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Artworks by this artist generating uplifting optimism, as evident at Minsk gallery exhibition **Page 10**



BELTA

Tomislav Nikolić and Alexander Lukashenko sign joint statement in Minsk

# On-coming traffic between Belgrade and Minsk

President of Serbia, Tomislav Nikolić, arrives in Belarus on official three-day visit

# Good sign of open interaction

By Alexander Pimenov

**International Monetary Fund proposals for co-operation being considered, notes Alexander Lukashenko on meeting Head of IMF Mission in Belarus, Peter Dohlman**

Mr. Lukashenko notes that he is familiar with IMF proposals regarding prospects for co-operation with Belarus. Of the future programme, he says, "Not a sin-

gle provision is provoking rejection." He believes that the proposals rely on objective economic and social laws.

"There is a formula of paying for services such as electricity, heat and transport, in full," explains the Head of State. Mr. Lukashenko comments that terms are the main issue. "I don't think there will be any strong misunderstanding regarding these terms, or terms in general," the President underlines. "We want to fulfil the

proposals we've worked out together as soon as possible."

The Head of State notes with satisfaction that Belarus and the IMF are strictly fulfilling their agreement to elaborate the programme, which should serve as a foundation for collaboration. Mr. Lukashenko adds that he remembers meeting the IMF Managing Director, Christine Lagarde, in New York, with successful results. The President admits that, after the meeting, he saw relations

between Belarus and the International Monetary Fund in a different light.

Belarus has no intention of breaking from its socially-oriented strategy, as the President emphasised to Mr. Dohlman during their meeting. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the social state scheme would continue regardless of IMF feelings. He mentioned, "We cannot leave a single child, a single elderly person, a single person with disabilities without assistance from

the state. This is what the social state is all about. We can't just push them aside."

Mr. Lukashenko noted that all IMF proposals can be implemented in Belarus. "We're ready to continue working in this direction," commented the Head of State, adding that he hopes for no delays.

Mr. Dohlman thanked the President of Belarus for his openness at the meeting, which he sees as representative of the open and produc-



Peter Dohlman

ive interaction between the IMF and Belarus. Mr. Dohlman noted that the IMF and Belarus share common goals with regard to building an effective and growing economy in Belarus. The IMF also pays close attention to social security and to aiding those in need.

# Intellect enjoys demand

Most scientists believe that we won't be able to create artificial intelligence until we've gained more understanding of how the human brain works. Much remains to be studied.

By Yulia Vasilishina

Two major scientific projects launched recently: *Human Brain* (in the EU) and *Brain Initiative* (the USA). Attempts are being made to penetrate our consciousness and the secrets of our mind, with the aim of using information to model an artificial intelligence. Belarusian scientists are taking an active part in the process, with efforts consolidated by a new Interdepartmental Research Centre of Artificial Intelligence, established at the National Academy of Sciences' United Institute of Informatics Problems, in liaison with the Physiology Institute.

A recent presentation demonstrated achievements in this field, and the latest preoccupations, including mobile robots able to solve intellectual tasks -- such as calculating the volume of space within a room, and compiling a related map, for transmission to a group of other robots engaged in protecting the area, or in transporting cargo across the territory. Work includes creating systems to analyse photographic images taken from above, and diagnosis of body conditions, to help doctors detect 'foreign objects', as well as systems to synthesise and distinguish speech (including Belarusian). Stem cells are being



Presentation of Research Centre of Artificial Intelligence at NAS' United Institute of Informatics Problems

'trained' to transform into neuron cells able to 'close' brain traumas, and a special film has been developed to transform 2D pictures into 3D.

Until recently, developers were acting separately but, as the General Director of the United Institute of Informatics Problems, Alexander Tuzikov, explains, "The Centre of

Artificial Intelligence has been established to act as a platform for co-operation and experience exchange between scientists working across various spheres within this topic. For example, the United Institute of Informatics Problems enjoys great development in the field of multimedia information processing, while the Physiology Institute is

studying how the brain works." He notes that the Centre is open to other specialists as well. Groups of researchers focusing on this topic are working at the Belarusian State University and at Brest's State Technical University. There is great potential, so joint realisation of major projects is sure to help us achieve new results in the shortest possible time.

## No trivial issues in counteracting terrorism

By Svetlana Isaenok

**Legislation on terrorism counteraction is soon to change in Belarus, with a draft law prepared by the State Security Committee, of applied character**

Back in August, the Council of Ministers submitted the document to the House of Representatives, and it passed its first reading. Deputies are now 'polishing' technicalities, in preparation for the second reading.

"The draft law will introduce changes and amendments to laws 'On the Struggle Against Terrorism' and 'On the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus,'" explains Vasily Papko, a member of the Standing Commission on National Security. The changes will tackle the competence of state security bodies, and of the Interior and Defence ministries, in counteracting terrorism. The function of each structure will be clearly defined by law, enabling us to act consistently.

The draft law envisages counterterrorism operations aiming to prevent the activity of terrorists when impossible to do so by other means. Moreover, those conducting counterterrorist operations or investigations into suspects will be held to higher accountability in their work to unearth terrorist organisations and their members. One of the draft law's innovations is the legal confirmation of social rehabilitation of citizens who have suffered as a result of terrorist acts or from the activity of a terrorist organisation or in preventing such activity. Such rehabilitation includes legal, psychological, medical and professional assistance, alongside employment and housing provision.

"It's also proposed to introduce amendments to the Law 'On the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus', by which the Armed Forces can be called upon to help defend critically important sites, as stipulated by legislation," adds Mr. Papko.

Parliament notes that work continues on the document and that a session of the working group has been held, involving representatives of all interested bodies.

"The major task of the draft law is to enhance the efficiency of anti-terrorist activity. At present, the most dangerous manifestation of modernity is terrorism; it knows no borders and threatens all society. The struggle against this phenomenon should be major and merciless," believes Mr. Papko.

## Facilitating public order

By Alexander Torguev

**Centres monitoring public security to be set up nationwide**

Over the past six years, there has been a reduction in 'street' crime within the Republic, thanks to advanced information and telecommunication technologies in use by the militia. These have enhanced operational capability and efficiency. The installation of video surveillance systems in heavily populated locations has helped greatly, with almost 16,000 sites

now covered, via over 4,600 video cameras serving the Internal Affairs Department. Their footage has helped detect over 800 crimes this year and, in future, every urban settlement will be covered, as will regional centres.

Internal affairs bodies have launched contemporary technologies to ensure sustainable digital closed radio communication and efficient management of guard duties. Moreover, there are plans to provide all regional branches with similar equipment within the next two years.

## Experts drawing their conclusions

By Pavel Minakov

**Belarus plays an increasingly important role regionally, notes Jamestown Foundation President, Glen Howard, at international Fresh View on 'Frozen Conflicts' in the post-Soviet Space conference, held as part of Minsk Dialogue initiative**

"The more often I visit Belarus, the more I realise that it's a wonderful country and that it plays a very important role. Given the regional context, this role is becoming even more

significant," emphasises Mr. Howard, focusing on the many new events taking place in Belarus today.

"Belarus' geopolitical role has increased in significance, with Western politicians starting to realise how important the country is geopolitically," stresses the expert. He underlines that Belarus has become a facilitator in the Ukraine crisis negotiations, which involve Russia, Ukraine, Germany, and France. Moreover, Mr. Howard accentuates Belarus' role as an exporter of potassium. "Belarus plays an important role in the global economy," he notes.

# On-coming traffic between Belgrade and Minsk

By Vasily Kharitonov

In line with diplomatic protocol, the Palace of Independence hosted solemn negotiations between Tomislav Nikolić and Alexander Lukashenko, in narrow and extended formats. The heads of state signed a joint statement and, following tradition, the Serbian President planted a tree in the Avenue of Honorary Guests.

The Balkan States well remember how, in 1999, after NATO began to attack the former Yugoslavia, Mr. Lukashenko announced his desire to visit the burning country and personally support its citizens. The President kept his word, despite the warning of the alliance that it couldn't guarantee his security. Belgrade's media perceived the arrival of the Belarusian Presidential airplane as symbolic, showing sincere friendship.

The recent visit included a tour of the Minsk-Mir site. The presidents of Belarus and Serbia took part in a ceremony to lay a commemorative capsule, symbolising the start of construction. An international finance centre is to be the hub of the site, helping attract prestigious finance corporations, banks, and globally-known insurance and leasing companies. Moreover, Belarusian companies will enjoy equal access to contemporary infrastructure. More than 27,000 new jobs are expected to be created.

Dragomir Karic, a deputy of the National Assembly of Serbia and the Honorary Consul of Belarus to Belgrade, who was present at the recent inauguration ceremony of the President of Belarus, comments, "From a geopolitical, strategic and practical point of view, Belarus is an oasis of calm, guaranteeing social and political stability for the working environment. It means there's a future. People have no anxieties, being concerned about what tomorrow or the day after may bring. State strategy convinces us that the world's largest financial giants will come to Minsk."

Minsk-Mir is an endeavour of the future. Bilateral relations between our countries have been gaining speed for two decades, with regular political dialogue facilitating. Mr. Lukashenko has visited Belgrade four times — in 1998, 1999, 2009 and 2014. Meanwhile, the presidents of Yugoslavia and Serbia have been to Belarus twice — in 1996 and 2013. This summer, the Chairman of the National Assembly of Serbia paid his first official visit to our country.

Active interaction between



Tomislav Nikolić during his visit to Minsk Tractor Works JSC

our two countries' leadership has brought real economic success. After signing an inter-governmental agreement on free trade in 2009, trade turnover between Belarus and Serbia has increased 5-fold. Joint work this year is concentrated on the implementation of a 'road map' to develop collaboration; analysts attached great importance to this during Tomislav Nikolić's visit.

