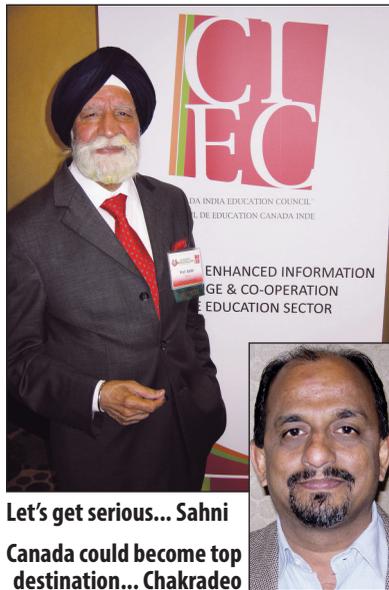




Engineering solutions
Hargurdeep Singh (centre in black suit) with members of the Sheridan Engineering Association at their first meeting, held to discuss ways of using their talents to engineer solutions for students with a variety of physical challenges. On the anvil are plans to build assistive devices for students with disabilities. The project is being developed as part of Tetra Society's Youth in Transition program.
Photo by George Beshiri

Ontario set to be top student destination



Let's get serious... Sahni
Canada could become top destination... Chakradeo

Continued from pg 3

The ratio of Indian students as a proportion of all international students Canada today attracts has risen sharply in recent years — but there could be an added impetus to this surge in coming years, delegates at Synergy 2012, the conference organized by the Canada India Education Council, heard last week.

“Australia has taken a real hit after the spate of racist attacks against Indian students, and has become a bit of a no-go area in recent years,” Pune-based visiting Prof Anant Chakradeo told *Focus*.

“The other traditionally popular destination for Indian students, the UK, has also seen a sharp decline owing to visa and work permit issues,” he said.

Chakradeo, who travels extensively all over the world in his capacity of International Relations Director of the MIT Group of Institutions, said the US and Europe, notably Germany, still remain attractive destinations for Indian students.

“But next year could well be Canada’s — and Ontario’s — year,” he said. That’s because unlike many Quebec institutions — which don’t get the full benefit of international student fees — Ontario has upped its game, he pointed out.

As every year, Synergy 2012 was organized by CEO Husain Neemuchwala and vice-chair Kam Rathee, led by chair Pierre Pettigrew.

But do challenges persist? Of course they do. As Sahni said, “All stakeholders need to get serious, show a real commitment...”

Increasing focus to be laid on Canadian Experience Class

Continued from pg 3

“Immigration backlogs are detrimental to our ability to attract the world’s top talent. With the decisive action we’ve taken to tackle the backlog, we will finally be able to select immigrants who better meet the needs of the Canadian labour market,” the minister said at a recent press conference.

While CIC plans to maintain the current levels of immigration (240,000 to 265,000 new permanent residents) in 2013, the Canadian Experience Class will be the main source in the federal skilled workers category. The CEC, created in 2008, facilitates the transition from temporary to permanent residence for international students and temporary foreign workers.

Admissions under the CEC have increased from about 2,500 people in 2009 to more than 6,000 in 2011, with more expected this year than ever before, according to a press release. “In 2013, CIC intends to accept a record high of up to 10,000 permanent residents through this popular program.”

To reach these numbers, more and more international student graduates are being encouraged to apply through the stream. Speaking to *Focus* Kenney said: “I think they are ideal immigrants in terms of their youth, their Canadian education; they’ve already developed soft social skills... they have to work in Canada before we give

them their PR in Canada, and they have demonstrated they can get good jobs here. I’m just very, very optimistic about their prospects.”

Last year, 72,000 study permits were granted. But how many of these students would qualify under the CEC? “I don’t know. But it’s surprising that the number of foreign student graduates applying for permanent residency through the Canadian Experience Class is a tiny fraction of the number of foreign students in Canada,” said Kenney. He noted that CEC applicants would be in proportion to the countries from where most students come. “That right now tends to be India and China.”

CIC, which has keenly followed Australia in reforming the immigration policy, hopes to adapt its model in recruiting as well. That means going into countries like India, China and the Philippines to promote Canada as a desired destination for prospective immigrants who could first enter the country as students.

To begin with CIC plans to advertise on websites of the prestigious Indian Institute of Technology. “We are going to raise our profile. We want those kids to think about Canada,” Kenney said. He also wants to tap into the source closer to home. “Lots of super bright [foreign] students go to American universities and can’t get permanent residency there. We want to scoop them up!”



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