

Abroad Perspective - Russians active in Malaysia and India

Prior to the break-up of the Soviet Union, thousands of students from the Indian subcontinent were studying, *en masse*, in the region. The newly-formed Russia, in an attempt seemingly to recapture past tradition, is being quite aggressive in its marketing campaign. Russia's Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU) and Tula State University are among the institutions participating in a three week tour of Malaysian cities, for example. In India, the Russian Centre of Science and Culture of New Delhi recently held a press conference, lauding Russia as an education abroad destination.

MSU is currently in the process of obtaining official programme accreditation with the Malaysian Ministry of Education, and hopes this will be accomplished within six months' time. This move is expected to add to the currently 400 Malaysian students enrolled in other Moscow universities.

Sources: <http://202.186.86.35/news/story.asp?file=/2003/5/11/education/byrussia&newspage=Search> and <http://timesofindia.indiatimes.com/cms.dll/xml/uncomp/articleshow?msid=46566929> •

The Playing Field - Urban Development in Penang

North (Utara) Seberang Prai in Penang, Malaysia, is a region undergoing rapid urban development, and is great fodder for overseas education institutions seeking involvement in dynamic new projects. The region is set to attain national service and infrastructure set-up levels by 2010, and international levels by 2020.

Several tertiary institutions including Universiti Sains Malaysia (USM), have already established themselves in the region. The Universiti Terbuka Malaysia's (Unitem) has plans to establish a regional centre, while the new Industrial Training Institute is set to open its doors next year.

With the establishment of USM's Advanced Medical Research and Dentistry Institute, it is hoped that Kepala Batas would become a leading "medical city" in the region, attracting foreign researchers and post-graduate students. A private company is also expected to create a private medical college which will offer twinning degree programmes with foreign universities.

Source: <http://biz.thestar.com.my/news/story.asp?file=/2003/5/19/business/dvbatas&sec=business> •

Over the Counter - MBA quality in South Africa

Joining in the increased global demand for an MBA education, South Africa experienced a reported 82% growth in the market between 1998 and 2000. In 2002, as many as 5,000 MBA students were registered in South Africa's private institutions. In an attempt to address growing concerns surrounding the quality of the nation's MBA programmes, South Africa's Council on Higher Education (CHE) has implemented the MBA Re-Accreditation Process project.

Saleem Badat, Chief Executive Officer with the CHE, indicated to Higher-Edge that the nature of the demand for an MBA is leading to similar off-shoots targeted to specific fields. He stated that "the MBA may not necessarily be appropriate graduate education and training for senior management positions in all fields. However, high quality programs similar to the MBA that are appropriate for these (other) fields may either not exist or may not enjoy the reputational brand that the MBA enjoys, further intensifying the demand for an MBA qualification".

The Re-Accreditation Process is to encompass the 54 MBA programmes offered in South Africa's approximately 24 registered private and public higher education institutions, by means of surveys and site visits. Schools that do not pass the CHE's set standards will be shut down by the end of the year and will have their accredited status revoked.

The official CHE website is at <http://www.che.org.za>

Sources: http://www.bday.co.za/bday/content/direct/1_3523_1344513-6079-0,00.html and <http://www.suntimes.co.za/2002/06/16/business/surveys/survey13.asp> •

Globe Tipping - Tips for hotel booking

When making an investment to conduct ongoing work in a specific country, it is wise to compile a list of hotels that offer competitive rates at the outset. Sources on the internet include hotel chain and travel agency websites, the latter of which sometimes offer wholesale prices. If contacting a hotel in advance via email is not working out, try placing an international call. A \$3 phone call could lead to great savings.

Upon arrival in the country, making local calls to other hotels is also a good way of finding other deals. •

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