French Cannes, which is currently hosting the MAPIC 2015 trade show, has awarded Belarusian developer Dana Holdings in two nominations: 'Top Developer of Multi-functional Complexes in Europe in 2015' and 'Top Developer of Shopping Malls in Europe in 2015'. The company presented three projects: Minsk-Mir, Mayak Minsk (Minsk's Lighthouse) and the Dana Mall trade and entertainment centre. This vividly illustrates the mutual benefit of working together, from sending tractors for Serbia to the launch of building projects in the Belarusian capital.

Our countries have much in common: from population numbers to spirituality, as our heads of state recognise. Mr. Nikolić has spoken openly of his feelings regarding 'sanctions' placed by some large countries, calling them 'a shame' on those who initiate them. Belarus is no longer suffering so badly from these sanctions, which is welcome news for Minsk, as is today's constructive dialogue with Belgrade, which is presiding over the OSCE this year.

Another important aspect of negotiations has been Belarus' role in helping build the Eurasian Economic Union. Serbia boasts a free trade regime with the European Union, which offers a combina-

tion of economic interests for our two states regarding these integration structures.

Dialogue between large players can become complicated, for various reasons, while relations between medium-sized countries (by European standards) can form a bridge of mutual understanding.

Our presidents have freely

## WORD-FOR-WORD

### From the joint statement by the presidents of Belarus and Serbia:

The presidents are satisfied with the positive dynamics of co-operation in trade-economic and other spheres, and would like to strengthen bilateral ties across the following priority areas:

- Increase volumes and diversification of mutual trade turnover and the joint search for new spheres of economic interaction;
- Expand collaboration in machine building, agro-industry, transport and energy, food and wood-processing;
- Develop production co-operation, and provision of successful joint enterprises and implementation of new projects on the territory of both states

admitted that our political-economic interests happily coincide, and that they enjoy a personal friendship. Collaboration has grown, as proven by our rising trade turnover: approaching \$250m, and with a goal of \$500m.

What ways can we further develop interaction? Mr. Lukashenko has invited Serbian businesses to be more active in mastering the Belarusian market. Meanwhile, our manufacturers are keen to invest in Serbia's economy.

However, it's necessary to shift from simple trade to closer production co-operation. Mr. Nikolić confirms this on the Serbian side, and a corresponding inter-governmental commission is elaborating joint plans in detail. Its conclusions and proposals will guide a roadmap of co-operation for

coming years, with the focus on expansion, as highlighted by the visit of the Serbian President.

Of course, Belarus views Serbia as a key trade-economic partner in the Balkans. Mr. Lukashenko noted during his open negotiations with the President of Serbia and with the Serbian delegation a whole

Region. Promising projects have been outlined in the joint manufacture of fire-fighting and agricultural machinery, and Belarus is ready to support Serbian proposals at state level regarding promising projects in various areas.

In particular, Belarus is ready to implement joint projects in the spheres of construction, machine building, wood-processing, agriculture and food, together with Serbia.

The President of Belarus underlines that the development of co-operative projects is a 'two-way street'. He commented, "We hope to receive similar support for Belarusian investment projects, planned for realisation in Serbia."

The Head of Belarus is keen to expand and strengthen contacts between our two countries and is delighted to note that all regional centres of Belarus are connected with Serbian cities via twin-city and partnership agreements. He stresses that these agreements should be placed on an economic basis, to force heads of regions to be more actively involved in real economic projects. According to the President of Belarus, this would become a good basis for further promotion of co-operation between our two Slavonic states.

Meanwhile, he notes that it would be symbolic if, next year, the heads of the republics of the former Yugoslavia would gather to discuss the construction of the Minsk-Mir complex. Mr. Nikolić adds that definite steps have been taken to organise such a meeting, with the participation of the presidents of Slovenia, Croatia, Macedonia and Montenegro. He states, "All of the former Yugoslavia would be represented, helping our people attain a better life, thanks to you."

Trade-economic interaction is the basis for bilateral collaboration. According to the President of Belarus, significant potential exists in the spheres of fuel and energy, agriculture, machine building, construction, transport infrastructure, science, education and tourism.

Mr. Lukashenko believes that Belarus and Serbia understand the need to shift from simple trade to more complicated and efficient co-operation, via industrial, sci-tech and innovation collaboration. He notes that assembly production of Belarusian tractors, buses and trucks in Serbia has found its niche not only in Serbia but across the Balkan

## Foreseeable first visit

By Vladimir Khromov

### President of Belarus planning official visit to Russia, discussing preparations with Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Belarus, Alexander Surikov

Following the Presidential elections, Alexander Lukashenko intends to make his first official visit as Head of State, to Russia, at the invitation of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin.

Back in mid-October, at the CIS Summit in Kazakhstan, Mr. Lukashenko suggested that Mr. Putin adopt decisions on acute issues of bilateral co-operation. At the session of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, and during his visit to Moscow, the Kremlin responded positively.

During his meeting with the Russian Ambassador, Mr. Lukashenko underlined, "Thank you for the invitation to officially visit the Russian Federation. After the Presidential elections in Belarus, it is correct of me, as usual, to pay an official visit to Russia: a country I cannot call foreign, no matter that some dislike my stance. I think it's correct and will answer many questions."

The Head of State remarked that a number of Belarus-Russia bilateral events are to take place. "I believe we're going to meet with other presidents in a multilateral format," notes Mr. Lukashenko. He sees much to talk about sincerely, 'without leaving anything unsaid' and adds that he's ready for a sincere and serious conversation on Belarusian-Russian relations.

Mr. Lukashenko has suggested 'sincerely discussing problematic issues, if they exist, as well as determining prospects'. The Head of State believes that, before the forthcoming meeting with the President of Russia, areas of bilateral interaction should be adjusted, to remove some tension. However, he notes that he isn't aware of any special problems.

The President discussed with Mr. Surikov details of the forthcoming official visit, as well as speaking about the development and strengthening of Union State positions. This powerful integration project has already become a good example of developing economic interrelations within the format of the Eurasian Economic Union. However, it's evident that it's time to drive forward Union State relations. This topic is likely to occupy the central place during the forthcoming top level negotiations.

# Evident advantages and disadvantages of ratings

The World Bank has released its annual *Doing Business* report, in which Belarus has moved upwards not by leaps and bounds but, certainly, to some extent. Our country has risen 13 points, from 57th place to 44th. However, last year's report has also been updated since being originally released, across 10 indices (due to changing methodology). In line with the updated report for 2014, Belarus was ranked 43rd. Accordingly, it appears that we have dropped a place rather than rising! Nevertheless, Belarus is ahead of fellow CIS member states Russia, Moldova, Azerbaijan, Ukraine and Tajikistan.

By Evgeny Velikhov

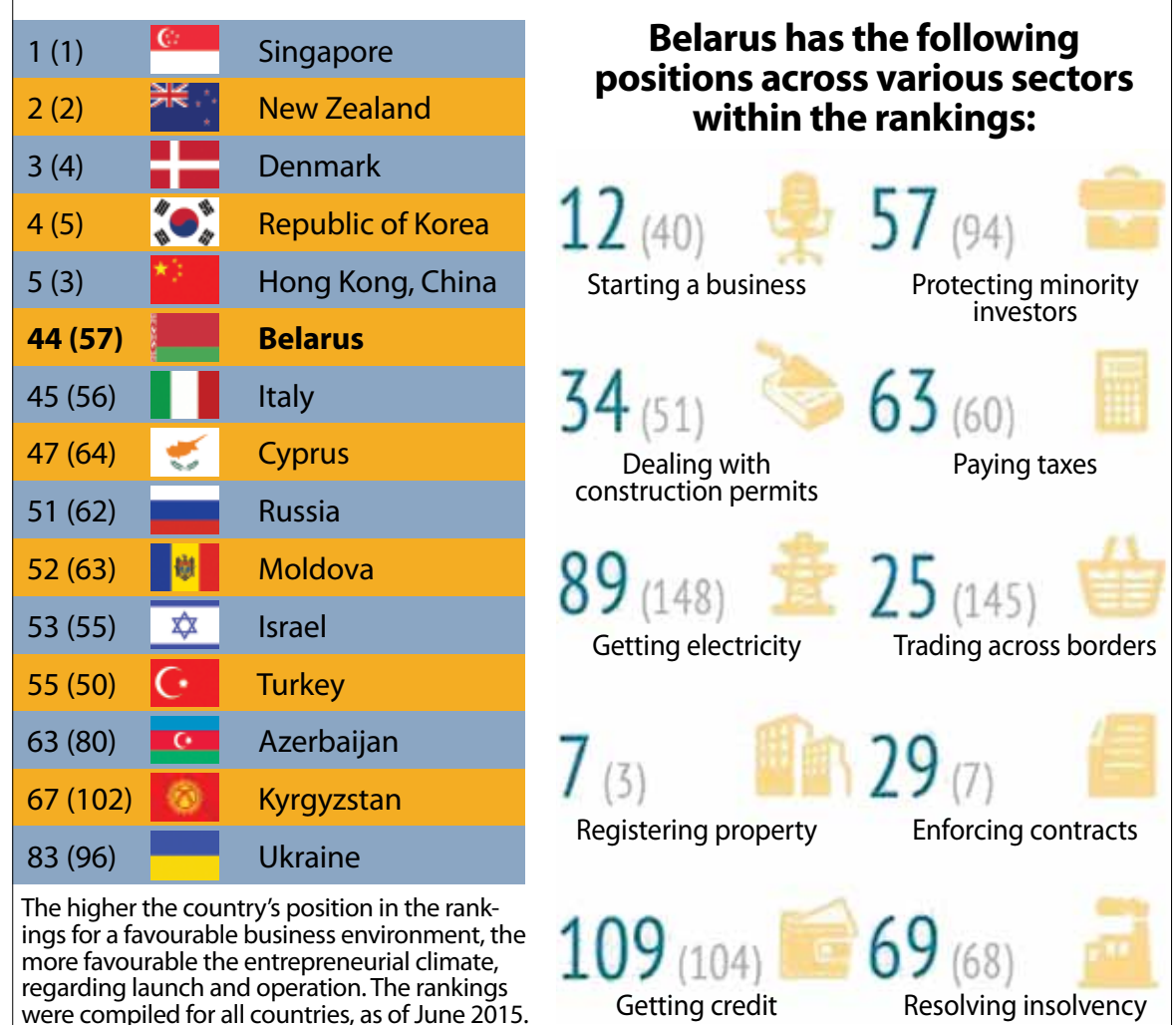
We've made a breakthrough across several positions. In particular, our country has moved from 40th place to 12th for 'Complexity of New Business Registration' while 'Dealing with construction permits' has shifted from 51st place to 34th. We've also managed to considerably improve our position in the nomination for 'Getting electricity', having occupied the lowest places for several years. According to the Energy Ministry, in this year's ranking, Belarus has moved from its previous 148th place to 89th. Deputy Chief Engineer of Belenergo Association, Valery Porshnev, is convinced that, next year, we'll manage to improve further, since WB experts will be able to take into account improvements made this year. It's also expected that businesses will work alongside energy specialists to solve certain issues.

