

《China sees more exports, investment along Belt and Road》

BEIJING — China's exports and investment along the Belt and Road, a China-proposed trade and infrastructure network, increased steadily in the first five months of 2015 as the country strengthened economic ties with the region.

Exports to the Belt and Road nations rose 2 percent year on year to \$244 billion in Jan-May, Ministry of Commerce (MOC) spokesperson Shen Danyang told a press conference on July 7.

That growth outpaced China's overall export increase of 0.8 percent in the same period.

However, a 23.2 percent drop in imports from the Belt and Road nations brought China's total bilateral trade with those countries down 9.5 percent year on year to \$398.4 billion, according to MOC figures.

In Jan-May, Chinese enterprises invested \$4.86 billion in 48 nations and regions along the Belt and Road, up 3.7 percent year on year, Shen told reporters. Major destinations included Singapore, Indonesia, Laos and Russia.

The Belt and Road initiative refers to the Silk Road Economic Belt and the 21st Century Maritime Silk Road and was proposed in 2013 with the goal of reviving ancient trade routes between Asia and Europe. The network passes through more than 60 countries and regions, with a total population of 4.4 billion.

Those areas accounted for more than a quarter of China's total exports and about a fifth of its outbound direct investment in the first five months of 2015, according to the MOC.

During that period, Chinese companies signed contracts worth \$25.1 billion for more than 1,000 projects in the Belt and Road region, a surge of 19.1 percent year on year, Shen said.

He said more than 2.8 million Chinese workers have been working at those regions as of the end of May, accounting for more than a third of the total number of Chinese workers at overseas.