

Record number of volunteers from SRUC Oatridge help at heritage site

Countryside Management and Rural Skills Students from the Oatridge Campus of Scotland's Rural College (SRUC) got their hands dirty by enjoying a day volunteering with Scottish National Heritage (SNH).

Body weight requirements loosened for military academy candidates

An amendment to the physical examination standards for military academies has loosened the body weight requirements for candidates, military authorities said.

The amended standards allow a male candidate weighing up to 30 percent more than the standard body weight for his height to pass the examination. For female candidates the maximum is 20 percent over the standard.

Standard weight for candidates, in kilograms, is the difference between his or her height in centimeters and 110, according to the standards.

The original standards released in 2006 stated that male candidates more than 25 percent heavier than the standard weight for their height, and female candidates exceeding the standard by over 15 percent, shall not pass the physical examination.

The amendment made other changes to the military academy physical examination, including permitting candidates to have larger tattoos and canceling several examination items such as checks for carsickness, seasickness and chronic sinusitis.

Authorities started work on the amendment in 2014, hoping to make the standards better match the physical and mental conditions of young people, which have changed due to social and economic development and improved living standards, according to the military authority.

PM congratulates Capt. Amarinder Singh on taking oath as Punjab CM

PM congratulates Capt. Amarinder Singh on taking oath as Punjab CM

Projects to improve traffic on Yangtze



A navigation lock in operation in Xiangjiang River in Changsha, Hunan province. [Photo/Xinhua]

China will dredge sections of the Yangtze River this year to deepen it and increase the amount of freight traffic that can use the waterway, a national legislator said recently.

“Projects will be carried out on the upper, middle and lower reaches of the Yangtze River,” said Tang Guanjun, deputy to the National People’s Congress and also director of the Changhang River Administration of Navigational Affairs in Hubei province.

“We aim at forming a water network connecting more places,” he said.

“The water level is of prime importance to freight transportation on the river. For every 10 centimeter rise in the water level, a 3,000 metric ton ship can carry an extra 176 tons of cargo,” he said.

“The ‘golden water gateway’ is essential to boosting the development of the Yangtze River Economic Belt. The river’s mainstream is the busiest river in the world regarding freight traffic,” Tang said.

In 2016, freight traffic on the mainstream of the Yangtze River was 2.31

billion metric tons, while railways across the country carried 3.33 billion tons. The river handled 15.2 million containers last year.

“Water transportation is much cheaper than rail and road transportation,” he said.

New projects will be carried out under strict environmental rules, Tang said.

“We will build a green navigation channel, including using environmental materials and technology to avoid water pollution, and use an ecological design to allow fish to migrate and plants to grow,” he said.

The projects will be carried out on the mainstream and its tributaries.

After the project is completed, the river will be navigable for bigger ships, allowing them to be able to load and unload cargo along the middle and upper reaches of the Yangtze River.

Bottlenecks affect freight transportation traveling to the middle and upper reaches of the river.

The increase of freight traffic along the river is an important part of the Yangtze River Economic Belt, one of China’s three major national strategies.

The economic belt covers 11 provinces and cities, such as Jiangsu, Zhejiang, Anhui, Sichuan and Shanghai, with a total area of 2.05 million square kilometers. The belt also spans the country’s eastern, middle and western regions, and its population and GDP account for more than 40 percent of the national totals.

[Time to see the UK’s strengths – steady pound since 2012](#)

Amidst all the hyperbole over short term movements in sterling it is worthwhile looking at the longer trend. Today sterling is around the same level against the Euro as it was at the beginning of 2012. It is almost a fifth higher against the yen, and around one fifth down against the dollar. Over this time period the dollar has been strong against all major currencies, running with higher interest rates and expectations of higher rates than elsewhere in the advanced world. The yen has been particularly weak thanks to negative rates and the creation so many extra yen by the authorities.

One of the odd features of the protracted and often repetitious UK debate about Brexit is the wish of so many to look for weaknesses and problems on the UK side, and to fail to analyse the weaknesses and difficulties on the EU

side in the forthcoming talks. On Tuesday I pointed out to the PM during the exchanges on her statement about the EU summit that the questions to be asked need to be asked of the 27.

I began by asking how can a group of civilised democracies that are meant to believe in decent values not reassure British citizens living on the continent legally that they can stay there after exit? I do not for one moment think the Spaniards will want to evict UK pensioners living in their own villas on the Costa Brava, for example. Nor do I see how they could do so legally. However, why is it asking too much of the EU and the Spanish government not to confirm that of course they are welcome to stay. After all, the UK government has been very clear that we would like all EU citizens legally in the UK to stay as long as they wish, but do need similar confirmation for our citizens on the continent.

I also asked for confirmation that it is clearly in the interests of business and governments on the continent to carry on trading tariff free, with no more barriers than they currently face, once the UK has left. The UK will willingly offer continental countries tariff free access to our market as long as we have the same to theirs. The choice rests with them, as the UK would recommend tariff free but can live with WTO most favoured nation terms.

Whilst we are about it, we should ask the rest of the EU how they intend to implement their Treaty obligation to have good relations with neighbouring states and to promote trade with them. As the EU is always keen to ensure we follow the letter as well as the spirit of the Treaty I assume the same applies on this important issue.

The UK voted to take back control of our laws, our money and our borders. We are doing so based on the referendum of the UK voters, and now also on the back of a Commons vote with a majority of 372 to leave. Under the Treaty we do not owe them any money apart from our regular contributions.