"We've created all conditions for technological connection and have released Decree #397, enabling us to perform a range of services from

one application. Many entrepreneurs still prefer the old scheme but then 'go off the rails' and return, to be connected. Probably, they are embarrassed by the financial issue."

Other flies exist in the ointment, with some improvements worsening other aspects. Compared to last year, the situation has worsened over several parameters: 'Getting credit', 'Paying taxes', and 'Enforcing contracts'. The Economy Ministry doesn't conceal that, despite having improved some areas, potential for business development remains huge.

The Honorary Chairman of the Business Association of Entrepreneurs and Employers (named after Kunyavsky), Georgy Badei, agrees, noting that some negative factors are preventing the country from moving forward. He tells us, "Despite our improvements in some spheres vital to business, several principal problems remain unsolved. Firstly, the fiscal burden on business remains high. Under more stable conditions, this would be less noticeable, but the world market is in turbulence, which can't but affect



us. Enterprises have fewer available assets while loans are expensive. Secondly, stiff tax policies are alarming. The simplified tax system has proven efficient so I don't know why we need to be restrictive."

According to experts, another negative factor is reduced support for businesses, due to programmes focusing on small and medium-

sized entrepreneurship. Previously, the average annual sum of business support (across all regions) reached Br200bn; in the first half of this year, 10 times less was spent.

Attitudes may vary towards the ratings, with some countries ignoring the *Doing Business* report. Last year, an independent committee set up by the World Bank to monitor

the importance of the *Doing Business* report announced that its relevance and impact may not warrant the effort. Nevertheless, for many, the assessment remains important. Russia's President, Vladimir Putin, has tasked his government with reaching the top twenty by 2018. Our goal is slightly less ambitious, aiming to reach 30th position: a goal not far off.

## Five years of guaranteed sales

By Vladimir Krotov

**Belarusian Potash Company and Chinese CNAMPGC sign memorandum on co-operation for five years**

"The memorandum testifies to the great potential for economic collaboration between Belarus and the PRC, and should facilitate stronger long-term, mutually beneficially business relations," asserts Yelena Kudryavets, Director General of Belarusian Potash Company JSC.

"We've been working efficiently with CNAMPGC for many years, annually dispatching significant amounts of potassium, and ensuring annual positive trade figures."

The Belarusian Potash Company notes that CNAMPGC is one of the largest buyers of Belarusian potas-



At a Belaruskali mine

sium. The All-China Federation of Supply and Marketing Co-operatives, headed by the Federation's Vice President, Li Chunsheng, paid a recent visit to Belarus, with one of the largest players on the Chinese market of potash fertilisers — CNAMPGC Holding Limited Company, headed by General Manager

Luo Deqiang.

During the visit, Belaruskali JSC and the Belarusian Potash Company met the delegation for negotiations, discussing the current situation on the potash market. The Chinese delegation also toured Belaruskali sites, including a potash mine and an ore-dressing plant.

## Presentation of projects drawing big attention

By Oleg Dovlatov

**Minsk-Mir, Mayak Minsk (Minsk's Lighthouse) and Dana Mall projects enjoy popularity with investors at MAPIC 2015 international retail property trade show, held in Cannes**

"Our innovative projects being implemented in Belarus have drawn significant attention from the many visitors to the exhibition, which annually gathers leading developers, retail traders and investors from all over the world," notes Gary Burrows, Head of the Commercial Real Estate Division at Dana Holdings.

During the trade show, the developer signed agreements on leasing premises in Dana Mall trade and

entertainment centre, with major foreign retail traders.

This year was the fourth time for Dana Holdings representing Belarus at the prestigious exhibition in Cannes, with the developer showcasing projects which have already won numerous international awards.

MAPIC 2015 recognised Dana Holdings as Europe's 'Top Developer of Multipurpose Centres and Shopping Malls'.

The international investment and civil engineering group of companies, Dana Holdings, is now busy building 5 million square metres of real estate in Eastern Europe. Dana Holdings has been working in Belarus since 2006 and is the leading real estate developer on the Belarusian market.

# Range of tyres of supreme quality

Belshina exports around 60 percent of its produce, with most heading to Russia. Recently, its exports have been supplemented with Germany, Austria, the Scandinavian states, Macedonia and Bulgaria.

By Pavel Minakov

Experienced car lovers may remember a time when Belshina products didn't enjoy a good reputation. The company offered a small range of tyres and their quality was variable. However, I can personally confirm that the stereotype is now obsolete. In the mid-November snow my car had not been prepared for the winter season, as I had not yet changed my summer tyres, making it risky to drive. I began searching for winter tyres but found nothing by the popular brands. As a result, I had to buy Belshina tyres and have been extremely pleased with them. In the winter, I managed to drive away from almost any bank of snow and even dragged out my friends' car (with tyres by a globally famous brand).

Since then, I've not been sceptical about the Belarusian company's products and I'm not alone in my views. Belshina is steadily renewing its range and plans to attract new customers. Several years ago, the company launched a major technical modernisation worth hundreds of millions of Euros. It's aimed at the industrial production of new tyre sizes, the increase of production volumes and enhancement of competitiveness. Although the modernisation is in full swing, it's clear that a virtually new plant has been created on the site of the old Belshina. It enjoys the same equipment as that used by leaders of the tyre industry



Belshina pays special attention to export potential development

and the single difference is the 'recipe' of rubber, kept a close secret by the company.

I've often seen how tyres for passenger cars and trucks are produced. Each time, the process is mesmerising. An operator places two 'wings' of a tyre on a machine, while the remaining parts are produced automatically. As a result, it takes just 47 seconds to make the basic product, which then needs to be vulcanised

before the tyre is ready for use. In the future, the production of vehicle tyres with up to 20-inch diameter is planned. As a result, the range of the Bobruisk company will expand so much, that any driver would be able to find the necessary tyres for their cars whether it be a city mini car or a large jeep.

The company's large tyre workshop has introduced into production, tyres for energy-efficient

tractors — both Belarusian and foreign. These new tyres are able to withstand heavy loads while creating less stress on the soil. Belshina products can rival its competitors on the global market and, at present, has virtually fully implemented its international labour division: a part of its larger-sized manufacturing bears the brand of a globally known producer — Trelleborg; the Belarusian company produces tyres for this

international group under its own brand. The super-large tyre plant plans to produce tyres for domestic lorries of up to 360 tonne capacity, as well as foreign dump trucks. So far, only two companies in the world manufacture these, Belshina will rival them in the near future.

After a long break, Belshina products are once again supplied to Tolyatti: the Belarusian company has been nominated as a general tyre supplier by AutoVAZ to equip new Lada-Vesta cars. Before signing the contract, the car producer stipulated that Belarusian tyres need to pass tests at a major Spanish testing station to ensure they compete favourably against known brands. Our tyres performed successfully with Bobruisk's product even better than famous brands in some respects.

Belshina exports around 60 percent of its produce, with Russia being its major buyer at the moment. The company realises that it needs to diversify its market, already conquering Brazil and Australia. Its sales to Serbia, Macedonia and Bulgaria have risen, and supplies to Germany, Austria and the Scandinavian states have been launched. Indonesia is now among the most promising markets and exports to Turkey have been renewed.

Belshina is injecting huge funds into its modernisation and this strategy is fully paying for itself. Wise investment in technical re-equipment enables the company to occupy its place among the global leaders.

## Weighted estimations truly matter

By Vladimir Khromov

**World Bank has repeatedly praised Belarus for reform being correct and timely, and able to counteract the negative effect of external financial difficulties**

Not long ago, the WB released its new economic review on Belarus, stating that it has joined its closest neighbours in entering a period of low economic growth.

Truly, it's a challenge to 'grow' under the present conditions. However, it's great to see even minor progress registered — as the WB predicts. To enhance our competitiveness, the Bank advises that we 'overcome structural shortages'. It has praised measures taken by the Government and the National Bank, noting particular pleasure with our policy of inflation targeting and free currency exchange rate. The WB believes that these should generate a positive result in the mid-term, while some benefits are already evident.

Inflation in Belarus has slowed and the tendency seems likely to strengthen. The WB notes that, next year, prices are likely to rise by around 17 percent and, in 2017, by 15 percent. Moreover, according to the WB, 2017 may see the Belarusian economy begin steady growth. Next year, GDP figures will fluctuate around zero but, later, will grow by around 1.5 percent.

There is nothing unexpected in these conclusions. Institutions similar to the WB and IMF traditionally believe that our economy needs institutional reform to 'positively influence the results of company activities, while supporting innovations and contributing to the entry of Belarusian produce onto new markets.'

