

Talk about two regions' future is demonstrative to the utmost

Alexander Lukashenko visits Mogilev Region's Gorky District and Vitebsk Region's Orsha District as part of working trip across country's regions

By Vladimir Vasiliev

The development of the locality was under focus, with the President convinced that the Gorky District boasts huge potential as yet under-utilised. He has asked Gorky District Executive Committee Chairman Igor Makar to change the look of the district and town of Gorky in just one year, with funds allocated for this purpose. In 2012, Gorky is to host the Republican *Dazhynki* Festival. As Mr. Lukashenko stressed, the aim of his recent visit was to start preparations for this important event.

Discussions on Gorky's future were hosted by the Gorky combine-farm. Mr. Makar is an experienced agrarian, having headed a collective farm and having chaired the Nesvizh District Executive Committee [a district known as being among the most successful in the country for agricultural development]. At the end of 2010, Mr. Makar was appointed Head of the Gorky District by the President — a job he has embraced wholeheartedly. Although his ideas and methods do not find universal favour in the Mogilev Region, Mr. Lukashenko fully backs Mr. Makar, awaiting concrete results from him — primarily, in the agricultural sphere.

The state is to allocate significant funds to the district: out of Br1.4 trillion for *Dazhynki*, Br700bn is reserved for local lands and farms. The President considers that the Gorky District



Alexander Lukashenko visits Gorky's variety testing station

should rival the exemplary Shklov District. At present, it is state subsidised but Mr. Makar hopes to make it self-financing and one of the most successful in the country in five years' time.

Mr. Makar has many concrete ideas on how the Gorky District's agricultural branch should be developed, including sugar beet growing. According to the Chairman, the district could become a raw material zone for a sugar plant planned for construc-

tion in Chausy. The Chairman of the Mogilev Regional Executive Committee, Piotr Rudnik, explained the project to the President, with support from the Agriculture and Food Minister, Mikhail Rusy. The plant is estimated to cost 360m Euros, with Polish investors ready to inject 300m. Mr. Lukashenko believes that the project is promising and that talks with Polish partners should continue.

Reform of the Gorky State Agricultural Academy,

of which Mr. Lukashenko is a graduate, was also high on the agenda. This educational establishment boasts rich, old traditions but the President is concerned for its future, believing that its resources and teaching staff need to be stronger. He asserts, "We need to raise our staff training to that of our modernised agricultural branch, at the least." As the President stresses, the Academy 'is in the tail of events' at present, needing complete reform by

the time of *Dazhynki-2012*. Major funds will be allocated for this purpose, with a new student hostel and a library to be built by next year. Other significant projects have also been outlined.

In the Gorky District, the President was interested in the pace of harvesting; already, over half of the harvest has been collected. Mr. Lukashenko noted that quality is important as well as speed, as no grain should remain on fields.

The President has also visited the Orsha District in the Vitebsk Region, with talks focusing on agriculture and the field of energy. Mr. Lukashenko explained that the goal of his visit was 'to give the Orsha District a boost to reach the level of the advanced districts'. He is convinced that, if local people work more intensively, they can reach a new high level.

Speaking about agriculture, the President outlined that investments into villages and planned projects would continue, despite economic difficulties. He stressed that costs must be cut in food production — overseen by those who grow raw materials and those who process.

The energy branch is tasked with continuing modernisation and development. In the Orsha District, the President visited the Belarusian State District Power Plant (BelGRES) — the oldest electricity generation station in the country. At present, it is undergoing serious modernisation, shifting from foreign energy sources to local peat and woodchips, which now account for 60 percent. Next year, the second boiler will be launched, raising this figure to 100 percent.

On gaining acquaintance with the plans of energy workers, the President ordered that the share of local fuels should not only be raised but Belarus-made components and materials should be used in boiler assembly to the utmost. Moreover, Mr. Lukashenko has asked villagers to target full import substitution.

Trade figures vividly indicate cooperative ties between countries

By Anton Ivanov

India is interested in acquiring a stake in Belaruskali, notes the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Manoj Kumar Bharti

"As we've already made clear through governmental channels, India is interested in buying Belaruskali shares if they are offered for sale. We are looking forward to a decision by the Belarusian Government and Belaruskali," explains the Ambassador, adding that India has already concluded a lucrative contract to purchase potash fertilisers from Belarus.

When asked by journalists about promising areas of Bela-

rusian-Indian co-operation, the Ambassador notes that the pharmaceutical industry interests India. "This is one of the areas in which Belarus and India are expected to co-operate closely," he tells us, adding that Belarus and India could advance their cultural collaboration. "In particular, I'm looking for opportunities for Indian filmmakers to come to Belarus and make films," he stresses.

India is Belarus' traditional trading partner in Asia. In 2007, a strategic task was set at a high level meeting to increase our bilateral trade to \$500m by 2010. The target was achieved in 2009. From January-May 2011, Belarusian exports to India stood at \$23m and, excluding potash fer-

tilisers, made 83 percent against the same period of 2010. Our foreign trade balance is presently negative but should become positive by the end of the third quarter.

Belarus' main exports to India include potash fertilisers; from January-May, they brought in over \$9m (almost 40 percent of Belarus' total exports to India). Our country imports drugs and pharmaceutical products, tobacco, tea, fish products, spices and nuts from India. Meanwhile, the Belarusian Automobile Works, Minsk Tractor Works, Amkodor Association, Belshina, Integral and other enterprises are promoting their goods on the Indian market.

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