

THE PLAYING FIELD

Saudi students head for Malaysia

Malaysia is becoming a popular overseas education destination for students from Saudi Arabia. As many as 172 Saudi students are already studying in Malaysia and 300 more are expected to join them. With the Saudi government increasing funding for overseas studies, many countries have been vying for a greater share of the country's student market. While a significant proportion of Saudi students are studying abroad in universities across the United States, United Kingdom and Canada, the Government is on the lookout for alternative, cost-effective destinations.

The cost of obtaining higher education in Malaysia and other Asian countries is lower than traditional study destinations such as United States and United Kingdom. Higher-Edge had reported last year ([Issue dated November 29, 2006](#)) that Malaysia was trying to attract students from Muslim countries, as the majority of Malaysians practice Islam as their religion.

Source: ["Saudi Students Look Toward Malaysia for Higher Studies."](#) Arab News, May 3, 2007

ABROAD PERSPECTIVE

Asian threat to British universities

European universities need to improve on quality and access in order to lead academic rankings, according to the European Commissioner for Education Jan Figel. Figel anticipates a real threat from Asian universities, especially institutions in India and China. "If we don't act we will see an uptake or overtake by Chinese or Indian universities. Indian technology is seen as the third best in the world. China itself decided it wants several top universities by 2015," Figel told *The Times*.

Drummond Bone, president of the higher education action group Universities UK, agreed with Figel's view. According to Bone, European universities must work together to attract students and investment. "Overseas students don't come to the UK or Europe, our students are attracted elsewhere and then if you've got the students going elsewhere the businesses go elsewhere," Bone was quoted as saying in *The Times*.

Source: ["Asia threatens to knock British universities off the top table."](#) The Times, May 21, 2007

OVER THE COUNTER

Indian students exploited in Australia

Australian education programs continue to come under fire. Hundreds of international students, most of whom are Indian, are continuing their agitation against the Melbourne-based Central Queensland University (CQU). The allegations are that the university intentionally "fails" them during examinations to make money. The tuition fee for each subject costs about \$ 1,871 U.S. which has to be paid again for the subsequent year.

According to media reports, nearly half of the 375 students enrolled in CQU's Issues in Management Accounting (ACCT20053) course have flunked the summer semester exam. Victorian Minister for Education Services Jacinta Allan has ordered a full audit of CQU's campus in Melbourne. Last year, there were similar protests and the university allowed the failed students to reappear free of cost. CQU is considered one of the most successful Australian universities in terms of recruiting, teaching and making money from international students.

Source: ["Indian students exploited in Aus?"](#) The Times of India, Apr. 26, 2007

["Indian students threaten new action against uni."](#) The Age, May 19, 2007

GLOBE TIPPING

Holidays in India

For those of you who visit India frequently on business, it is advisable to learn how the country's holiday system works. There are three secular National Holidays: Republic Day (Jan 26), Independence Day (Aug 15), and Mahatma Gandhi's birthday (Oct 2). These are observed everywhere in India, and all government offices and businesses are closed for these. In addition, there are 4 all-India Public Holidays when all offices of the Central government and banks remain closed. In each of the states, there are additional holidays termed State Public Holidays, both religious and secular. Each state publishes its own holiday calendar. There are also Restricted Holidays from which individuals may choose a limited number, though government offices and businesses don't close. Ad-hoc Holidays are ones which are declared suddenly for reasons such as the death of a respected politician or due to an industrial strike.