

# Long-haul trucks rely on famous 'Perestroika'

Minsk Automobile Works strengthens its foothold on world market, considerably expanding range

By Vladimir Bibikov

In August 2011, Minsk Automobile Works is launching its latest truck, which is destined to be a sensation. The three axis trailer for long-haul will be able to carry cargoes of up to 60 tonnes (rather than the traditional 40 tonnes) and will have its engine placed in front of the cabin, American-style. According to Alexander Borovsky, MAZ Director General, this arrangement protects drivers in case of accident, while enabling more comfortable conditions inside the cabin, including a sleeping space. The 'auto-liner' is primarily designed for transcontinental highways such as international transport cor-



'Perestroika-2000' concept car

ridors Berlin-Minsk-Moscow and further on till the Pacific Ocean and Beijing and Scandinavia-Russia-Belarus-Ukraine-Black Sea.

Taking into account the modern condition of these highways, the new trucks allow more efficient use of Belarus' unique transit



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

Technical level of MAZ manufacture ever growing

potential. In due time, MAZ plans to produce articulated lorries, which are even more efficient for long-haul journeys. These will be the descendants of the famous MAZ 'Perestroika-2000', which was awarded a Grand Prix at the International Car Salon in Paris.

Why is MAZ's leadership so confident in announcing the deadline for its original innovation? Just a year ago, the plant found itself in a difficult situation, as did similar enterprises all over the globe.

Today, sales have returned to pre-crisis levels, exceeding 22,000 units in 2010: trucks, buses and trailers. There is even a waiting list for some models. This year alone, the company has produced 16 new models, with more scheduled for the near future. Its technical level is being ever improved upon, with \$600m being

spent on MAZ reconstruction in coming years, doubling its output of trucks.

"If we don't move with the times, we'll fail to compete with the leading market players," asserts Mr. Borovsky. "We have a clear vision of the direction in which MAZ should advance; we plan to create a vehicle which matches our best European rivals."

The enterprise's five year renovation programme envisages a considerable rise in export sales. At present, MAZ's share of the Russian market (its largest buyer) is stagnating; however, deliveries to other countries look set to rise 6-7-fold. The establishment of assembly lines in other countries is another aid to the expansion of MAZ's presence on traditional and new markets. Assembly factories are already operating in Latvia, Lithuania, Russia, Iran, Vietnam

and Egypt, with Hungary being next in line.

Additionally, MAZ is constantly expanding its range, building on the popularity it enjoys in many countries. It's known for its comfortable and reliable medium and large-class buses, and inter-city and tourist buses. It recently demonstrated two mini-bus models, designed for commercial development in the years to come.

An example of MAZ's first vehicle — a five tonne heavy-duty dump truck — has been mounted on a pedestal close to the factory's administration building, with the 'Perestroika-2000' concept car solemnly unveiled nearby. The past and the future of the country's largest enterprise are conjoined here. The enterprise will now name its vehicles not just with numbers, but with immediately recognisable names.

# Domestically produced medicines go from strength to strength

Vitebsk enterprise could become flagship of pharmaceutical branch

By Yelena Burmistrova

I walk down the immaculately clean corridor and everything is fascinating to me: the next doors won't open until the previous set is closed and access to the packaging room requires walking through a bath and the putting on of surgical boots. Each door bears an indicator of its degree of cleanliness, while workers from different subdivisions never intermix. Even lunch time is well planned, with staff able to make use of a microwave oven, kettle and refrigerator in their comfortable, yet practical, lunchroom. The environment doesn't encourage long breaks, since time is of the essence.

"We initially begin producing the non-steroid anti-inflammatory drug — 'Oximal,'" explains the Director of BelVitinipharm, Oleg Merkushev. "Our new filling and packaging workshop (packing 50 varieties of 24 medicines) is the first stage in our innovative project to create new facilities. The next stage envisages the mastering of full-cycle drug production. We'll manufacture a variety of medicine

forms: tablets, powders, tinctures, suppositories, ointments, drops and injectable solutions."

The company plans to achieve full capacity by mid-2012, investing about 40m euros into reconstructing another block. It is focusing on import-substitution, keen to produce 300 new products.

By early 2011, BelVitinipharm will have been reincorporated as a joint stock company, partnered by the Jordanians. The pharmaceutical market is a complicated segment, with all developments and recipes patented — protected against attempts at duplication. It takes 3-5 years to create generic preparations but up to 10 years to design an original drug: the expense of such long term investment is too great for a new facility.

A large Jordanian pharmaceutical company is providing investments to aid further construction at the plant, ensuring jobs as soon as the first stage comes into operation. Interestingly, 'Oximal' — which is now being packaged — has been delivered from Jordan. The firm is ready to share its technology in producing 150 drugs, which are now in



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BelVitinipharm products to enjoy demand

demand at home and abroad.

"The opening of a new facility is of state importance," notes Mr. Merkushev. "Besides providing the Belarusian market with good quality, well-priced medications, we can supply drugs abroad, with the help of our foreign partners: to the Middle East and Northern Africa. Our Jordanian colleagues already sell their manufactures there."

At present, the company employs 55 workers but, in the near future, is to provide jobs for over 600 people. Vitebsk lacks specialists, so additional training is being undertaken to ensure personnel are suitably qualified. Everyone, including the director and general engineer, have been trained at leading European companies, receiving internationally recognised certificates.

# Electric train to facilitate movement

First city electric train to arrive from Switzerland in January

This year, Belarusian Railways has concluded a contract with Swiss Stadler for the purchase of ten electric trains. Six are to operate in Minsk, while four others are to connect regional cities, with three city electric trains coming into operation in 2011.

The first electric train is already being assembled at a plant in Swiss Bussnang. "It is due to arrive in Belarus in January," explains the Head of Belarusian Railways, Anatoly Sivak. Pre-operation tests are to be conducted at the engine depot in Minsk, with Swiss specialists participating. The train will be delivered from Switzerland on six cargo trucks.

Another two electric trains, destined for Belarus' city routes, are now being assembled in Switzerland, due to arrive in February and March. "We plan to test run these trains in August," adds Mr. Sivak. Their major advantage is that they can service routes with heavy passenger flow; they are sure to enjoy demand.