

THE PLAYING FIELD

Learning Chinese for success

With China developing into an important player in the global economy, knowledge of the Chinese language is being viewed as a tool for success. Taking advantage of this trend, the Chinese government has embarked on an ambitious mission to promote the teaching of Chinese as a foreign language overseas. Last month, the country hosted the first international conference on Chinese language which was attended by nearly 600 participants, including 353 overseas delegates from 66 countries.

The *People's Daily Online* quoted Ma Jianfei, deputy director of the National Office for Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language (NOTCFL) as saying, "With China's rapidly growing economy and increasing international exchanges, value of the Chinese language is rising constantly. Learning Chinese is gaining a tool to engage in friendly exchanges with 1.3 billion Chinese people and the key to enter an important and vast market in the world." According to NOTCFL, more than 2,500 universities in 100 countries are teaching Chinese as a foreign language.

Source: ["Over 30 million people learn Chinese in world as foreign language."](#) *People's Daily Online*, July 20, 2005

OVER THE COUNTER

New rules for foreign institutions in India

Foreign education providers interested in setting up shop in India may find the going tough if the recommendations put forward by the CNR Rao Committee are accepted. A committee set up by the Government of India to frame a policy on the entry of foreign educational institutions, the CNR Rao Committee has put forward several recommendations on the subject.

First, the committee has suggested that only foreign universities from countries that offer Indian universities a business opportunity abroad should be allowed in India. Also, the committee has recommended that Foreign Education Providers (FEPs) should be monitored by the Government and registered as "deemed" universities under the University Grants Commission (UGC). The approval system to be followed for foreign universities setting up Indian operations is to be conducted in two phases.

In the first phase, foreign universities will be allowed to operate during a trial period. Institutions will be allowed to set up long term ventures on the basis of their performance

during the trial period. The proposed system will apply to all modes of operation —franchisee agreements, twinning programmes, study centres, programme collaborations, and offshore or branch campuses.

Source: ["Foreign varsities may have to face tough entrance tests."](#) *The Economic Times*, July 27, 2005

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Dearth of language teachers in Scotland

The study of modern languages is decreasing in popularity at Scottish higher education institutions leading to a dearth of language teachers. With a drop in the number of students enrolling in teacher colleges to train in the subject, the colleges are struggling to fill up seats and meet recruitment targets.

Less than two-thirds of the places at Scottish teacher training colleges have been filled this year. At Strathclyde University, less than half of the places have been filled. The varsity had hoped to recruit 60 modern language teaching students but has fallen short of its targets by managing to recruit only 28. Ian Smith, dean of the faculty of education at Strathclyde University, told *The Scotsman*, "There seems to be a real problem in modern languages - it's the only subject where we have less than half of the places filled. One reason is simply a shortage of applicants and the second is that there are quite a number whose language profile doesn't match what schools are looking for."

Source: ["Shortage of languages teachers looming."](#) *The Scotsman*, August 6, 2005

GLOBE TIPPING

Siemens, Airbus to develop inflight mobile phone system

Siemens and Airbus plan to develop a mobile phone system that would allow passengers to make and receive calls on their mobile phones while in air. The German company will provide the GSM mobile phone standard technology while Airbus will build it into existing electronic systems as well as market and maintain it. This new technology would be made available to consumers by 2006.

Source: [Outlook Traveller](#)

NOTICE: Due to the "Summer Schedule" of publications our office is following, this is the last issue for this month. We will be returning to regular weekly service on September 7, 2005.