

《印度军队开始学习汉语》

Visva-Bharati University in Indian state of West Bengal has launched Mandarin classes for soldiers, according to news agency Press Trust of India.

The news agency said 25 army personnel have enrolled for the course this year.

The university's "Cheena Bhavan" (China College) will run the classes, said Swapan Kumar Dutta, officiating vice-chancellor of the university.

The course aims to introduce soldiers to the rich Chinese culture and the centuries-old ties between both countries, said the report.

The eligibility criterion for soldiers was the same as other students enrolled for the course.

The course is being taught at an army establishment since it was not feasible for soldiers to attend the Chinese-language classes in the Visva-Bharati campus, Dutta said.

He said the Chinese consulate in India has extended all help to set up a "modern Chinese laboratory" with modern equipment at Cheena Bhavan.

"We are working on Gurudev Rabindranath Tagore's vision of broadening the mind through linguistic and cultural exchanges," Dutta said, referring to Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore whose poems are well-known even in today's China.

Visva-Bharati University was founded by Tagore in 1921. Cheena Bhavan (China College) was established by Tagore and Chinese educator Tan Yunshan in 1937. Southwest China's Yunnan University has maintained an exchange program with the college since 2011.

While lots of people around the world began learning Mandarin in recent years, not many are learning the language in India. The bhavan has more than 130 students, with courses focused on Chinese language, ancient Chinese history and Chinese literature.