These reforms envisage strengthening the independence of management, improving the system of personnel qualification enhancement, and inspiring directors and workers via improvements to the business environment'. Foreign experts often admit that changes are being introduced.

The WB believes it vital that we strengthen our existing system of social protection, to ease conditions for those living on a low income: via macro-economic correction and economic transformation. It states: 'measures of reform policy will not produce immediate results from the point of view of economic growth yet should be realised as soon as possible.'

### MT REFERENCE:

**Belarus became a World Bank member in 1992 and, since then, credit resources worth \$1.48bn have been allocated to the country.**

This year, the WB's survey was, for the first time, accompanied by an analytical report regarding prospects for Belarus' joining of the WTO. So far, our country is not making any steps in this direction; moreover, it has not received an invitation from the organisation. However, experts have calculated the advantages and

disadvantages of the move, and positive effects dominate.

According to WB estimations, Belarus' fully fledged membership of the WTO would ensure significant growth of income and well-being, thanks to reduced discrimination and non-discrimination barriers for suppliers of services.

Belarus has been liaising with the WB not only in the field of financial consulting. From time to time, it takes loans from this organisation for infrastructure projects. On meeting Qimiao Fan — the WB Director for Ukraine, Belarus and Moldova, the Chairman of the National Assembly's Council of the Republic — Mikhail Myasnikov, said, "We appreciate the strategy of the WB Group partnership, which was adopted in 2013 and will run until 2017. This is a system-based acting document enabling us to realise major national infrastructure tasks in the field of road construction, energy, forestry and the

communal economy. Moreover, it involves grant support for some of our minor projects."

So far, the country has attracted \$1bn of infrastructure loans, in addition to four grants worth \$10m. This is a huge amount but Mr. Myasnikov believes that the WB Group boasts even wider possibilities. He tells us, "A new avenue of co-operation is being outlined: a complex of measures to enhance Belarus' economic competitiveness. The matrix is fine as it involves improving the business climate, attracting direct foreign investments, and creating conditions for the state sector's sustainable development and for the support of entrepreneurship."

There are many plans, with both sides demonstrating interest in their development and realisation.



# True masters of affairs of the heart

Much time has passed since Minsk could claim to be the only place in Belarus boasting the latest medical technologies. For several years, high-tech surgeries have been successful across the regions, and the range of their scope is ever growing: especially important for patients with critical heart problems. Previously, patients from the Grodno Region suffering from a dissected thoracic aorta were obliged to rush to the capital. Unfortunately, not all survived the long trip. Now, these and many other surgeries are held at the Grodno Regional Clinical Heart Centre, saving people's lives.



A. Yanushko (C) with colleagues discussing treatment



Grodno Regional Clinical Heart Centre doctors at work

By Yekaterina Soboleva

Grodno Regional Clinical Heart Centre is a modern medical institution equipped with the latest technologies, and conducting almost all types of cardiac surgery, including cardiovalvulotomy, and surgeries on coronary arteries and greater vessels.

Its doctors are a unique combination of youth and experience. Of its 10 surgeons, four are studying for the second year, having graduated from the medical university. They are entering the highest caste of their sphere, becoming cardiac surgeons. The others are professionals who have years of training behind them, including two-year clinical studies at the Scientific and Practical Centre of Cardiology, and at leading clinics in Europe.

The region's cardiology has

acquired a new round of development with the introduction of a new cardio-surgical building, funded by a regional investment programme. It's also a platform for active co-operation with foreign colleagues: surgeons from the Netherlands have come on a work-exchange programme, sharing their experience of high-tech surgeries to treat arrhythmias, operating on 25 patients.

Grodno is one of only a handful of regional centres offering valve replacement surgery using 'key-hole' techniques. The Head Doctor of the Grodno Regional Clinical Heart Centre, Tamara Dolgoshey, tells us, "Such surgeries require the highest surgical skill but are least invasive, enabling much faster healing and recovery. People can return to work more quickly, and it saves state money spent on treatment. Unsurprisingly,

these surgeries are very much in demand."

The deputy head doctor for cardiac surgery, Andrey Yanushko, conducts 'key-hole' surgeries in Grodno. Two such were even broadcast online for Belarusian, Russian and Israeli colleagues, during a seminar on this technique, hosted by Grodno. Several small (about 5cm) incisions are used to access parts of the body. Few clinics worldwide have been able to offer such operations, until recently: only those in the USA, Germany and Israel. However, three years ago, the Scientific and Practical Centre of Cardiology began using the method, followed by the Grodno Regional Clinical Heart Centre. Last year, about 30 surgeries were achieved using the new technique.

The Centre has been managing to treat more patients with each year that passes:

from 200 in 2013, to 349 in 2014, and 400 this year so far. The figure should hit 500 by New Year.

Doctors say that regional executive power support has been vital in purchasing necessary equipment, including at the end of last year, when much equipment was acquired for 'key-hole' surgeries. Residents of the Grodno Region are the primary beneficiaries but patients from other regions and, even, neighbouring states do receive treatment. This year alone, five Russian patients, from Ukraine and Armenia, have received surgery (at a cost of approximately \$10,000). Of course, such operations are free for Belarusians.

Previously, only Minsk offered a wide range of surgeries but these are now being offered in Grodno, such as cardiovalvulotomies, in combination with surgeries to restore heart rhythm (magnetic techniques). Surgeons have helped 15 patients and have experience across two main zones: arteries supplying the heart and brain with blood. There used to be two brigades of surgeons, one cardiac and one vascular, but the 'job' is now combined, with a single surgeon able to perform.

Grodno cardiac surgeons are technically ready to conduct heart transplants but the number required is still modest enough for Minsk's Scientific and Practical Centre of Cardiology to cope. However, it's good for the team in the capital to feel the support of nearby colleagues.

## All ages obedient to Internet

By Alexander Pimenov

**Around 80 percent of Belarusian Internet users of elderly age would like to use Skype and social networks**

Via the *All Ages Are Obedient to Network* programme, specialists have concluded that

increasing numbers of those aged 55 and older are using Internet retailers. Every third student taking part notes that they'd like to order goods and food for home delivery. Over 67 percent of those polled believe that everyone should learn how to pay for utility services online and how to find

pharmaceutical medications.

Social networks, messengers and other programmes continue to arouse interest, enabling calls and message exchange with relatives and friends. Around 80 percent of students within the *All Ages Are Obedient to Network* programme say that they'd like

to use Skype, and create their own profiles in Odnoklassniki and Facebook. Many are also keen to use their computer and the Internet independently. The programme's specially developed study guide helps those of elderly age in learning IT skills, taking into account their psychological state.

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

## Vaccinations recommended

*Is it essential to receive the flu vaccination?*

A. Petrov, Slonim, Brest Region



Every winter brings a flu epidemic; in the USA alone, 36,000 people die from flu annually, with its concurrent infections and complications. Meanwhile, losses from flu exceed \$80 billion, with the number of hospitalisations connected with flu many times exceeding the number of deaths.

In Canada, the National Advisory Committee on Immunisation has recommended that everyone aged 2 to 64 years be invited to receive an annual influenza vaccination. Meanwhile, children between the ages of 6 and 24 months, and their household contacts, should be considered a high priority for the flu vaccine.

Supporters of the vaccine cite its economic feasibility, since the cost of development, implementation and purchase is lower than the losses (direct and indirect) from infection. Opponents say that anti-flu vaccines have too many complications, making mass application inadmissible.

Various public health agencies recommended annual vaccination against flu for those at risk of complications:

- Those aged 65 and older;
- Patients with chronic lung diseases (such as bronchial asthma or chronic obstructive pulmonary disease);



Vaccination as back-up

- Patients with chronic cardiac diseases (such as congenital cardiac diseases, cardiac insufficiency, or ischemic heart disease);
- Patients with chronic liver diseases (including hepatocirrhosis);
- Patients with chronic kidney diseases (such as nephrotic syndrome);
- Patients with epistatic immunity (people suffering from HIV, or who are taking medicines to suppress the immune system, such chemotherapy or steroids of long reception) and their household contacts;
- Those spending time in close environments, where flu can spread quickly (such

as prison, a nursing home or hostel);

- Medical officers (both for prevention of flu, and the spread of infection);
- Pregnant women.

According to scientific research, people aged 50-64 are ten times more likely to die from flu-related illness than young people, while those aged 65 years and over are ten times more likely to die than those aged 50-64 years. Vaccination of people over 65 halves their likelihood of death.

The WHO Global Advisory Committee on Vaccine Safety (World Health Organisation) has studied the serious side effects of flu vaccines, finding that mass immunisation is less effective than selective vaccination of at-risk groups (taking into account medical contra-indications) during a pre-epidemic period.

Recent vaccinations comprising antigens of the flu virus (detached and cleaned after cultivation of integral viruses) have modest side-effects: moderate pain, reddening (occasionally), swelling at the injection site, and a rise in body temperature. Usually, these problems begin soon after injection and last for 1-2 days.

Annually, the flu virus changes, and alternative strains prevail. Because of

the high speed of mutation, vaccines remain effective for only about one year; WHO co-ordinates each anti-flu vaccine, aiming to predict the most probable strains of causative agent.

Vaccines currently in use in Belarus have strain compositions recommended by the World Health Organisation for 2015-2016, for countries in the Northern hemisphere.

Anti-flu vaccination is the most effective method of preventing the occurrence of flu virus infection, and its potentially serious complications.

By Tatiana Zhukova  
Doctor of higher category,  
M.D., Ph.D.

# Active communication without prejudices

Aiming for prompt integration into Belarusian society, the *Roma Integration* programme offers classes

By Yekaterina Medvedskaya

Belarusians have been known for their tolerance for centuries. At present, people of 140 nationalities live here, in peace and concord. According to the 2009 census, there were 7,000 Gypsies living in Belarus. Now, the Gypsy community estimates that the figure is closer to 60,000.

