

As students prepare for China's college-entrance exam, a scandal brews

Chen Chunxiu was applying to join an adult-education programme when she discovered, to her surprise, that she already had a degree. When she asked Shandong University of Technology to explain why its records listed her as an alumnus, the answer was a shock.

The university concluded that another young woman with the same surname but much lower grades had **connived** with teachers and local officials to obtain the college-acceptance notice that should have been sent to Ms Chen.

connive 共谋; 纵容

Reporting of Ms Chen's story has caused a **furor** ahead of this year's gaokao. Several people from the same province have come forward with similar complaints. An editorial in "China Daily", a state-run newspaper, warned that the frauds revealed in Shandong could be "only the tip of an iceberg" and that there may be many more cases elsewhere.

furor 公愤; 狂热

iceberg 冰山

At most Chinese universities, gaokao scores are the only gauge of applicants' ability. The economic damage caused by covid-19 will make it all the more important to get a place at a good university in order to have a chance of getting a **decent** job. That will crank up pressure on pupils sitting the gaokao.

decent 正派的; 得体的

In early July officials in Shandong province said they were taking action against more than 60 people implicated in three cases of identity theft, including the one reported by Ms Chen. The university she should have attended said it would try to help her enroll, 16 years after her opportunity to do so was stolen.