

- **China became the biggest buyer of Russian crude oil**

Since the beginning of this year, Russia has been sending crude oil to China. At the beginning of the year exports doubled compared to the same period of last year. In the first quarter pipeline volume soared by 43%; Russia reduced its exports to Europe, and its decline from January to May was 19%.

Pipeline operator Transneft stated that in the first quarter of the year the quantity of Russian crude oil piped to China soared by 43% to around 750,000 barrels per day. Within the first five months of this year, Russia's crude oil exports to Europe through its major ports in the Baltic and the Black Sea has decreased by 19%.

Russia has been the largest crude oil supplier in China for 13 consecutive months. According to data from the General Administration of Customs of China, Russia delivered 5.79 million tons of crude oil to China in March, equivalent to an average of 1.36 million barrels per day, which is significantly higher than the Saudi equivalent (1.19 million barrels per day). In the first quarter, Russia's crude oil exports to China increased by 22% year-on-year, with an average of 1.34 million barrels per day.

<http://www.jiemian.com/article/2107321.html>

- **The central bank clarified the overseas investment management of RMB qualified investors**

The central bank issued a circular on further clarifying matters related to the management of offshore securities investment by RMB qualified domestic institutional investors. Renminbi qualified investors may not remit foreign exchange abroad for foreign exchange purchases when they conduct overseas investment. According to factors such as cross-border capital flow, offshore RMB market liquidity, and RMB product development, macro-prudential management of overseas investment by RMB qualified investors was implemented.

<http://money.163.com/18/0503/09/DGSE0EHO002581PP.html>

- **The RMB exchange rate against the U.S. dollar was lowered by 62 basis points to 6.3732 yuan**

According to data from the China Foreign Exchange Trading Center, on May 3, the central parity of RMB against the US dollar was reported at 6.3732 yuan, down 62 basis points.

The People's Bank of China authorized the China Foreign Exchange Trading Center to announce that the middle exchange rate of the RMB on the interbank foreign exchange market on May 3, 2018 was: US\$1 to RMB6.3732, EUR1 to RMB7.6149, and JPY100 to RMB5.8025 and GBP1 to RMB 8.6474.

<http://news.cctv.com/2018/05/03/ARTIjp59Evh3BUixDsgeCXRI180503.shtml>

- **China's Belt and Road Initiative to continue gaining traction in ASEAN countries**

China's trade with countries along the route of the Belt and Road Initiative has grown significantly over the years, especially with the 10 ASEAN member countries, and the trend will continue to gain traction, chief economist of a regional economic surveillance unit said on Thursday.

Hoe Ee Khor, chief economist of the ASEAN+3 Macroeconomic Research Office (AMRO), said in an interview with selected reporters that China's Belt and Road Initiative can fill the massive infrastructure gap in the region.

The ASEAN+3 comprises the 10 Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN) member states, and China, Japan and South Korea. The 10 member states of ASEAN are Indonesia, Thailand, Vietnam, Singapore, Malaysia, the Philippines, Myanmar, Cambodia, Laos and Brunei.

Khor said since the Asian financial crisis, the region has been underinvesting in infrastructure. "They have been investing 2.5 percent when they should be doing 6 percent - so there's a gap of 3.5 percentage point," he said, citing the poor infrastructure development in countries like the Philippines and Indonesia.

According to the ASEAN+3 Regional Economic Outlook (AREO) 2018, AMRO's annual regional surveillance publication released the same day, the top 10 trade partners with China long the route of Belt and Road Initiative are Vietnam, Malaysia, Thailand, Singapore, India, Russia, Indonesia, the Philippines, Saudi Arabia and United Arab Emirates, six of which are in ASEAN+3 region.

Moreover, Khor said the initiative can also help increase connectivity across the region and help support the tourism industry in the region.

He said tourism is a driver of growth in the region, adding that the countries that benefit the most from tourism are countries with good infrastructure like Thailand, South Korea and Japan.

Khor said he sees more projects financed within the framework of the Belt and Road Initiative will be implemented in the coming years, citing the ambitious high-speed railway project in Laos and a similar rail link project in Malaysia.

<http://europe.chinadaily.com.cn/a/201805/03/WS5aead8a9a3105cdcf651bd08.html>

- **China makes greater efforts to better business environment**

China will further improve its business environment by halving the time required to open a business and start construction projects, the State Council decided at an executive meeting chaired by Premier Li Keqiang on Wednesday.

According to a decision at the meeting, the amount of time required to start a business in municipalities, sub-provincial cities and provincial capitals will be reduced from an average of over 20 days to 8.5 workdays by the end of the year.

This measure will also be introduced in five leading cities of Dalian, Qingdao, Ningbo, Xiamen and Shenzhen, with other areas also required to see positive progress, to be followed by national implementation in the first half of next year.

Measures to halve the time required for government approval of construction projects from the current average level of more than 200 workdays to 120 workdays will be piloted in 15 cities, including Beijing, Shanghai and Tianjin, and in Zhejiang Province, this year whereby all government review items and approval processes concerning home building and urban infrastructure will be simplified, optimized and standardized. This pilot program will be rolled out nationwide in the first half of next year.

http://www.xinhuanet.com/english/2018-05/02/c_137151807.htm