

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Caste Bill Expected to Drive Indian Students Overseas

The number of Indian students studying abroad, which has been climbing steadily in recent years, may spike still more if a bill proposed recently by the Indian government becomes law.

Current rules require Indian central universities, Indian Institutes of Management and Indian Institutes of Technology to set aside 23 per cent of their seats to members of “scheduled” castes and tribes—groups that were deemed, after Indian independence, to need preferential treatment by the government. The new proposal would more than double this ratio to 50 per cent—making acceptance into these schools much harder for everyone else. According to Indian newspapers, many aspiring Indian university students who don’t belong to these castes are already considering studying overseas—to the delight of recruiters for foreign institutions.

“As student protests rally around the importance of merit over all else, members of the education export community are rubbing their hands in glee,” one newspaper reports.

Sources: “[Quota Chaos Spurs Rush to Foreign Univs](#),” *Hindustan Times*, April 13, 2006; “[Who Will Reap Most from the Quota Raj?](#)” *Times of India*, May 8, 2006; “[‘Backward Caste’ Deal for Students Fires Indian Middle Class](#),” *Telegraph*, April 18, 2006

Globe Tipping

M.D. Offers Online Travel Advice

Being informed about the health risks of travel abroad is vital. One useful stop on the Internet is [The Travel Clinic](#), a web site hosted by a Canadian physician, Dr. Mark Wise. The web site offers a useful survey of issues—from jet lag to myiasis—affecting the world traveler.

THE PLAYING FIELD

China Declares Halt to Massive University Expansion

The dramatic ramp-up in higher education enrolments that has been underway in China since 1999 is coming to an end. The country’s cabinet now says it wants to slow the expansion and focus on quality, rather than quantity. It also says there aren’t enough jobs in the country for all the university graduates the system is now producing.

Some China observers say the Communist Party is concerned about the political instability that may result from the presence of large numbers of unemployed, university-educated young people in the country.

More than 5 million new students enrolled in Chinese higher education institutions last year—4.7 times more than in 1998. The total number of higher education students in the country stands at 23 million—more than any other country. The massive expansion program has been a key reason cited for recent declining enrolments of Chinese students in many western countries, including Britain.

Sources: “[Higher Education Ends Era of Grand Expansion](#),” *China View*, May 11, 2006; “[Shrinking Opportunity on China’s Campuses](#),” *Washington Post*, May 12, 2006

OVER THE COUNTER

Australian Schools Need More Money to Compete: Monash Head

Australian universities will “become less and less attractive to international students” unless the country’s federal government either raises its funding or allows them to hike fees, Monash University Vice-Chancellor Richard Larkins said recently. Documents officially released earlier this month, however, show all of Victoria State’s universities in surplus, with Monash \$51.9 million (\$39.4 million U.S.) in the black.

Last month, Australian Education, Science and Training Minister Julie Bishop predicted competition from China would force Australian universities to merge in order to remain competitive.

Sources: “[Unis Will Struggle Internationally Without Funding Changes: Monash Head](#),” *The Age*, May 3, 2006 “[Merges the Way to Meet China’s Rise](#),” *The Australian*, April 19, 2006