

It's better for buyers to purchase new vehicles

Belarus finally gets its own people's car

By Vitaly Mishin

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko has visited BelGee CJSC in Borisov, where Belarusian auto-industrial production of passenger cars is spawning. The Head of State started his working trip with visiting a test area, where he was shown a line-up of cars, manufactured by joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprise of passenger automobiles — BelGee.

Mr. Lukashenko decided to personally take new Geely cars for a test drive. The Head of State used a Geely SC7 (sedan) and a Geely LC Cross (compact hatchback) on a tour around the town of Borisov. After that he got behind the wheel of the new crossover Geely EX7 and took it for a spin in a special testing area that resembles off-road conditions as closely as possible. On the whole, the President was satisfied with the performance of the cars. Mr. Lukashenko believes that Geely SC7 is a rather fitting car for rookie drivers and also highly praised the other two models he had tested.

"Small cars are very good for rookie drivers," noted the President. "They aren't as speedy as more 'adult' large cars. This small vehicle will also find its buyers while large automobiles — crossovers — are very good and decent vehicles."

The President also stressed the need to secure high quality of the cars of the Belarusian manufacture. Meanwhile, the Head of State was assured by the manufacturers that they haven't received serious claims from buyers over the time of sales and repeating defects haven't been revealed.

After the test drive the

President instructed the government to come up with a system to encourage Geely car sales on the domestic market.

The issue was also tackled during the Head of State's visit to Borisov-based Avtogidrosilitel Plant OJSC, whose manufacturing premises are used for Geely car assembling. Talking to the company's staff, Mr. Lukashenko pledged that the government would develop a scheme to promote the purchasing power for Belarusian-made cars in-

it does not matter who buys cars," noted the Head of State.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the producer himself should take efforts to secure high quality of the car at the reasonable price while also providing the relevant guarantees and quality maintenance service. At present, Geely's guarantee is three years or 100,000 operational kilometres. According to the President, these are decent conditions but there is definitely a room for improvement. In

car is of good quality. Among other things the quality is secured by the main component parts, i.e. the engine and transmission, being of the Japanese and Australian manufacture.

It is expected that about 50,000 cars will be annually sold in Belarus. Financial support from state will help secure this volume of sales. The President believes that a buyer had better purchase a new car of the Belarusian assembling than bring a second-hand car from abroad. Moreover, the



Crossover Geely EX7 during testing

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Geely cars are assembled at BelGee CJSC near Borisov

side the country. "We will promote the sales of the cars together. The state will create the necessary conditions and help encourage the population to buy these cars," said the President, adding that the support could be also provided in the form of long-term loans. "We will think over how to support the Belarusians who buy cars here. At first the support will aim Belarusians. We will also think about others because

particular, the Head of State assured that the issue of lowering the price for Geely cars would be additionally considered and a special control over the car quality would be set. "You cannot let me down. If we produce a car of poor quality and people start complaining, you will set me up," the President noted. At the same time he stressed that judging on the organisation of the assembling process and his personal test drive the Geely

value for money is quite acceptable. The cheapest Geely LC CROSS costs from \$10,590 to \$11,000 while the most expensive — Geely EX7 (crossover) — \$21,500. "Why should we bring garbage here from Europe? They are not cheap either. And if you buy a second-hand car at let us say \$5,000, then you will have to put another \$5,000 in the automobile service some two or three years later," said Mr. Lukashenko.

leybuses, trams, but we have not got a passenger car," noted the President speaking about the national car production project.

"The next step is the construction of a more powerful plant near Borisov (between Zhodino and Borisov)," said the President assessing the prospects of car manufacturing in Belarus.

It is expected that the construction of a new car-produc-

ing plant will be divided into two stages, with an estimated volume of investment reaching \$500m. The first stage envisages a construction of a plant with the annual capacity of 60,000 cars (with car body welding, painting and assembly facilities) by January 1st, 2017. By the time, localisation of components should reach 30 percent and make up 50 percent by July 2018. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the development of the national automobile manufacturing would give an additional impetus to the development of many other industrial sectors.

The President also stressed the need to expand the BelGee dealer network in Belarus. Today there are seven dealers in the country — in every region and Minsk. According to the President, it is necessary to set up additional dealer centres in towns situated far away from the regional centres.

This year, there are plans to produce 18,000 Geely cars in Belarus and sell about 14,500 cars, with the biggest part (about 11,000) to Russia.

Car sales in Russia and particularly in the future Eurasian Economic Union were also discussed during the President's communication with the BelGee staff.

The Head of State underlined that if Belarus, Russia, and Kazakhstan set out to create a union, 'there should be no hindrances and everyone should operate in equal conditions.' "It is the way I put the issue before my colleagues," said the President about the latest summit of the 'troika' heads of state at the session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council in Minsk.

IT technologies on service for air passengers

Belavia passengers now able to independently check-in via mobile phone

The Belavia website now offers online check-in, including for those using mobile phones. This reflects modern trends in passenger demand and allows easy check-in within 22 hours of travel (ending 3 hours prior to scheduled take-off). The service covers departure from most airports serviced by Belavia, allowing choice of seat.

A boarding pass is generated, including a barcode read by scanners at the airport: either sent via e-mail or for storage in a customised application — such as Passbook for iPhone.

Passengers travelling with luggage still need to visit the check-in counter before passing through security and those travelling within the CIS will need to show their e-boarding pass at the check-in counter, to gain a paper version for pre-flight inspection.

The Director General of Belavia Airline JSC, Anatoly Gusarov, notes that it's important to move with the times regarding the latest air-transportation technologies. "In 2012, we introduced online check-in and, last year, we installed self-service kiosks at the airport. This year, we're offering check-in via mobile phone and we next plan a mobile version of our official site."

Plastic hockey cards join game

By Valeria Gavrushcheva

Thematic bank cards issued specially for the World Championship

These new cards impress with their design. Whilst the depiction of a hockey rink is their major feature, they are also made of transparent plastic, which is truly rare for Belarusian cards. Priorbank cards are beautifully packaged and can become a nice hockey souvenir. Importantly, no passport is needed to buy such a card. These prepaid cards are available in sums of Br250,000, Br500,000 or Br1m.

The cards are not attached to a particular account and anyone can use them as they have no personal de-

tails attached to them. This is a usual instrument to pay for products and services (at trading and catering organi-



sations) and for making payments at Priorbank's payment-reference terminals. However, holders of these new 'hockey' cards won't be able to make Internet payments, withdraw the remaining sum after the expiry

date or, in case of a PIN-code loss, to withdraw cash. The latter has been introduced intentionally to promote non-cash payments.

Cards are issued on the basis of the national BELCARD payment system and use Belarusian Roubles. In addition, they are accepted exclusively on Belarusian territory. "We wished to issue a Belarusian card especially for the championship," explains Priorbank's Executive Director, Anatoly Pavlovich.

The new cards are the first of their kind for the national payment system but, as BELCARD Payment System JSC's Director Alexander Sotnikov explains, "Prepaid cards are used worldwide, and the global banking market is now actively working to promote such cards."