Not long ago, Minsk's International Contest of Young Architects presented a project to reconstruct Titovka settlement, for Gypsies, near Bobruisk; the winning entry is designed by students from the Belarusian Polytechnic University and the Belarusian Academy of Arts, Yelizaveta Chepikova and Dmitry Kutuzov.

A display of photos and sketches of the future settlement is open to the public for a month, including works by non-winning finalists. The idea of reconstructing a residential district for this purpose was proposed some time back, with various zones of activity: for children, for relaxation, for businesses and an area of natural beauty.

A museum of Gypsy culture and lifestyle is also planned, housed inside a traditional 'caravan'. It may be sited at the location of the Festival of National Cultures, in Grodno; Bobruisk's chief architect is now studying the proposal.

The Titovka site is currently in much need of development, and lacks employment opportunities, so the project aims to revitalise the area. Gypsy communities tend to be located outside cities, such as in Kolodishchi (near Minsk), close to Vitebsk and to the city of Kalinkovichi in the Gomel Region. To enhance their integration, and their rich traditions, into Belarusian life, specialists from the National Academy of Sciences, from the Republican Centre of National Cultures and from the Foreign Ministry have developed the *Roma Integration* programme. This aims to teach people of Roma ethnicity local language skills, to help them communicate with officials within ministries and agencies.

International Romani Language Day is celebrated on November 5th. On the eve of the holiday, the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora — Artur Gomonov (from Minsk), joined the Head of Osh-



Scientific leader of *Roma Integration* programme, N. Kutuzova, bestows diploma on K. Bankovsky

myany's Gypsy Community — Artur Yegorov, and various representatives of the community in discussing urgent issues. Among those present were Alena Martinkevich (from Bobruisk), Konstantin and Raisa Bankovsky (from Vitebsk) and Victor Murachkovsky (from Nesvizh).

An awards ceremony to recognise those who have been learning through the programme was recently held. Young Alena Martinkevich's grandfather, taking her diploma into his hands, admitted, "Initially, I was against Alena's participation. Later, people with all sorts of requests came to our house: asking us to register a child at school and at the polyclinic, or to register lost documents. I then realised that I should help my granddaughter. I'm the first 'pupil' to enlist for next year's lessons."

Natalia Kutuzova, who is heading

According to statistics, around 80 percent of Gypsy children in Belarus receive secondary and elementary education. However, most only finish basic courses; only 2 percent go on to higher education. Around 17 percent have secondary, professional-technical or secondary-special education.

the programme, explains, "In 2014, our experts collected information on all Belarusian regions, meeting local authorities. Then, in June 2015, we opened our training course on communication."

Lessons took place over five months, including work explaining the law 'On Citizens' Applications' and other information on Belarusian legislation. "We aim to help the Gypsy community talk to authorities in a single language," stresses Ms. Kutuzova. However, she believes, education is 'the key aspect'.

Ms. Kutuzova comments, "In neighbouring countries, many problems are successfully solved via mini-programmes, including pre-school training for Gypsy children. A teacher who knows their language (most often a representative of the community) teaches them elementary behaviour, such as sitting quietly and listening when a teacher is speaking."

The Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora, Artur Gomonov, believes that schools should be integrated, with Belarusian and Gypsy children learning alongside one another. It is for this reason that experts have rejected a European project to establish a separate Gypsy community, not wishing to encourage isolation.

Integrated classes have proven successful this year, with 47 Gypsy children attending a Slutsk secondary school; many have been encouraged by Victor Murachkovsky — a Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora activist. His *Let's Prepare Children for School* campaign, launched on September 1st, has provided school

## MT REFERENCE:

At the moment, six Gypsy public organisations are registered in Belarus. In 1997, the Belarusian Association of Gypsies — Roma — was established and, in 1998, the Belarusian Gypsy Diaspora (with a branch in Vitebsk) was set up. In addition, there is: the International Public Organisation of Gypsies — *Vozrozhdenie* (Revival); the Oshmyany Gypsy Community; and the Gomel Inter-Regional Roma Community.

kits to Gypsy families who have many children and only a small income.

The Titovka school is unique, attended by 123 pupils, of whom 100 are from Roma families. The *Roma Integration* project has presented textbooks and books, including the Gypsy ABC and Gypsy Fairy-tales (presented by St. Petersburg's Memorial Anti-discrimination Centre).

*Roma Integration* is going well, delighting its organisers and those taking part. Mr. Gomonov notes that the Gypsy community is traditionally closed, requiring negotiators to be experienced and well-educated, as well as being experts in Belarusian legislation.

## Health above all

By Maria Lokotko

**Strong health and lack of bad habits are major indicators of wellbeing for 70 percent of Belarusians — as indicated by Information-Analytical Centre's sociological poll**

High salaries and material independence are in second place, being cited by 64.5 percent of Belarusians, while strong families are in third place as an indicator of wellbeing, noted by 63 percent of respondents. Meanwhile, 59.5 percent voted for positive human characteristics, behaviour and education. Love and respect were named by 53 percent of Belarusians, and 30 percent opted for a successful career and high status.

During another sociological poll, most Belarusian citizens (77 percent) said that the country primarily needs order and stability. Maintaining living standards was mentioned by 51.5 percent of respondents and 49 percent focused on medical services. The state's sovereignty and independence is cited by 49 percent, while the quality of food and industrial products is mentioned by 45.5 percent. Achievements in the field of socially oriented state policy are important to 39 percent, while the successes of Belarusian sportsmen are cited by 34.5 percent.

Both sociological polls, held from September 30th to October 7th, covered all regional centres of Belarus and the city of Minsk, in addition to district cities and villages.

## Word in native language

By Julia Leonova

**Reading in Belarusian enables over 1,500 Minsk schoolchildren from ten educational establishments to take master classes with famous Belarusian writers**

Children's writer Vladimir Lipsky joined popular TV host Yuri Zhigamont in October, to offer classes in Belarusian culture to second and third year schoolchildren. This month, they'll pass the baton to publicist Tatiana Sivets and poetess Raisa Borovikova, who'll be enthusing youngsters with both modern children's literature and the rich legacy of our Belarusian culture, through games and discussion, rather than textbooks.



Raisa Borovikova

Ms. Borovikova is looking forward to sharing the world of Belarusian poetry and fairy-tales with children, saying, "You need to learn your native language from early childhood: the earlier — the better. Few speak Belarusian at home, especially in our cities, so we need to support learning. We have wonderful children's literature and great writers. Through joint efforts, we can remedy the cultural situation currently observed. It's a project much needed at present."

# Oginski lived and created here

**Zalesie could become among most attractive tourist brands for Belarus**

Oginski's estate has always attracted creative people, including tourists. They love to visit Zalesie, where Oginski created so many of his wonderful works. "A year ago, we restored the estate, breathing new life into it. It now hosts concerts of classical music, festivals and artistic

meetings. It's no accident that it's also a centre of jubilee events, dedicated to the 250th anniversary of the birth of the famous figure, diplomat and composer," explains the Chairman of Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Kravtsov.

Many churches have been restored in the region, with buildings and ancient parks also renovated, preserving the memory of great his-

torical figures. Annually, thousands arrive from all corners of Belarus, Lithuania, Poland, Russia and elsewhere, eager to explore the Grodno Region's special places: those connected with legends, such as Michal Kleofas Oginski, who the Governor notes is close to the hearts of three nations. "His spiritual legacy can't be divided," he asserts. "One thing is evident: Michal Kleofas Oginski

has roots in this land. He is our fellow countryman and we'll always be proud of this."

Around 50 guests have been invited to take part in festive events dedicated to the 250th anniversary of the birth of Michal Kleofas Oginski, hosted by his museum-estate in Zalesie. Oginski's descendants (through his daughter Amelia) also come from Polish Poznan.

# ‘Not in my name’: lots of demonstrators denounce violence after Paris attacks

## Thousands of demonstrators have taken to the streets in Europe to denounce violence, in the wake of the Paris attacks

Crowds filled the streets of the French city of Toulouse, coming together to show solidarity and to remember the victims in the capital.

“It is to show as well that we are united against everything that tears apart society — and that we all aspire to peace in the end,” said one demonstrator.

‘Not in my name’ was the message coming out of a demonstration in Rome, organised by the Union of Italian Islamic Communities. One banner carried through the streets described ISIL as a ‘cancer’.

Muslim associations across Italy have declared their commitment to peace. “These terrorist groups are only creating hate between people and between religions. Religion has nothing to do with this. Our religion is not a religion of terrorism, it’s not a religion of war — but of peace,” said Mustapha Hajraoui, President of the Islamic Confederation.

People have also been pausing in Stockholm to remember those killed in Paris.



Demonstrators attend a protest called ‘Not in my name’ of Italian muslims against terrorism in downtown Milan

## Argentina moves to the right as Mauricio Macri wins presidential poll

**It was a celebration full of typical Latin American enthusiasm: conservative opposition candidate Mauricio Macri has been confirmed as the winner of Argentina’s presidential election**

With almost all votes counted Macri has taken 52 percent. His victory is the first in more than a decade for Argentina’s centre-right.

“Today is an historic day. It’s a change of era. And that’s why this change can’t be based on revenge or a settling of scores,” declared Macri possibly reflecting on a campaign which had been marked by strong mutual attacks. A month ago it looked as if Daniel Scioli was set to win, keeping the party of outgoing president Christina Fernandez de Kirchner in power. However, in the weeks between the first poll and Sunday’s run-off, Macri surged ahead with his business friendly policies.

His win stands as an indictment of De Kirchner’s stewardship of Latin America’s No.3 economy which has been plagued with double-digit inflation, a widening of the fiscal deficit, and her confrontational style.

## Observatories combine to create a virtual telescope the size of the Earth

The ALMA observatory located in Chile’s Atacama Desert is to join with observatories from all over the world to create a telescope that can identify objects as small as 10cm on the surface of the Moon

The technique consists of combining data gathered by ‘two or more telescopes’ to create a virtual telescope with a collection dish equal in size to the geographical distance between them. The project will allow creation of a ‘virtual telescope the size of the Earth’.

