

Wealthy autumn harvest holiday

15th *Dazhynki* Festival-Fair of Rural Workers organised this year in Molodechno, Minsk Region

By Victor Andreev

Dazhynki-2011 kicked off with a traditional large scale parade, with folklore teams performing scenes from traditional customs. A column of young families marched with prams re-equipped as mini combine harvesters and tractors while young bikers and rockers marched alongside musicians playing wind

instruments.

In modern Belarus, 'dazhynki' (known as harvesting time) is still celebrated in rural areas as it has always been. However, the national holiday has also become an occasion for general entertainment: for rural workers and urbanites alike.

A large screen was installed in Molodechno's main square, creating a TV bridge



Dazhynki-2011 participants parade through Molodechno streets

for each region to show its farming achievements. Veliki Gostinets and Vilenskaya streets were closed to traffic, allowing trade stalls to operate and open air parties to be enjoyed, with music and dancing. As ever, quite a few tourists arrived to join the festivities.

As is traditional, President Alexander Lukashenko attended, presenting awards to those rural workers who have won the 2011 national harvesting competition. Meanwhile, Deputy Prime Minister Valery Ivanov praised Molodechno's efforts at making this year's

Dazhynki so memorable; he pronounced it to be the best to date. "The Ice Palace, the Summer Amphitheatre and the Central Square were built from scratch or rapidly reconstructed. Moreover, the holiday has brought change not only to Molodechno but to neighbouring districts and

the main roads in the region, which are now more beautiful."

The country is now preparing for the next farming year. *Dazhynki* will be hosted by Gorki (in the Mogilev Region's Gorki District) in the second half of September 2012.



Confucius Institute at Belarusian State University

Positive example in linguistics

By Dmitry Baburin

Belarusian-Chinese relations are bright example of how two states can interact in industry, economy and education

A high level Chinese delegation recently launched the second Confucius Institute in Belarus. The new site is being hosted by Minsk's State Linguistic University (MSLU) while the first opened back in 2007 at the BSU. It is very rare for a city of under two million residents to boast two such institutes of Chinese studies.

The Chinese language is currently studied by around 40 million people worldwide, and is growing in popularity. It may soon become bad manners not to be able to speak to those from China in their native language. Of course, being able to speak fluently brings mutual benefits, as Belarus' Education Minister, Sergei Maskevich, stresses. He is confident that being proficient in Chinese language and culture should encourage relations in all spheres.

"Our future relations, trade, communication and collaboration depend on mutual understanding and better knowledge of other nations' culture and traditions. I'm convinced that the Confucius Institute will become a successful humanitarian project. Moreover, Belarusians' interest in studying Chinese language and culture is rising," says Mr. Maskevich.

Chinese students are also showing interest in our state, with 1,989 studying across 25 Belarusian universities last year. Belarusians also go to China to study, though in smaller numbers. Now that two Confucius Institutes are operational in Minsk, there is less need to travel to China to learn the language. Xu Lin, the Secretary General of the Confucius Institutes Headquarters, now supervises 353 similar institutions across 104 countries. She believes that the Institute at the BSU is one of the most positive examples. No doubt, the MSLU has a good example to follow.

Debates on clear topics

By Palina Lakhmanenka

Belarusian capital hosts two day Japan — Eurasian Countries Forum

The forum — held for the second time — was fully devoted to the multi-faceted theme of the peaceful development of relations and international co-operation between Eurasian countries — as is becoming more evident in our mutual desire to

tackle global problems.

The first forum took place in 2002, in Japanese Kyoto, attended by a Belarusian delegation — featuring members and friends of the Belarus-Japan Society. Japan responded by inviting Belarus to organise a similar forum in Minsk. Not long ago, a large delegation from the Japan — Eurasian Countries Society arrived in the Belarusian capital, with scientists, public figures and specialists in the field of nuclear stud-

ies among the two dozen guests.

The forum's three sections were devoted to themes of interest to both sides: the provision of a peaceful future, ecological security and overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl and Fukushima-2 disasters. The Japanese guests thanked Belarus for its moral and material support during the recent earthquakes and tsunamis, which brought so much destruction and loss of life.

Real opportunity to find promising business partners

By Lidia Novikova

Grodno Region becomes centre of international collaboration in late September

Ministries and departments, as well as diplomatic missions and business circles from Belarus, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Ukraine and elsewhere have sent representatives to three important events: the 13th International *Euroregion Neman-2011* Multi-Trade Exhibition-Fair, the 2nd Regional Belarusian-Latvian Business Forum and the 3rd International *Grodno — a Town at the Borders* Investment Forum.

"The economy of the Grodno Region is demonstrating stable development," noted Semen Shapiro, Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, at the opening ceremony. "This is proven by growing foreign trade turnover, which exceeded \$2bn this year; against the same period of last year, it has risen by almost a third. Our region trades with almost 100 states. Russia, Po-



Talks among interested parties at Grodno forum

land and Lithuania are our key trade partners while the Grodno Region is a large market in itself, boasting one of the highest retail turnovers per capita countrywide."

The events attracted over a hundred participants, keen to develop mutually beneficial co-operation and to find new markets. Investment and business forums were organised for those from across Belarus and neighbouring states, allowing them to present their businesses, attend

'matchmaking' meetings and take part in open discussions.

After touring the trade fair, businessmen were able to discuss proposals in detail at the business 'matchmaking' session, entitled *Promising Areas of Investment and Innovative Co-operation between the Grodno Region and Regions of Neighbouring States*. The Belarusian-Latvian Business Forum and *Grodno — a Town at the Borders* Investment Forum also proved a success.