

Friends of Riverside Nature Park meeting



Last night, I attended the latest Friends of Riverside Nature Park committee meeting, held at the Mitchell Street Centre.

There was a useful update from environment officers from the council's Neighbourhood Services about proposed landscape improvements on Riverside Drive and Avenue running from the nature park, eastwards along to the Riverside Pavilion east of the airport. At the east end of this area, there will also be parking improvements [I highlighted](#) yesterday.

The landscape proposals will be discussed at the council's Neighbourhood Services Committee in the coming weeks to obtain necessary approval.

9 Chinese think tanks among world's best

A report released on Wednesday shows that the number of Chinese think tanks has grown rapidly in the world during the past year.



Wang Huiyao, president of CCG, delivers a speech at the release of 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report in Beijing, on Jan 25, 2016. [Photo provided to chinadaily.com.cn]

Nine Chinese think tanks were included among the world's top think tanks in the 2016 Global Go To Think Tank Index Report, published by the think tank and civil societies program at the Lauder Institute of University of Pennsylvania (TTCSP).

Selected from a list of 175 top think tanks in the world, these nine think tanks are China Institutes of Contemporary International Relations; Chinese Academy of Social Sciences; China Institute of International Studies; Development Research Center of the State Council; Shanghai Institute for International Studies; Institute of International and Strategic Studies Peking University; Unirule Institute of Economics; Center for China and Globalization; and Chongyang Institute for Financial Studies, with China Institute of Contemporary International Relations ranking the highest at 33.

The report shows the United States at the top with the largest number of think tanks, at 1,835, while China holds the second place with 435, followed by UK, 288, and India, 280.

The 2016 study was subdivided into 52 lists based on such categories as region, area of research and special achievement, in which 41 Chinese think tanks were selected with 18 of them also outstanding in the Top Think Tanks in China, India, Japan and the Republic of Korea.

"It's very meaningful that a number of Chinese think tanks are influencing the world," said Wang Huiyao, president of the Center for China and Globalization. "More think tanks are needed to help our government in making decisions accurately and scientifically. Meanwhile, think tanks serve more

like a 'soft power', which can also help enhance our country's international stature," he said.

According to the report, three Chinese think tanks have made their mark Think Tanks to Watch. They are Shanghai Advanced Institute of Finance, Unirule Institute of Economics, and Center for China and Globalization.

Another four are among the Best New Think Tanks, including Alibaba think tank, 21st Silk Road Collaborative Center, Qianhai Institute for Innovative Research, and Center for Eco-Financial Studies, with Alibaba think tank ranking the highest at 23.

Referred to as "think tanks' think tank", TTCSP manages and supports a global network of close to 7,000 think tanks and trains future think tank scholars and executives.

"Since 2006, our ranking process has been refined and streamlined, and the number and scope of the institutions and individuals involved has steadily grown." said James McGann, director of the TTCSP.

The 2016 report shows continued expansion of think tanks in Asia, Latin America, Africa, the Middle East, and North Africa.

Besides, there is increasing diversity among think tanks in these regions with independent, political party affiliated, and corporate and business sector think tanks that are being created with greater frequency.

[Shooting gallery owner given 3-year suspended sentence](#)

A Chinese woman who ran a small recreational shooting gallery in north China's Tianjin Municipality has received a suspended three-year prison sentence for illegal gun possession.

The sentence was handed down by Tianjin No. 1 Intermediate People's Court.

Zhao Chunhua, 51, opened a roadside shooting gallery to help support her family but was arrested in October. Among the model guns seized from her stall, six were identified as real guns.

She was sentenced to three and a half years in prison for illegal gun possession by a district court in Tianjin in December last year, triggering a public outcry, with many calling the verdict harsh. It caused widespread debate about the criteria for legally defining guns.

The Intermediate People's Court took over the case after Zhao appealed against the initial verdict.

According to the court, Zhao knew that the model guns could cause injuries and could not be purchased through legal channels, therefore, she had the subjective intention to possess them.

Given that Zhao showed remorse and the guns she owned were for recreational shooting, posing little threat to society, Zhao was given a three-year probation.

Zhao pleaded guilty and was immediately released.

President Trump pushes on

Some commentators are surprised. The new President is doing exactly what he said he would do. The worldly wise well educated pontificators who confidently predicted Mr Trump would metamorphose in office to someone more like the various well honed expert politicians he defeated are having to change their minds.

Mr Trump told us he did not accept the idea that the US has to place climate change at the centre of its industrial and economic policies. References to that set of policies and beliefs have been taken down from the White House website. Instead Mr Trump has taken executive actions to make it easier to exploit US hydrocarbons and transport oil to market by pipeline. He understands cheap energy is an essential underpinning of an industrial strategy.

He told us he would get US corporations to invest much more in the USA. There has been a procession of business leaders in to see him to be asked to step up their domestic investment. Doubtless they have been told they will get tax cuts and regulatory changes to make the US more competitive. They will also have seen the reputational damage if they do not make suitable statements about their commitment to US manufacture. The car makers are now planning more capacity in the USA.

He has said he wishes to control inward migration, and to tackle the problem of foreign criminals operating in the USA. He has made some executive orders and is investigating his further options over the Mexican frontier.

He expressed hostility to multilateral trading agreements that he thought were not fair on the USA. He has pulled the USA out of the Trans Pacific Partnership, a complex large agreement which was not ratified by Mr Obama. He has begun the process of renegotiating NAFTA where he thinks Mexico has an unfair advantage. As this is ratified he will need to deal with the Congress on how to proceed.

The critical commentators will probably shift their ground from proposing he will change, to arguing the realities of government and the limits on

Presidential power will now prevent him doing much of what he promised. It is true his tax cuts require action and goodwill by Republican Congressmen and women. Repeal of Obamacare and changes to existing trade treaties will need the approval of the legislature. Mr Trump is at his most powerful in his early days as President, and all the time there is a Republican majority in the Senate and Congress. He may again surprise his critics by being able to cut deals with the legislators to secure tax cuts, Obamacare change and other important items in his manifesto.

Mr Obama came to office promising to shut Guantanamo, pull out of Afghanistan and press for peace in the Middle East. He got wobbled off all of those and defined his Presidency by securing a deeply unpopular healthcare reform. Mr Trump needs to make sure when he spends his political capital with the legislators he buys something worth having which makes them and him more popular. Tax cuts might well do just that. The replacement for Obamacare may prove more divisive and difficult.

[5-year-old trains to walk on wires](#)

5-year-old Zhang Wang trains to walk on wires in a series of 'Spartan' workout plans designed by his father. The plans include one-arm push-ups, rock climbing and Chinese Kung Fu cudgel.

The boy from southwest China's Sichuan Province has become an internet celebrity in China.

His father, previously a migrant worker, has his son's best interests in mind, despite the training seeming quite arduous for such a young child. The father hopes that training his son like this will build his confidence and extend his range of interests.

His father sees safety as a top priority and always accompanies his son when training.