Lars-Ake Nyman, head of scientific operations at ALMA, notes, “So I mean it’s fantastic that all these countries are working together and they can form the status quo because with this telescope your form a telescope the size of the Earth more-or-less when it comes to resolution and images. You can study very distant objects in much detail, and also closer objects, like the centre of our Milky Way, the Black Hole, can almost be resolved with these types of observations.”

ALMA will be included in the *Event Horizon Telescope* project, a worldwide network of telescopes



The ALMA observatory

that will study, not only super-massive black holes, but stars, quasars and many objects that are part of our Universe.

Lars-Ake Nyman explains some of the procedures, “The astronomers can write observing proposals, and then the proposals are being treated and eventually

they become scheduled.” In August, ALMA linked up with the US National Radio Astronomy Observatory, creating a virtual telescope able to observe the 3C 454.3 quasar, one of the brightest radio-objects in the sky, despite the fact that it is located 7.8 billion light years from home.

## Lyon cancels *Fête des Lumières* Lights Festival over security fears

**This year’s Lights Festival in the French city of Lyon has been cancelled for security reasons following the Paris attacks**

Describing the decision as ‘painful’, the Mayor said recent events showed the terrorist threat remained at a ‘high level’. Instead, he said the *Fête des Lumières* would be transformed into a tribute to the Paris victims, calling on Lyon residents to light up the city with candles on window ledges, in line with the festival’s origins.

It’s a blow for business: the four-day event in early December attracts nearly three million people — well over double the city’s population. Hundreds of thousands visit each of the main displays in Lyon’s squares.

The main police union had called for the festival to be cancelled, fearing that in the current climate even the sound of a firecracker might cause panic.

## Greece approves reforms to unlock further bailout cash

**Greece has approved a reform bill, which paves the way for the release of further bailout funds from its international lenders**

Meanwhile, Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras’ parliamentary majority shrank after two dissenting lawmakers were expelled. The bill, outlining regulation on tax arrears and home foreclosures, is set to unlock the two billion Euros to pay state arrears and a further 10 billion Euros to recapitalise Greece’s top four banks.

However, the defections of Nikos Nikolopoulos of the right-wing Independent Greeks party and Stathis Panahgoulis of Tsipras’ Syriza party further weakened the left-right coalition.

Nikolopoulos voted against the bailout bill, while Panagoulis abstained. Both were expelled from the ruling coalition’s parliamentary group, meaning the government can now count on 153 votes in the 300-seat chamber.

## Dakar 2016 race route unveiled

**Details of the 2016 Dakar Rally were unveiled at a ceremony in Paris**

The 37th running of the event will be the eighth successive year that it takes place in South America. It will take the competitors across Argentina and Bolivia but misses out Chile altogether this year.

The gruelling rally raid will cover some 9,300 kilometres of which 4,700 will be timed special stages. The Race begins on January 2nd in Buenos Aires and ends two weeks later in the central Argentine city of Rosario.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**





# Popularity on a high

**Belarusian Pesnyary gives concert at Minsk's Concert Hall on Friday 13th, for second year in a row**

By Yuliana Leonovich

Defying superstition, the band held their recent concert on the inauspicious date. In fact, it's likely that they didn't even notice the incidence. Before the show, Vladislav Misevich admitted, "It's more important for us that the concert is taking place. Some time ago, we made a decision to perform once every two years. In 2014, we gave a large solo concert dedicated to the 45th anniversary of *Pesnyary's* foundation. However, our fans have been insistent, for which we're very thankful. At their request, we again decided to give a concert — presenting a new programme."

Interestingly, the musicians chose not to devote their concert to a certain event, rather agreeing to perform in a relaxed atmosphere. Endless congratulation messages were replaced by warm dialogue and recollections of past times. Importantly, kind friends were invited: fans and colleagues who have helped *Belarusian Pesnyary* experi-

ence their second youth and artistic revival.

The musicians never stop surprising their fans, despite gathering representatives of various generations to their concerts for many years. Some come to recollect their happy past and others attend to simply hear the band's repertoire. This time, one of the most popular Belarusian ensembles shared the stage with friends: artistes from the Spamash Producer Centre — Alexey Gross and Alena Lanskaya, in addition to saxophone player Vitaly Yamuteev and the choir of Minsk's Seminary — led by Proto-deacan Andrey Skrobota. Vladislav Misevich and Alexander Katikov personally visited rehearsals by



seminary pupils in Zhirovi-chi, several days before their performance. Vladislav admitted that he was delighted by what he'd observed. The musicians' choice of invited guests was wonderful, with audiences applauding ardently after just two songs; those present did not wish to part with the young singers. Honoured Artiste Alena Lanskaya received fans' approval also. Speaking after the performance, she not-



Alena Lanskaya shares that it's been her long held dream to perform alongside *Belarusian Pesnyary*

ed, "In childhood, I hardly dreamt that I'd perform alongside Daineko, Penya or Misevich. *Kupalle Summer Night* and *Red Rose* were often heard at home; I grew up to their accompaniment. Today, my dream has come true. I hope this won't be our last experiment."

*Belarusian Pesnyary* aren't making any promises for future performances. As Mr. Misevich explains, they'd rather not repeat a programme. He says, "Last year, we realised Vladimir Mulyavin's dream of preparing a major concert programme, with an orchestra. This time, we invited our talented younger colleagues. Next time, we'll offer something new."

Some time ago, *Belarusian Pesnyary* were rare guests to Minsk,

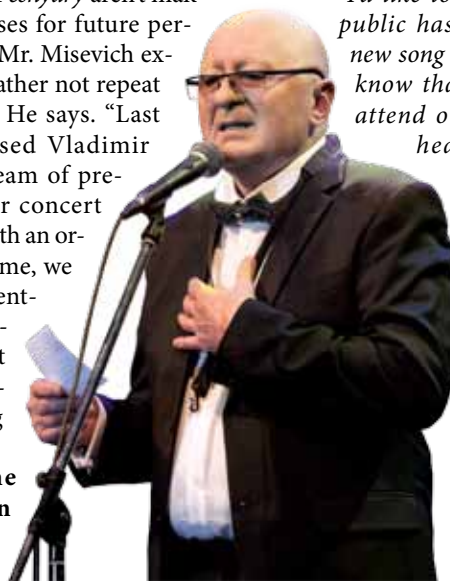
performing only every few years. The situation has changed now, as you've been giving concerts in Belarus more often. Why is this?

*In truth, the financial crisis in Russia affected our concert activity, just as it has other artists, including those abroad. Look at how many Russian singers have come to Belarus in concert recently, thanks to our improved climate and eager audiences. Our popularity in Belarus remains high — much owing to our fans. We've retained the same 'face' for 45 years, and have a great repertoire.*

Moreover, we're more than simply acting the part of 'pesnyars' (singers): it's our whole being. This may account for our band's success.

Your programme included not only golden hits but new compositions. *Belarusian Pesnyary* seems to be on a high.

*I'd like to think so. The public has accepted our new song warmly but we know that most people attend our concerts to hear Mulyavin's legacy. We've preserved the charm of Mulyavin's time while attempting to offer fresh ideas. As you see, we're a success! We still enjoy popularity and love. What else could an artiste desire?*



Vladislav Misevich

## Really much to show Estonians

By Olga Frolova

**Exhibition of Slutsk sashes from Belarusian museums being held in Tallinn in 2016, as discussed at meeting between Belarusian Ambassador Anatoly Stepus and Estonian Culture Minister Indrek Saar**

Prospects for joint activities in the field of culture have come under discussion, covering plans for 2016's Days of Culture of Estonia

in Belarus, as well as co-operation between our largest museums. A Slutsk sashes exhibition in Tallinn is among those being organised, helping forge ties between the national minorities of our two countries.

The Belarusian Ambassador also met the Director of Kadriorg Art Museum, Aleksandra Murre, who confirmed eagerness to expand long-term relations with Belarus' National Art Museum. Mr. Stepus is keen to see more liaisons encouraged.

## Comparing two geniuses

By Anastasia Prokhorova

**Gomel exhibition of sculpture, ceramic and graphic works, by Salvador Dali and Pablo Picasso**

Over 100 works by the two greatest Spanish masters of modernity are on show in Gomel: graphic pieces and famous sculptures by Dali, including his *Women in the Fire*, and *Surrealistic Flowers*; and pictures and ceramic works by Pablo Picasso.

Visitors will have the rare opportunity to compare the two geniuses' views and thoughts on women, bullfighting and hot Spain.

Russian businessman and patron of arts Alexander Shadrin has generously permitted his own collection to go on show, gathered over the past 15 years. Many of the items were purchased from Parisian museums of Salvador Dali, as well as from private collectors, galleries and auction houses across Europe.

## Step towards big victory

By Yekaterina Alexandrova

**Junior Eurovision entrant from Belarus, Ruslan Aslanov, is convinced that he'll see success at the adult competition**

Ruslan Aslanov, representing Belarus at *Junior Eurovision-2015* Song Contest in Bulgarian Sofia, came fourth, just behind Malta's Destiny Chukunyere, Armenian Mika and Slovenian Lina Kuduzovič. However, Ruslan isn't upset; rather he is convinced, "We've done everything we could. Though it's very difficult to enter the big stage, I tried to combine the pleasant and the useful and receive pleasure from this." A young performer promised his fans to return to *Eurovision* stage, but that of the adult competition. "I still have three years. Wait for creative explosions!" notes Ruslan when he spoke to his friends and journalists who were welcoming him in the national airport.



Ruslan Aslanov

His vocal teacher Olga Drozdova, who accompanied Ruslan during his trip, is also glad for her pupil. "I think we've won, since we managed to come fourth though all our rivals were truly strong."

