

THE PLAYING FIELD

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Malaysian students offered scholarships to study in top foreign schools

Malaysia's Public Service Department (PSD) is awarding 1800 scholarships this year, an increase of 300 from last year, to students who have been accepted by top foreign universities. The Government is also encouraging students to apply to local institutes rather than mediocre institutions abroad. There are 8,000 scholarships available for students to study locally.

"Tertiary education in Britain and the United States is very costly. We do not want to send our scholars to any random university overseas," Higher Education Minister Datuk Mustapa Mohamed told *The Star*.

Source: "[PSD scholarships only for students in top universities](#)," *The Star*, Mar. 4, 2007

["Only those in prominent varsities need apply."](#)
Sun2surf, Mar. 5, 2007

OVER THE COUNTER

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UK slashes student visa fees

The UK Government has slashed visa costs for international students. The move is a result of stiff resistance from university heads who attributed the fall in international student applications to a hike in student visa fees in 2005. The charges have been reduced to £99 (\$ 191 U.S.) from £129 (\$ 249 U.S.).

According to Universities UK, Britain's higher education action group, the move will make UK visas competitive with countries such as U.S. and Australia. Fees for postgraduate students wishing to extend their visas are to rise from £250 (\$ 483 U.S.) to £295 (\$ 570 U.S.).

Source: "[Government cuts visa costs for international students](#)," *The Guardian*, March 8, 2007

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

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New Zealand bid to increase foreign students

With education being its country's fourth largest export, the New Zealand Government is looking for ways to increase its dipping market share in the global education market. A few years ago it was the hot new entrant into the international student recruiting market, but recently New Zealand has witnessed a decline in the number of fee-paying foreign students from more than 97,900 in August 2003 to around 76,180 last August. This is due to growing competition, a strengthening New Zealand dollar and bad publicity, including a number of high-profile incidents at English language schools. A document detailing the Government's strategy to expand the sector is expected to go to the Cabinet shortly.

Source: "[Extra funding key to foreign students](#)," *Stuff.co.nz*, Feb. 28, 2007

GLOBE TIPPING

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Cricket Fever

With the Cricket World Cup kicking off in West Indies this week, do not expect to get much work done if you happen to be in Pakistan, India or Bangladesh. While banks, multinationals, moneychangers are expecting a slump in business, parents and school authorities are resigned to a dip in productivity of their wards. There is unlikely to be much interest in anything not related to the game. During the time the games are telecast on television (usually in the evening), you may be surprised to find that life in these countries has literally come to a standstill!

For more on the schedule:

<http://cricketworldcup.indya.com/>