

# High status of friendly meeting

Nobel Prize Laureate in Physics, Zhores Alferov, is familiar with Minsk, having studied at school #42 after the war. He received a ‘physics vaccination’ lasting his whole life, and still has many friends in the Belarusian capital. Having reached undreamed-of scientific heights, while becoming a major Russian politician, Mr. Alferov continues to view Belarus as his native country. He proudly calls himself its ‘plenipotentiary envoy’ in the world.

By Denis Krymov

Mr. Alferov met the Belarusian President as an old friend, a smile immediately lighting his face. The President didn’t conceal his joy either, saying, “I’ve been keeping a close eye on you, as well as on your speeches and announcements. I’m always grateful to you for your position. Even if we make a false step somewhere or don’t behave in the way we should, you always rush to protect Belarus. This is your keynote, for which I’m very grateful.”

Mr. Alferov responded briefly that it’s natural and can’t be otherwise. Only those who judge by actions, rather than by words, and who respect each other sincerely can

speak in this manner.

Academician Alferov has many times proven that his respect for Belarus is more than romantic nostalgia; he is always ready to lend his authority and, where necessary, his shoulder.

As Co-Chairman of the Skolkovo Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Council, which plays a significant role in the development of high-tech industry in contemporary Russia, Mr. Alferov wished to discuss how best to promote the Foundation’s five areas of work: power engineering and energy-saving; information technologies; space technologies; biomedical technologies; and nuclear technologies. The Nobel Prize winner noted that he is determined to see



Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Alferov discuss prospects for co-operation between Belarusian and Russian scientific circles

Belarusian scientists involved in this work, especially talented young people. Moreover, Mr. Alferov was pleased to inform the President that Belarusians have been involved in all five areas, with definite success (although their degree of participation needs to be expanded).

The Skolkovo Foundation’s Scientific Advisory Council, which has already gained a reputation as a competent international venue for scientific collaboration, unites prominent scientists from

Russia, the USA, France and Germany. According to Mr. Alferov, he is promoting an offsite session of the Foundation’s Council, being held in Minsk on September 20th-21st. “In March, we held a session in Berlin; Novosibirsk’s Akademgorodok hosted the meeting in May. Minsk will become a city where authoritative scientists will be able to hold their session; undoubtedly, it will have wide resonance.”

Mr. Alferov doesn’t conceal his reasoning. “When I suggested hold-

ing an offsite session in Minsk, I thought about the international press which, in my view, gives a distorted view of Belarus today. I’d like outstanding foreign scientists to see with their own eyes that Belarus boasts good science, with new technologies developing, including the most advanced. I’d like them to see that Minsk is among the beautiful, cosy and comfortable cities in Europe. Moreover, it’s very important that Belarus becomes an active participant of the process

of creating promising new international companies,” he emphasises.

The President of Belarus supports Mr. Alferov’s ideas and has promised to assist in organising the Minsk session of the Scientific Advisory Council of the Skolkovo Foundation — to be hosted by the National Library. According to the Presidential Press Service, the meeting also tackled how best to develop high-technology and science in the academic institutions and universities of Belarus.

## Discussion to determine co-operation prospects

By Ivan Antonov

Vladimir Makei, the Head of the Presidential Administration, meets the Vice President for Parliamentary Affairs of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Lotfollah Forouzandeh Dehkordi

According to BelTA, both sides noted the traditional friendly ties between Belarus and Iran, while discussing current bilateral relations and prospects, as well as the interaction of our two states within the international arena. Lotfollah Forouzandeh Dehkordi, as a special envoy of the Iranian President, passed an invitation from Mahmoud Ahmadinejad to President Lukashenko, to take part in the Non-Aligned Movement Summit, to be hosted by Tehran in late August.

## Business to definitely revive small towns

Economic focus at House of Representatives



Plenary meeting at the House of Representatives

By Vladimir Khloponin

The draft regulation by the House of Representatives tackles the Presidential Decree to stimulate entrepreneurial activity in small and medium-sized towns. It aroused a positive response from the deputies, with the Chairman of the Standing Committee for Industry, Fuel and Energy, Transport, Communications and Entrepreneurship, Sergey Semashko, emphasising, “This is a long-awaited, progressive and im-

portant document which will inspire the development of rural areas and small towns. It offers unprecedented privileges to entrepreneurs, attracting them to small settlements and offering employment to local residents, while enhancing the welfare of the regions.”

The deputies discussed documents connected with the functioning of the Customs Union. In particular, they ratified a Protocol to Introduce Amendments and Additions to the Agreement on the Move-

ment of Goods for Personal Use by Individuals Across the Customs Union Border. This is good news for ordinary citizens, since goods with a total value of no more than 10,000 Euros can now be brought into the country by plane without paying customs duties. Previously, a restriction of 1,500 Euros operated. Now, this limit remains only for road transportation.

Alexander Shpilevsky, the Chairman of the State Customs Committee, warns that customs services in Belarus will be monitoring the import of such goods as household appliances, ensuring that commercial volumes are not brought over the border under the guise of being for personal use. Someone importing the fifth TV set in one month would fall under suspicion and be liable to pay customs duty.

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