Ruslan thanked his fans and admitted that he had one of the biggest support teams. "I was pleased that people had come to support me and it was easier for me to enter the stage due to them," notes the young singer. The Belarusian performer has also made friends with his rivals and after the *Eurovision* Ruslan's range of friends expanded by 17 (this was the number of entrants at the contest from various countries, including Australia).

The fact that Ruslan was among top ten is viewed by many of his adult colleagues as no surprise. For example, a Belarusian entrant of the adult *International Eurovision-2015* Song Contest, Uzari, calls the young performer 'talented' and his song 'cool'. Actually, Ruslan's *Volshebstvo* (Magic) song truly differed from other performances. The singer turned into a true magician on the stage, who was able to control any powers. The show was interactive and the team brought exclusive graphic decorations due to which dozens of LED butterflies flew into the audience hall during Ruslan's performance, adding to his spectacular performance.

# Melody in colours from Bushchik

Artworks by this artist generating uplifting optimism, as evident at Minsk gallery exhibition

By Veniamin Mikheev

Mikalai Bushchik uses colour in an unusual manner, creating sketchy portraits, and 'childish' multi-coloured houses and trees. Of course, they are not supposed to appear realistic, rather representing an idea. Experimenting with colour, he creates poetry and musical rhythm, both in oil and watercolours.

The titles of his works are also interesting, evoking much: *Space of Fire* uses warm reds to symbolise heat: wide strips represent desert, while the sky is separated by a horizon line, holding a small yellow sun.

Bushchik is a moody artist, creating unusual landscapes: not inventions of the subconscious but representations from his travels. As we know, nature inspires many emotions in our soul.

You can't help but feel that the gallery is filled with bright colours, despite the subdued lighting. There is an atmosphere of mystery, as if conjuring the depths of the universe. Having entered, you feel as if you must whisper, speaking in murmurs, to avoid breaking the harmony of art. It becomes like a rare bird we might startle and frighten away.

It is said that Bushchik creates impressions rather than images. He explains, "As far back as I can remember, I always liked to paint. At first, I simply copied drawings, but I surprised my parents when I was 5 by painting a true circle. They even took compasses to measure it. When I was 14, I received my first paints, from my grandmother and grandfather. I then began reproducing the canvases of great artists. I've always valued classics, seeing their depth of thought and feeling. This has always stayed with me: not so much the outward side of things, but the essence and emotional side."

Mikalai's vocabulary does not include the word 'must', as



Rainbow of colours inside gallery exhibition halls



Mikalai Bushchik and his impressions



Emotions conjure images. I try to bypass destructive elements, as they negate a state of harmony. Where thoughts form a positive 'line' of harmony, they become structured."

He considers art to be organic, representing time. As for masterpieces, he states, "I think that a masterpiece combines the creativity of an artist, composer and poet, representing the time in which they live. Each artist is a pioneer."

You can't help but feel that the harmony about which he speaks is his constant state: one of calm. He notes, "You

need to stick to your path: be true to yourself. Love life and the concept of 'love'. All depends on desire and the choices we make. Our soul and mind must work jointly, singing with one voice, whether or not it's profitable. Good income may bring disharmony, so making choices isn't easy. Some are greedy, while others are more purposeful. You must choose between a life of satisfaction and internal calm, or generating money, at the cost of satisfaction. Of course, the latter often brings disappointment."

People always speak of his sense of colour, calling him an 'outstanding colourist'. His latest works are no exception, being a triumph of sunshine. I do wonder which locations he's depicting.

**Where does all this light come from? Our landscapes are full of greys and browns.**

*I wanted a new view of myself and a new view for spectators. I wanted to show new compositions: possibilities of the soul.*

**What has changed in your works?**

*Time has changed, having its own rhythm, as we feel through our environment, and the impetuosity or calm of people. There is the rhythm of conversation, of relations, of roads, and of our thoughts and online communication. The face of time in rhythm changes, as do our emotions. Each emotion has its colour: hot or cold. I don't know how best else to explain.*

*I don't aspire to gain public acclaim, or to create a chronicle. I create for other reasons: to show the aesthetic and spiritual beginning of time.*

**I see that you still use your vivid colours.**

*It's my attempt to show my impressions of today. The exhibition has its flavour.*

**Does everything revolve around colour: plot, images and composition?**

*Certainly. I try, as much as I can. Only the future can decide. These are only my impressions; others may feel differently. I hope they excite others and appear unexpected. After all, an artist portrays what he sees: for me, the harmony of the world, and a feeling of happiness.*

*I'd like others to see this and take this harmony to heart, rather than watching their action films or tearful soap operas. The world is perfectly harmonious. Even world corporations polluting nature display caution in their decisions, and on problems of poverty. People do tend to think about the future, and about children.*

*My works are symbolic rather than chronological.*

**Your watercolours show your travel impressions?**

*Yes, they are my personal perception, like chamber music. I toured Belarus, Lithuania and Bulgaria. For an artist, travel is life, even if he simply looks out of the window. Watercolours have their own passion, thirsting to show the beautiful gift of life. I'm really surprised when, in painting, I see semi-photographic images rather than emotions. Technique should have its place, since it satisfies the first aesthetic interest, but an artist should express himself, interpreting the soul's vision, and telling his own story, through the melody of paint. It doesn't matter whether the work is realistic.*

**Has travelling been a strong influence over you?**

*Travel allows us to experience the world as a child, gaining new stimuli. I like to rejoice in such feelings, revisiting a place only when I've nearly forgotten it: when only symbolic memories remain. I'm surprised that people paint trees and stones. I prefer something else: people, the Earth, and space.*

**You've always said that culture and art are very different things.**

*Yes, culture is like the soil, while art is what grows on this soil. Our way of life is culture, while that to which the soul aspires is something light and harmonious: art. Creativity is everything in which we are engaged; how we are engaged in it is art.*

Our conversation revealed much about Mikalai Bushchik: not only about his creativity, but about his personality.

# Worthy performance in home tournament

Minsk hosts International Greco-Roman wrestling tournament in honour of Olympic champion Oleg Karavayev, with Belarusian wrestlers again proving themselves, with silver and bronze medals

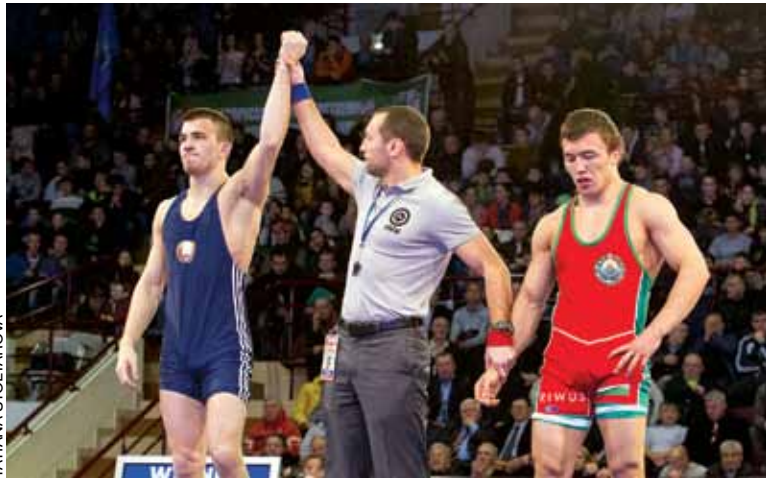
By Igor Leshin

The Belarusian team almost claimed gold, having an equal score in the final, but lost on points, to Russia.

As is traditional, Belarus was able to enter two national teams: Belarus-1, of skilled and titled wrestlers; and Belarus-2, of talented, up and coming young athletes. However, there was some last minute juggling of team members, to ensure the best matches during the round against the Russians (being drawn in the same initial group).

At the preliminary stage, Belarus-1 confidently outstripped Ukraine and Uzbekistan, only stumbling on meeting the Russians. In the match for third place, our wrestlers met Azerbaijan, defeating them 5:3, to enthusiastic exclamations in the packed stands at the Palace of Sports.

Belarus and Russia met in the final, with Belarusian Soslan Daurov (acclaimed as having the best technique in the tournament) winning his match, taking the first event point. Three defeats followed, before our team rallied, and managed to win some points.



Timur Berdyev after his victorious fight



The match won by Soslan Daurov

With their last strength, in the hardest duels, Dzhabid Gamzatov and Victor Sosunovsky gained victories. Before the last match, our team was just one point behind the Russians. Iosif Chugoshvili appeared on the mat in the decisive fight, and

fought brilliantly. However, although the score was 4:4, victory went to Russia, on additional indicators. Those watching were left in no doubt that Belarus' wrestlers gained the most complicated victories, and that the team's silver is worthy of gold.

## Visiting Pyshki for football

By Yegor Glebov

**First stone laid in constructing Grodno's indoor football stadium, in Pyshki urban forest, close to new indoor ice rink, and using same modern technologies, with pneumatic walls and roof**

The city has long lamented its lack of an indoor football stadium, having only a standard artificial pitch, which has been used for around a decade. Grodno Regional Executive Committee is jointly financing the new facility with the Belarusian Football Federation.

The stadium is being given to the Neman football club sports school, for year round training of young footballers and professionals. The new construction meets all requirements for full training of teams, including heating during cold weather and a contemporary air conditioning system for comfort in summer.

Around three hectares have been allocated for construction, allowing seating for 1,000, well-furnished cloakrooms and administrative offices.

Pyshki forest area has been highlighted as an area of 'health', with cycle tracks and an indoor ice rink; the new stadium is a logical addition.

Governor Vladimir Kravtsov tells us about the football stadium's importance to the development of this sport:

Football is among the most popular and widespread of sports in the Grodno Region, with over 4,000 children attending clubs. The Region's facilities are growing, with 28 mini-football grounds now operating, and five full-sized pitches, with artificial covering. We all, especially footballers, will be looking forward to the stadium opening, to try out the new indoor football field.



