

SNAPSHOTS



From left: A pilot checks jet fuel before his plane takes off; Training planes on the runway at the Civil Aviation Flight University of China; Trainees listen attentively to an instructor.

FLYING HIGH



Pilots from the Civil Aviation Flight University of China must become familiar with Airbus and Boeing planes before they can work as copilots. PHOTOS BY LYU JIA / FOR CHINA DAILY



A junior pilot practices stalls; Depending on age, a male pilot cannot have more than 20 to 24 percent body fat.



A group of students wait to board a plane; 21-year-old Wang Zhenni is the only female student in her grade.



It is a long haul before a Chinese pilot can get the prime position in the cockpit of a passenger plane

By CHINA DAILY

When you travel by air, you often see pilots in uniform rushing into and out of airport terminals. But becoming a pilot is costly and involves a lot of training. In China, 90 percent of the country's airline pilots are trained at the same school. It's the world's largest civil aviation institution — the Civil Aviation Flight University of China. After graduation, pilots must first become familiar with Airbus and Boeing planes before they can work as copilots. If they want to become captains, it takes longer. For example, for Air China, a pilot needs to have had more than 3,000 hours of flight time to fly a Boeing 737. For a Boeing 767 it's 4,000 hours. After four years of school, a pilot needs at least five years of flying, during which period there is more training, strict assessment and a brutal elimination process.