

## THE PLAYING FIELD

### *Top UK varsities bending rules for foreign students*

An investigation conducted by Britain's *Sunday Times* reveals that several top British universities are lowering entry requirements to admit foreign students who pay full tuition fees. Admission tutors for several undergraduate courses at the universities of Edinburgh, Manchester and Sheffield have reportedly admitted they would be prepared to accept an international applicant from India or China who had failed to achieve the normal A-level requirements.

International students (majority are Asians) generate more than £2 billion (\$ 3.9 billion U.S.) a year in fees for British higher education. In contrast, British universities earn less from domestic and European students. Though universities are insistent that preferential treatment is not given to international students, the media expose presents a different picture. Alan Mackay, head of the international office at the University of Edinburgh, told the *Sunday Times* that to the best of his knowledge overseas students were not admitted with lower grades.

Source: ["Chinese students oust UK pupils from top universities," The Sunday Times, May 13, 2007](#)

## OVER THE COUNTER

### *TOEFL crisis in South Korea*

As demand for English proficiency test TOEFL far exceeds supply, South Koreans have been resorting to desperate measures to be able to write the test. This includes hunting for alternative test sites from Japan to Southeast Asia, and even as far away as Australia. There has been an increase in the number of people taking the test in South Korea from 50,311 in 2001 to about 130,000 in 2006. However, ETS has reduced the number of times the test can be taken after switching to the new internet-based testing method last year.

Source: ["High demand causes 'Toefl crisis' in South Korea," International Herald Tribune, May 14, 2007](#)

## ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

### *Bill to allow foreign universities stalled in India*

A law that would allow foreign universities to enter India has been stalled. The Foreign Educational Institutions (Regulation of Entry and Operations, Maintenance of Quality and Prevention of Commercialisation) Bill had been cleared by the Indian Cabinet ([see issue dated March 7, 2007](#)) in March this year. However disagreements regarding a clause in the bill has led to this impasse. The clause states that a committee of experts will review applications from "institutes of excellence" such as Yale or Harvard University, and give them certain exemptions, such as not having to employ quotas.

Source: ["Bill to allow foreign universities in India stalled," Live Mint, May 14, 2007](#)

## GLOBE TIPPING

### *When in Bangkok, beware*

Just arrived at the new Suvarnabhumi International Airport in Bangkok? Looking for a ride into the city? Upon entering the Arrival Hall, passengers are descended upon by dozens of touts holding cards and selling fixed rates for cabs to Bangkok. Unless you are a seasoned traveller or been to the airport before, you will not know that the metered taxis are located one floor below. There are no signs where to find regular taxis, and few people have an interest to tell you that if you just go down the escalators, you can get to the city for about 25% of the "fixed rate" quoted to you in the Arrivals Hall.