Chairman of the Belarusian Wrestling Federation, Yuri Chizh, at the tournament's opening ceremony

The head coach of the national team, Igor Petrenko, said proudly, "Our guys fought to the last! Today, we were very close to defeating Russia's team. Our wrestlers gained excellent experience, seeing that even idols can be conquered."

The young team also showed their worth. For them, the final meeting against skilled Russians was great motivation in showing them the level to which they should aspire, and the work ahead.

Soon, the national team will join a training camp, having six months before licence tournaments. They have the opportunity to correct mistakes and improve their skills. We aspire to win the maximum number of medals in top tournaments and the same number of Olympic licences!

The Chairman of the Belarusian Wrestling Federation, Yuri Chizh, and the Honourable Chairman of the Federation, three-time Olympic champion Alexander Medved, observed all the matches.

## General Assembly to be held in Minsk

By Igor Grishin

**The city which will host the General Assembly of the European Olympic Committees (EOC) in 2016 has been announced at 44th EOC General Assembly in Prague, with representatives of European NOCs preferring Minsk**

The preliminary application included three countries: Armenia, Belarus and Malta. The final list of contenders was announced on November 21st and Yerevan and Minsk were competing for the right to host the event. The President of the National Olympic Committee of Armenia, Garik Tsarukyan, notes in his speech that because of the friendly



NOC building in Minsk

relations with and respect for Belarus' NOC President Alexander Lukashenko, Armenia withdraws its bid in favour of Belarus. The Vice President of the Belarusian National Olympic Committee, Maxim Ryzhenkov, held a presentation — Minsk-2016 — for the participants of the General Assembly. Then a voting procedure took place after which the Belarusian application was announced as the winner. EOC President Patrick Hickey noted

that Minsk will be hosting the General Assembly and assured that it will be an important and memorable visit to the Belarusian capital for the whole European Olympic family because Minsk has already successfully hosted a number of large-scale sports events, including the 2014 IIHF

World Championship. The Prague has also hosted a working meeting of the Belarusian delegation with the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, who said that he would like to visit Minsk in 2016 as part of the General Assembly. Mr. Bach is also eager to meet legendary Belarusian fencers, Alexander Romankov and Yelena Belova, with whom he competed at the Olympic Games.

## New methods lead to records

**New preparation methods of Belarusian national swimming team result in evident improvements, with athletes able to set up nine national records at Belarus Open Swimming Championships, recently hosted by Brest**

"Eighteen months ago, we began to introduce new methods in preparation of our leading swimmers and changed the technique of distance passing for young athletes, who will be able to make a name for themselves in future. The results of the short-course swimming tournament testify that the athletes have accepted the innovations and adjusted to them, enabling them to set up nine national records in Brest," notes head coach of the Belarusian national swimming team, Dmitry Mantsevich.

After a small break the national swimming squad of Belarus started



Dmitry Mantsevich

training at the Brest Regional Centre of Olympic Reserve for one of the most important starts of the winter season — European Short-Course Championships — hosted by Israel from December 2nd-6th. The leader of the national team, Alexandra Gerasimenya, feels special responsibility before big starts. Two-time Olympic prize winner in London notes that she is now in good form and pins hopes on 100m freestyle distance at the forthcoming continental forum.

# Festival of the week



28th International Festival of Modern Choreography (IFMC) held in Vitebsk

## Exhibitions

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 6<sup>th</sup> December. *Korea's Life*

Until 11<sup>th</sup> December. *From*

*Realism to Impressionism* (19<sup>th</sup>-20<sup>th</sup> century painting)

Until 22<sup>nd</sup> December. *Modus Vivendi*

Until 30<sup>th</sup> December. *Celebrating*

*Victory Day in Museum*

### NATIONAL HISTORY

#### MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 6<sup>th</sup> December. *Wonderful*

*World of Watercolours*

Until 6<sup>th</sup> December. *The Silver Age*

Until 31<sup>st</sup> December. *Major*

*Presentation of Museum Relics:*

*79 Steps Inside History*

Until 1<sup>st</sup> June. *Belarus' Trade*

*on the Scales of History*

### MUSEUM OF MATURE AND ECOLOGY OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 6<sup>th</sup> March. *Jungles*

*behind the Window*

### MUSEUM OF MATURE AND ECOLOGY'S EXHIBITION HALL

9A Bogdanovich Street

Until 17<sup>th</sup> January. *Mummies*

*of the World*

### MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street

Until 1<sup>st</sup> December. *Maxim's Garden*

### ZABRODIE

#### ETHNOGRAPHICAL COMPLEX

Zabrodie village

Until 26<sup>th</sup> December. *Museum of the*

*First World War and Retro Machinery*

### PICTURE HOUSE

89/3 Pobediteley Avenue, office 3

Until 30<sup>th</sup> November. *Zoya*

Until 31<sup>st</sup> December. *Great*

*Classics of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

## Theatres

### BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

27.11. The Nutcracker or One More Christmas Story

28.11. Rigoletto 29.11. The Swan Lake

01.12. The Grey Legend 01.12. Romeo and Juliet

03.12. 1900; The Magic Flute

### BELARUSIAN STATE

#### ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

27.11. Tours of the Russian Drama Theatre

(Vilnius): Eugene Onegin 28.11. Tours of the

Russian Drama Theatre (Vilnius): King Lear

29.11. The Clandestine Marriage (Duke

Luxembourg); The Town Musicians of Bremen

30.11. Dubrovsky 01.12. Blue Cameo

02.12. Wedding in Malinovka

### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL

#### ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

27.11. Double Eternity 28.11. An Ideal Husband;

Magic Rings of Almazor 29.11. Tricks of Khanuma

01 and 02.12. Tours of the State Academic Small

Theatre: Wolves and Sheep 02.12. Oedipus

03.12. Tours of the State Academic Small

Theatre: Wedding, Wedding, Wedding

### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL

#### ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

27.11. Paulinka 28.11. Pinsk Gentry

01 and 02.12. Art 03.12. Kolyady Night

### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

27.11 and 01-02.12. The Mechanical Man 28

and 29.11. Who Laughs Last 30.11. Master

and Margarita 03.12. Abduction of Yelena

### REPUBLICAN THEATRE

#### OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

27.11. Dzed 28.11. A Two Dogs' Tale; Mr. Joke

29.11. People's Love; The Sea Wolf

01.12. The White Angel with Black Wings

02.12. Three Giselles 03.12. Feint-Kruaze

# Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

## November and December of decades and centuries past come to life

**November 27th.** In 1890, a military pilot, a Knight of the Order of St. George and a Lieutenant-Colonel — Nikolay Mulkov — was born in the Grodno Region.

**November 28th.** In 1950, Belarusian artist Nikolay Kuzmich — a laureate of Belarus' State Award — was born. He created a copy of St. Yevfrosiniya's Cross.

**November 29th.** In 1932, architect Boris Yurtin was born. Among his major works are the architectural-artistic decoration of the Park Chelyuskintsev metro station, landscape complexes of Minsk's eastern regions on the basis of the Slepianka water-park semi-ring and reconstruction of the Dinamo Stadium territory.

**November 30th.** In 1899, a People's Poet of Belarus and an academician of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences — Mikhas Lynkov — was born.

**December 1st.** In 1935, a Belarusian singer and an Honoured Artiste of Belarus — Valentina Morozova — was born in Minsk.

**December 2nd.** In 1958, Vladimir Parfenovich — a Belarusian kayak sportsman and a three-time Olympic champion — was born.

**December 3rd.** In 1962, a Belarusian handballer, an Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR, a world champion among juniors and a champion of the 24th Olympics — Georgy Sviridenko — was born.

**November 27th.** In 1859, the first Minsk-Bobruisk telegraph line was put into operation in Belarus and the first wire was

sent from Minsk to Bobruisk. The date became the birthday of Belarusian electric communication.

**November 27th.** In 2001, a memorial plaque was unveiled to Nikolay Yeremenko-senior — a People's Artiste of the USSR. It's placed on house #16 in Minsk's Maxim Tank Street where he lived his last twenty years.

**November 30th.** In 1923, the House-Museum of the 1st session of the RSDRP, a branch of the National Museum of Belarusian History and Culture was established.



**November 28th.** In 1871, the Smolensk-Minsk-Brest railway section was put into operation while November 28th is the official date of the Belarusian Railways' launch.

**November 28th.** In 1923, the first Belarusian literary society — Maladnyak — was established; it was initiated and then led by Mikhas Charot, a Belarusian poet.

**November 28th.** In 1924, the Kuibyshev Leather Haberdashery Factory opened in Minsk — now known as Galanteya Company.

**November 28th.** In 1926, construction of a concrete collector of the Nemiga River

completed — connecting the Romanovskaya Sloboda Street and the Svisloch River.

**November 28th.** In 1996, the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus came into force (it was adopted at a Republican referendum on November 24th, 1996), with amendments and supplements.

**November 28th.** In 1996, the National Assembly's House of Representatives and Council of the Republic were established.

**November 29th.** In 1924, the 1st All-Belarusian Local Lore Conference took place in Minsk.

**November 29th.** In 1930, Minsk City Council's Presidium ruled to introduce obligatory seven-year studies for 12-16 year olds.

**November 30th.** In 1932, the Minsk-Orsha highway was solemnly launched.

**November 30th.** In 1962, the first specialised Young Technician shop opened in Minsk.

**November 30th.** In 1998, the Vladimir Korotkevich Cultural-Enlightening Centre opened in Orsha.

**December 1st.** In 1944, the Republican Lenin Library began its work.

**December 1st.** In 1984, Minsk's Factory of Full-Colour Printing was established — becoming one of Belarus' largest printing companies.

**December 2nd.** In 1921, the Belarusian Republican Gosbank opened in Minsk — known as the National Bank of the Republic of Belarus since 1991.