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Canada urged to woo Indian students after Australian attacks

By Gurmukh Singh on Friday, May 29th, 2009 under Education, World

Toronto, May 29, The attacks on Indian students in Australia offer a great opportunity for Canada to ramp up enrolment from the country, says the Canada-India Business Council (C-IBC) which represents Canadian companies doing business in India.

Because of stricter visa rules and lack of publicity by Canadian institutions in India, only 3,000 Indian students join universities and colleges here, compared to 20,000 in Australia each year.

The attacks - which have left one student in the intensive care unit and the Indian community traumatized - will put a damper on Indian students seeking admission Down Under, said Husain Neemuchwala, chairman of the education committee at the C-IBC, here Thursday.

“These unfortunate incidents will cause others to look for alternative destinations for higher education, and Canadian institutions must seize this opportunity,” Neemuchwala told IANS.

He said, “Canadian universities, colleges and the government must offer this country as an attractive alternative, if not ideal, destination for Indian students.

“Being one of the top ‘exporters’ of international students, India offers them a huge market.”

Mumbai-born Neemuchwala said: “If American universities and colleges can attract 70,000 Indian students and Australian institutions 20,000 each year, Canada too should make its institutions more appealing to Indian students.”

He said, “Canada is safer, more tolerant and frankly more encouraging to people of different backgrounds. Its education system has been ranked among the best in the world - which is probably our best kept secret.”

“Further, the United Nations has rated Canada as one of the best places in the world to live, on the basis of its educational standards, life expectancy, national income and the general quality of life.”

With the introduction of a new three-year post-graduate work permit for international students, he said, Canada should become a favourable destination for Indian and other international students who generate \$7 billion for the economy each year.

Neemuchwala, who is also president of Toronto-based International Center for Education (ICE), took a Ed-Mission to India last year to forge ties with Indian institutions for joint ventures, partnerships and off-shore campuses.

The mission, which included 54 Canadian universities and colleges, signed 24 memorandums of understanding with their Indian counterparts.