BUILDING BRIDGES

With a view to regain the status of Australia as a safe destination for Indian students, Barry O’Farrell, Premier of New South Wales, inaugurated the first Australia India Youth Dialogue. Ruchi Chopda reports

Australia and India seem to be heading for a revival of old friendly ties. Last week saw the inauguration of the first chapter of the Australia India Youth Dialogue (AITYD) by Barry O’Farrell, Premier New South Wales, Australia. Speaking on the occasion, Farrell, who was on a week-long mission for trade and investment, said that education is a critical sector for New South Wales considering Australia’s strong tradition of overseas education.

“Education is important for developing the economic as well as long-term bilateral ties between the two countries,” said Farrell.

He expressed regret over the manner in which the 2008 attacks on Indian students were handled and called for a need to address the perception of Australia as an unsafe place in the eyes of parents of potential students.

The first AITYD will be held in Delhi and Mumbai in January 2012 by an Australia based non-profit organisation called Australia India Youth Dialogue Limited. The organisation, which has Macquarie University, New South Wales Government, state government of Victoria Australia, Australia India Institute and Australia India Business Council as its founding partners, aims to provide a sustainable platform for the youth of Australia and India to come together and foster an enduring partnership between the two nations.

Ruchir Punjabil, Chair, AITYD, emphasising the goals of the event said, “In the long run, the aim is to bring young leaders together who will be making key decisions for India Australia. We want them to handle the relations between the two countries as a top of mind entity.”

The AITYD will host 15 of the best and brightest young minds of each country at an annual conference that will be alternately hosted in India and Australia. Participants will be chosen from a variety of professions with the aim to widen their perspective and encourage them to think outside the box.

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