

《Feature: Entrepreneurs build a better world under Belt and R》

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BEIJING, May 7 (Xinhua) -- For centuries, the ancient Silk Road had played a significant role in commercial and cultural exchange among the countries plying its route.

Today, entrepreneurs are devoting themselves to rejuvenating the historical route and building a new world.

STRonGER TRADE linkS

More than a thousand years ago, Emperor Xuanzong of China's Tang Dynasty (618 AD-907 AD) sent special envoys and fast horses to Southern China thousands of miles away from the capital to get freshly picked lychees for his favorite concubine, killing many horses and envoys during the exhausting long trip.

Now even for fresh fruits tens of thousands miles away, say fresh cherries from Chile in South America, they can easily "fly" into Chinese supermarkets for ordinary people to enjoy thanks to the current convenient and fast trade routes.

China has now become the largest export destination for Chilean cherries. Data from the Chilean Fresh Fruit Exporters Association shows that during the last cherry export season, over 80 percent of the country's cherries were exported to China.

Chilean cherry planters and traders have made huge endeavors to ensure the fresh, crisp texture of cherries for Chinese customers. For example, newly picked cherries are transported to China by "private planes" to ensure good quality.

"I hope direct flights between China and Chile will be opened in the near future, so that Chile's cherries could arrive in China sooner and at a lower cost," said Ricardo Vial, trade manager of the Rucaray Corporation, a large-scale Chilean cherry manufacturer.

Poland is the world's third largest apple producing country. In 2014, the Russian government imposed a ban on food imports from the European Union and the United States in retaliation for their sanctions against Moscow over the Ukraine crisis, forcing Poland's apple exports to plunge.

"We launched a three-year apple promotion project focused on the Chinese market, bringing new hope for fruit farmers," said Miroslaw Maliszewski, principal of Polish Fruit Growers Association.

BOOMING INVESTMENTS AND EConOMIC COOPERATION

In December 1992, China's Shougang Group bid for 98.4 percent of Peruvian Iron Ore Corporation's stocks and the right to tap, explore and run the mineral resources of its mineral field.

Shougang headquarters founded Shougang Hierro Peru S.A.A., a mining company, which extracts, processes and sells iron ore in Peru.

The company's entrepreneurial path in the South American country with a different language and environment from China has been bumpy with obstacles, both big or small.

"During the past 24 years, Shougang Group has invested nearly 1.5 billion U.S. dollars in equipment replacement, technology transformation, environmental governance, living quarters and project expansion. Its output has surged from less than 3 million tons in 1992 to 11.12 million tons in 2015," said Kong Aimin, general manager of Shougang Hierro Peru S.A.A.

In addition to founding new companies abroad, a large number of Chinese corporations have deepened their cooperation with local companies overseas.

Zhejiang RIFA Digital Precision Machinery Company is a manufacturer of high-end precision machine tools with annual sales exceeding a billion yuan (about 145 million dollars).

In 2014 and 2015, it bought out Italian corporations MCM and Colgar, which were suffering from an economic crisis in Italy.

The two Italian companies are world-leading machine tool manufacturers, whose customers include renowned airplane manufacturers such as Airbus and Boeing and industrial giants General Electrics and Siemens.

"Improving technology, boosting development and expanding markets are not only play an important role in the Belt and Road Initiative, but they also meet the needs of both Chinese and Italian corporations," said Wang Benshan, chairman of Zhejiang RIFA Digital Precision Machinery Company.

"MCM and Colgar boast high-quality products and good word of mouth. Chinese companies help Italian ones out of difficulties with the market and funds, and increased taxes and stimulated employment for our city. This is win-win cooperation," said Maria Catrina Wono, deputy mayor of Cornaredo, where Calgar is based.

SMOOTHER PASSAGEWAY linking CHINA AND WEST

Kazakhstan is an important hub on the ancient Silk Road. The city of Khorgas is located in China, in Kazakhstan and on the border of the two countries. It serves as China's youngest border port city, a special economic zone forged by Kazakhstan, and the first cross-border trade area between China and its neighboring countries.

In December 2014, the Khorgos-Eastern Gate special economic zone in Kazakhstan, the most significant logistics center, was officially put into use.

Some foreign enterprises have gradually settled down in the special zone. With a soaring population and schools, hospitals, kindergartens and other supporting public facilities having been built, a brand new town is appearing. Many young Kazakh people have come to the special zone, some even giving up their jobs in big cities, because they think highly of the development potential and vitality here, said Zaslan, investment director of the special economic zone.

"The China-Kazakhstan Horgos Frontier International Cooperation Center is the busiest among the three Horgoses," said transport driver Juura.

Spanning Chinese and Kazakh territory, the center is 5.28 square km in size. With special access linking the two countries, a constant stream of Chinese and Kazakh customers come here to buy Chinese commodities.

"My customers are merchants from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Belarus and many other countries," said Zhang Wei, who sells bed linen at the center's Yiwu International Shopping Mall.

The Horgos city in China has become an important nod opening up to the West. Central Asia freight trains and China-Europe trains have linked up Horgos with the outside world.

once the highway in Kazakhstan linking western China and western Europe is complete, travel time will be reduced from 40 days by sea to 10 days by land.