

Strategic partners define prospect

Belarus seeks closer trade-economic collaboration with Armenia and further development of relations within the CSTO

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has told the Secretary of the National Security Council of Armenia, Arthur Baghdasaryan, that Belarus and Armenia should endeavour to intensify trade and economic ties. He expressed his regret that, last year, Belarusian-Armenian trade declined, but noted that, at one point, Belarus and Armenia had no bilateral trade at all. Naturally, the potential for developing our relations is huge.

On the eve of Mr. Baghdasaryan's visit to Minsk, Armenia proposed the intensification of relations, expressing its readiness to buy a range of Belarusian goods -- including agricultural machinery and consumer products. Every opportunity available for this; in particular, as a Belarusian Trading House operates in Armenia.

Mr. Lukashenko has said that he will order the Government to intensify co-operation with Armenia. Belarus is ready to find ways to supply its commodities to Armenia, including the establishment of joint ventures. At the initial stage, assembly of some machinery and equipment is possible; their production in Armenia could then follow.

The Head of State names collaboration within the CSTO as the second major area of co-operation with Armenia. "We have no closed topics in this sphere and will continue co-operating as we always have done. Please feel free to send your specialists to Belarus. We're ready to discuss any issue," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko thanked Armenia for co-ordinating its position with Belarus regarding international co-operation. In turn, Mr. Baghdasaryan emphasised that Belarus is Armenia's ally and that his country plans to further develop strategic partnership.

Profitable routes for 'black gold'

Belarus to continue pumping Azerbaijani oil through Odessa-Brody pipeline

In 2012, the country has no plans to stop supplying Azerbaijani oil through pipelines crossing Ukraine — despite improved conditions for Russian supplies, explains the General Director of BNK-Ukraine JSC, Nikolai Vasilevich. He told BelTA, "The pumping of Azerbaijani oil (through the Odessa-Brody pipeline) will continue, as will delivery of Venezuelan oil by sea (via the Estonian port of Muuga) — irrespective of the pumping of Russian oil."

According to Mr. Vasilevich, from January-November 2011, Belarus transported around 980,000 tonnes of 'Azeri Light' oil across Ukraine — supplied under swap-contracts signed between Belarus, Azerbaijan and Venezuela. "Preliminary estimations indicate that, over a one year period, the total volume would exceed 1m tonnes. As for 2012, our plans are being currently co-ordinated," the official added.

Medical professionals help promote good health

Early Intervention Department staff, from Gomel's Central Children's Polyclinic, among laureates of the 2011 Belarusian Presidential Award 'For Spiritual Revival'

By Lidia Zemechanskaya

The polyclinic's atmosphere of warm-heartedness is radiated by its staff. In one room, a physical rehabilitation doctor, Irina Polyakova, explains to young mother Yulia Bobkova how to look after two month old Ilyusha: how to put him to bed and react to his gestures. Initially, Irina used a doll to demonstrate but later took Ilya in her hands. The baby loved swinging on a large ball and soon fell asleep.

"Having a specialist's advice is very important to me. They explain and demonstrate everything in the smallest detail," smiles the young mother, who travels in from Gomel's suburbs. Looking at the peacefully sleeping boy, Ms. Polyakova admits, "I love my job. It's a true pleasure to deal with babies, helping them become healthy."

Galina Shevko — who heads the department — is treating 15 year Masha, brought by her grandmother, Maria Grigorievna. Masha suffers from an incurable illness, so has been supervised by the polyclinic for many years. "Wonderful specialists work here. They are so kind, which is very important in our case," says the elderly lady. "We understand that it's impossible to cure our girl but qualified support from the department's staff — rendered to both Masha and our family — helps



Nurse Lidia Klotchenko at work

us keep strong. I can call Ms. Shevko at any time as I know that she'll give me her advice irrespective of where she is: in Minsk, Kiev, on a business trip or at studies. I'm happy that this team has been given the Presidential Award. They deserve it."

Needless to say, the local specialists work hard, treating children not only from the Gomel Region but from the neighbouring territories of Russia and Ukraine. Disabled youngsters and low-birth-weight babies (some weighing just 950 grams) are sent to the fully-equipped clinic, served by highly qualified specialists (most studied abroad, learning from foreign experience of treating children's illnesses).

"We don't offer the usual polyclinic approach," explains Ms. Shevko. "Also, we avoid a traditional, clichéd style. To get to the heart of a problem, we often examine patients jointly — sometimes several times in complicated cases."

Doctors' success rate is rising in treating poorly youngsters and, where a cure is impossible, professional advice and kind words of sympathy can help. "We teach parents not simply to accept the situation but to learn how to make the best of it," explains Ms. Shevko. "We know that hope springs eternal. Moreover, miracles do happen. We do everything possible to help these come true."

Enhanced development of capital comes into limelight

President Alexander Lukashenko sets tasks during working meeting with Minsk City Executive Committee Chairman Nikolai Ladutko

Besides building residential houses, kindergartens, schools, shops and public service facilities, sports centres are to be a focus. By the end of 2012, the construction of a sports-recreational complex will be launched in Minsk's Zavodskoy District.

Mr. Ladutko has told the President of progress regarding current investment projects in the capital. From October-December 2011, over ten investment agreements were concluded — to commence in the first half of 2012. Mr. Lukashenko has asked that work in Pobediteley Avenue and at the 'Eastern Lighthouse' residential complex be given priority, in addition to that at the 'Minsk-City' business centre, and around Minsk ring road. The President stresses that the Belarusian capital should enjoy the highest investment attractiveness, as the necessary conditions have already been created at state level. From now on, everything depends on local authorities.



Festive style of capital's Kamennaya Gorka District

Mr. Ladutko notes that, in line with the President's instructions, a concrete plan for the capital's development is available, with city authorities working primarily with domestic businesses but also foreign companies. Mr. Lukashenko is keen to see work of the highest quality and enhanced labour productivity

from Minsk's construction branch, which he believes lags behind that of Western European states. Mr. Ladutko has promised to improve matters this year, enhancing conditions on construction sites, applying the latest technologies and ensuring greater responsibility and labour discipline.

Photos inspire kind recollections

By Galina Grishkovtsova

Photography exhibition by former Ambassador of the People's Republic of China to Minsk, Yu Zhenqi, opens in China: *Beloved Belarus and Other Countries in Focus*

The show is devoted to the 20th anniversary of diplomatic relations between China and Belarus and has been organised at the initiative of the Tianjin People's Association for Friendship with Foreign Countries and the China Foundation for International Studies (where Mr. Yu Zhenqi acts as Vice President).

The exhibition features over 80 photos showing beautiful scenery and life in Belarus and other CIS countries.

The Deputy Foreign Minister of the People's Republic of China, Cheng Guoping, sent a letter of congratulation to the launch of the exhibition, which was attended by the President of the China Foundation for International Studies, Zhang Deguang. The latter praised the event, joined by around 200 guest diplomats and members of the general public.