

Dialogue in interests of new mutually beneficial relations

Visit to Belarus by Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Dipu Moni should intensify bilateral collaboration

By Vladimir Yakovlev

The People's Republic of Bangladesh is a large state, almost equal to the Customs Union of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan in population: over 160m people. Any country, including Belarus, would value its support within the UN and other international organisations.

Both our countries speak against the establishment of a unipolar world order, while protecting the interests of small and young states. Meanwhile, we also share trade interests: Bangladesh is a significant consumer of Belarusian potash fertilisers, with Minsk Tractor Works also finding a niche on the market.

Of course, more opportunities exist, so the major goal of Ms. Dipu Moni's visit has been to outline these.

"We were expecting this visit," noted the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, warmly welcoming his guest. "We hope that it will lay foundations for strategic partnership. Naturally, your gigantic country is of great interest to us. Bangladesh will primarily find a direct path to Europe through Belarus. Moreover, we share similar



President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko meets Bangladeshi Foreign Minister Dipu Moni

approaches on many issues within international organisations and are always ready to return support from Bangladesh."

Ms. Moni thanked him for the opportunity to visit our state and expressed readiness

to discuss a whole range of issues. Importantly, her words had substance, as proven by her tours of several Belarusian enterprises whose produce and technologies could be of interest to Bangladesh. She met the heads of a number of

ministries and Belarus' Prime Minister, Mikhail Myasnikov. Of course, our country is keen to expand its sales to the strategically important Asian market — especially of mineral fertilisers. Last year, our export revenue from fertilisers

reached \$131m; this year, no supplies have yet been sold, testifying to the necessity to bring the supplies of potassium into order, which is beneficial to the purchasing country, desperately needing to increase crop yields on its

fields, and to Belarus.

Belarus is not looking beyond Bangladesh only as a purely sales market, since we can also share our advanced technologies, aiding industrialisation of this Asian country. Mr. Myasnikov has offered to construct several plants in Bangladesh, manufacturing agricultural machinery. In its turn, Belarus is ready to build a factory here to produce medicines.

Dialogue will continue later this year, when Mr. Myasnikov visits Bangladesh. An agreement has been reached but a great deal of preliminary work is needed: the removal of legislative barriers; signing bilateral agreements on the promotion and mutual protection of investments and the avoidance of double taxation. Military-technical collaboration also seems promising.

Significantly, on greeting Ms. Moni, Mr. Lukashenko promised to put aside time to discuss in detail how best to expand trade turnover, with specific goods highlighted. He extended an invitation to the President of Bangladesh to visit our country. "This would benefit our relations," he underlined.

Worthy partnership on equal terms

In Minsk, Belarusian President Alexander Lukashenko meets Lu Yongxiang, Vice Chairman of the Standing Committee of the National People's Congress of China

By Vasily Tikhomirov

"We've achieved an unprecedented level of mutual trust and support in our bilateral relations. We're grateful to China for its readiness to lend a friendly shoulder at any time. In turn, we consistently support China in especially sensitive spheres. We're proud that Great China has been our strategic partner and ally for so many years," Mr. Lukashenko underlined.

Both sides note that interesting dialogue is happening across all areas and is actively developing in the political sphere — at all levels, including the very top. Business contacts are yielding fruit, as proven by the \$3bn+ of trade turnover last year. Meanwhile, this is far from the limit.

The Belarusian leader noted that, in recent times, Belarus and China have been implementing investment projects worth many millions. He explained, "Major contracts have been signed in power engineering, construction, transport,



Participants of Chinese delegation

communications and industry. We're keen to further expand political, trade and investment collaboration, as well as to promote efficient interaction in the scientific, military-technical and humanitarian spheres. Our two states should concentrate in future on high-tech and science-intensive projects, promoting the modernisation of our economies and the creation of high-tech manufacturing"

The Belarusian President especially noted the importance of signing an agreement to set up the Belarusian-Chinese Commission on High-

Tech Co-operation. During the meeting, the guest also referred to the value of this document several times, noting the promising prospects connected with it.

Mr. Yongxiang emphasised that our two countries rely on their leadership to develop interaction. He asserted, "The personal attention of our leaders has allowed bilateral relations to develop along a stable and sustainable course, with mutual political trust intensifying and trade-economic liaisons activating. Remarkably, mutual turnover has risen 20-

fold — compared to the first years of our diplomatic relations: a rare case."

A whole range of topics regarding bilateral co-operation were discussed in detail, with results announced and the next orienting points specified. Political interaction occupies a special place.

According to the guest, China's position is to further reinforce political trust and expand mutual support while intensifying the existing political basis for bilateral relationships. He noted, "China highly appreciates and is very grateful

to Belarus for its decisive support — which tackles Chinese key interests. From our side, we completely understand and respect the path of development chosen by the Belarusian people. It proceeds from the national characteristics of the country and your foreign and domestic policy. We support the efforts of your state to protect your sovereignty and independence, as well as to develop your national economy, in defiance of external interference."

Meanwhile, the Belarusian President added, "I absolutely agree with you. Today's international situation is difficult and uncertain to a large degree. However, we should strengthen our co-operation and friendship. You should know that we won't step aside one jot from our agreed directions. We'll be firmly following the course of our agreements."

Mr. Lukashenko expressed confidence that the visit by the Chinese delegation to Belarus will become another step in strengthening bilateral collaboration.

Fans are expected

By Andrey Sinyavsky

While football fans eagerly await the European Championship, kicking off in June in Ukraine and Poland, customs officials await increased passenger traffic via buses, trains and personal cars

Fans will be crossing Belarus, heading for the tournament, so officials are keen to simplify procedures as much as possible.

The Belarusian-Polish Mixed Commission on International Automobile Communication recently met in Brest, making a number of important decisions. During the European Championship, Belarusian Railways is ready to ensure transportation of fans by train: regular timetabled and with additional services. The Belarusian Railways is ready to ensure the transportation of around 2,000 fans on the days when the national team of Russia is playing. According to forecasts, 50,000 people will travel by road from Russia and Belarus to Poland. Belarus has promised that it can cope with the influx and is ready to send 600 buses of fans across the border daily.