

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Indian-Foreign Collaborations

Higher education institutions keen on establishing a presence in India may be encouraged by the latest news from the Indian Ministry of Human Resource Development. Indian universities no longer need to seek permission from the Ministry if they wish to collaborate with their foreign counterparts. This shift in policy comes as India prepares to join the World Trade Organization next year, and comply with the General Agreement on Trade in Services (GATS).

Collaboration and branch campuses have generated discussion in India, as demonstrated by the Education Minister of West Bengal, Kanti Biswas. In an article published in *The Statesman*, Biswas argued that there were three major reasons for preventing the establishment of foreign university branches: first, the syllabi would not be Indian, and thus threaten Indian heritage; second, the primary goal of foreign universities is to make money; and third, the social planning of the country would be disrupted by the mere "presence of private institutions like Oxbridge."

Biswas' opinions were dismissed by *The Statesman* in an editorial: the threat posed by foreign universities to Indian heritage was "laughable," while social planning through higher education was merely a "Soviet fantasy" (West Bengal has elected a Communist government since 1954). The editorial countered Biswas' objections by raising an important point: "supply of quality higher education in India is less than demand."

The July/August 2004 issue of *Insight, On-site: India* examines the foreign degrees already on offer in India.

Source: "[India's Universities Are Given a Free Hand to Seek Foreign Partnerships](#)," *The Chronicle of Higher Education*, 23 August 2004; "[Oxbridge will take India down the drain: Kanti](#)," *The Statesman*, 12 August 2004; "[Oxbridge too far](#)," *The Statesman*, 13 August 2004.

GLOBE TIPPING

Searching For Cybercafes

If you are not traveling with a laptop computer to connect to the Internet overseas, the regularly updated "Cybercafe Search Engine" is a handy website to find out the locations of cybercafes around the world. Simply enter the city name (state and country searches were unavailable at the time of publication), and a list of known internet cafes are displayed. One point to remember: when searching for cybercafes in Beijing or Shanghai, the results simply state "every other corner, over 2000 multiple locations in Shanghai and Beijing."

Website: <http://cybercaptive.com/>

THE PLAYING FIELD

British Visa Processing In Nigeria

The United Kingdom has introduced a new visa application policy in Nigeria that promises to give potential students an easier visa processing experience. Taking out a full page advertisement in 20 July 2004 edition of *The Guardian*, the British High Commission detailed 22 visa application points being housed at DHL and UPS offices. Lagos alone offers twelve various locations where students can apply for a visa to study in the United Kingdom; the other locations can be found in Abuja, Port Harcourt, Kano and Enugu.

Nigerian students can now literally drop-off their documents and application and expect a process time of a few days. As Higher-Edge has reported previously, the United Kingdom is committed to providing speedy visa processing times: Chinese applicants have been promised same-day results ([Not-So-Foreign 3.17](#)). Given long processing times and visa delays in other countries, these policies may allow the United Kingdom to present itself to Nigerian students as a preferred study abroad destination.

OVER THE COUNTER

Declining MBA Application Numbers

The Graduate Management Admission Council recently released its "Application Trends Survey Executive Report 2004," which states that of the 238 programs that participated in the survey, 78% reported a decline in the number of applications to traditional full-time, two-year programs.

Of note was the decline in applications from China and India; 24% and 16% of schools reported declines from those two countries respectively. The Survey suggests that population trends and economic factors are "two possible culprits behind the lack of growth in application volume." According to the report, the number of people at business school age (25 to 29) has declined, while the cost of an MBA program may be prohibitive for many potential students.

While both factors can affect the number of international applicants, one factor that was not addressed by GMAC was the perceived "value" of an MBA. A foreign MBA degree was seen in India and China as a ticket to guaranteed employment. With rising unemployment figures for Chinese college graduates and quality business programs offered by Indian schools however, Chinese and Indian students are placing less value in the foreign business degree.

Source: "[Application Trends Survey Executive Report 2004](#)," Graduate Management Admission Council, 2004.