



Meira Kumar

By Vasily Kharitonov

“India is a huge nation: one of the richest and a leading country worldwide. Relations with India are very important to us,” asserted the Head of State. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that our bilateral relations boast a long history and, in recent years, have significantly intensified. Diplomatic relations between Be-

Solid foundation from which to serve new aspirations and projects

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko meets Indian Parliamentary Speaker Meira Kumar, noting the importance of good relations

larus and India recently celebrated their 20th anniversary; of course, interaction was also prominent in Soviet times, so we enjoy long-term friendship. Nevertheless, since independence, many spheres have had to be reignited from scratch. We have achieved trust over a short period of time, greatly assisted by the political will of the leadership of Belarus and India. Moreover, foundations have been laid for future work, as seen from the meeting between the President and Ms. Kumar.

Speaking of trade-economic collaboration, the President noted that the current turnover of \$0.5bn can certainly be improved upon. “I

believe that we need to raise our goals, shifting from simple trade turnover to co-operative ties, setting up joint enterprises here and in India, and strengthening our trade-economic relations,” said the Belarusian leader.

As far as policy and diplomacy are concerned, Mr. Lukashenko sees no obstacles. He thanked India for its stance within international organisations, noting, “We highly appreciate this. We’ll always support India, since it has never failed to assist Belarus.” Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that Belarus and India have a good basis for collaboration and that he views Ms. Kumar’s visit as evidence of readiness to further

develop our bilateral relationship.

Ms. Kumar passed on the best wishes of the Indian President, the Prime Minister and Indian people, adding, “Belarus and India have traditionally maintained warm-hearted, friendly relations.” In recent years, she believes our states have managed to improve bilateral trade-economic co-operation.

A treaty on a free zone trade between the Customs Union and India was on the agenda between Belarus’ Prime Minister, Mikhail Myasnikovich, and Ms. Kumar. He explained, “We’re building very good, equal and trustworthy relations with your country and we value these greatly. We’re glad to see your successes in

the social, economic and cultural development of your country and are aware of the great role played by Parliament and, particularly, the House of the People.” He hopes that the decisions adopted in the Indian Parliament reinforce Belarusian-Indian relations.

Moreover, Mr. Myasnikovich expressed confidence that Belarus and India are shifting from trade collaboration to investment interaction, as several joint innovative projects have already appeared. Our two states boast significant potential in this area and the solution of several issues will enable our economic partnership to become even more efficient.

Enduring values always remaining in fashion

8th International Media Forum has brought together in Minsk journalists from 15 countries of the world to attract attention to historical-cultural heritage issue

By Lyudmila Ivanova

Not so long ago, the word ‘media’ seemed exotic; our era of information explosion has opened the doors more widely but guidelines and principles remain important. The Belarusian International Media Forum was recently held for the eighth time: *Partnership for the Future: How Historical and Cultural Heritage Influences Unity*. Hosted by the National Library, the famous ‘diamond’ of glass and metal, the event was set against a backdrop of the best editions, as director Roman Motulsky emphasised.

This year, representatives of 15 countries took part in the forum, welcomed by Information Minister Oleg Proleskovsky. He commented, “In an era of rapid development of information and communication technologies, cultural dialogue is the surest path towards each other. The guiding principles of journalism remain responsibility, humanity and civic duty. The forum aims to focus journalists’ attention on our historical, spiritual and humanitarian heritage. It’s important that representatives of various countries meet to talk so we’re creating the conditions for this.”

Deputy Foreign Minister Yelena Kupchina stressed that the forum’s topic is particularly relevant in the light of Belarus’ presidency of the CIS, the motto of which is ‘integration for human benefit’. The Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Nikolai Ladutko, enthusiastically told guests about Minsk and the new library building; the floor in the conference room, being transparent, gives a sensation of flying.

Valery Kazakov, Chairman of



During the opening of the Media Forum at Mir Castle, guests see works by Belarusian folk masters

the Federal National Cultural Autonomy of Belarusians of Russia, noted, “I’ve participated in this media forum previously; it’s one of the most significant events of the year for me. As a former journalist, I’m interested in everything going on here. Our media should be connecting people and ideas.”

A comprehensive report of the plenary meeting was prepared by the Director of the Caucasus Media Institute, Alexander Iskandaryan, who asserted, “Media in the post-Soviet territory is divided, with those in distant lands lacking the information being shared between neighbouring countries. The use of our shared Russian language (retained by those from former Soviet times) is crucial.”

The Director of Zvezda Publishing House, Ales Karlyukevich, is convinced that the Belarusian media have much to be proud of in the field of cultural relations. He explained, “At the forum, we presented the *Harmony of Hearts* project: a joint effort by the Ministry of Information, the Union of Writers of Belarus and Zvezda Publishing House. It reflects post-Soviet literary trends from the past two decades and has resulted in four books being published — in Belarusian-Russian, Belarusian-Azerbaijani, Belarusian-Kazakhstani and Belarusian-Armenian. We’re now printing a Belarusian-Ukrainian edition. Each includes works by contemporary writers and poets from our countries.” The Minsk forum also

announced the results of the *Art of Books* international CIS contest.

Mir and Nesvizh are unique historical-cultural sites for hosting media events, with Mir having recently welcomed journalists discussing *The Mass Media: Our Historic Mission to Preserve and Develop Historical and Cultural Heritage, Language and National Literature as Factors in the Unity and Sovereignty of Nations*.

A traditional summer school of journalism is being organised for tomorrow’s media experts, through the press club, at Nesvizh. The theme is the new image of cultural journalism: *World Historical and Cultural Heritage Sites in the Context of the State’s Policy of Regional Development*.

Americans to receive Belarusian diplomas

Branch of Department of Information and Computer Systems Design of the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics (BSUIR) has opened at Computer System Institute in USA

“Contemporary development of technologies requires new approaches in education. I think that the opening of the branch of our university is a good start for the export of education services,” notes BSUIR’s Rector Mikhail Batura at the briefing.

The US branch will use the training facilities of the Computer System Institute to provide integrated (full-time + distant) training in mobile systems design. “Educational standards for this speciality have been developed due to prompt actions of the Education Ministry and the BSUIR. It is important that these standards meet the requirements of the both countries. Moreover, we’ve also come up with education curricula, schedules and programmes, as well as tasks and seminars,” continues the Rector.

The first group of students will start their studies on October 1st. An English-language page about the US branch will be available on the website of the Belarusian university. It will be developed by June, so that foreigners will be able to find out the details of the training. According to Mr. Batura, the tuition fee will be about \$6,000. “Graduates will receive state diplomas in two languages — Russian and English,” he adds.

The Rector notes that the BSUIR has been training foreign students since 1990s. English-language groups have been available for foreign students for four years already. “At present, we provide English-language training to about 100 foreign citizens in four specialities,” he asserts.