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**Buyers continue waiting for fall in property prices**

A typical Minsk property buyer tends to say: 'We'd like a two or three roomed apartment, in a brick or frame-block house, built no earlier than 2000, near the metro' **Page 5**


**Training with dolphins**

A special world, filled with aquatic games, dolphins' smiles and sea splashes **Page 7**


**Good time when bankers help culture**

Development Bank of Belarus plans to annually release editions dedicated to cultural treasures and outstanding personalities, notes Chairman Sergei Rumas, speaking at book-album launch, devoted to Alexander Kishchenko **Page 9**



Those working at Minsk's Integral Plant are true innovative experts

## Exporting innovations surely proves profitable and mutually beneficial

Today Belarus liaises with 149 countries in innovative sphere → **4**

# Wealth of land obviously needs preservation

By Vladimir Khromov

## Alexander Lukashenko stresses need for improved legislation to protect land use

The Head of State has received a draft decree to amend legislation relating to the withdrawal and provision of land plots. He commented, "You know my attitude towards land, especially farmland and forest areas. At present, construction projects and other activities connected with the

acquisition of land cannot be passed without the President's approval."

He reminded that, some time ago, the governors of Belarusian regions had the right to supervise the allotment of lands, before being stripped of this right for mismanagement. Mr. Lukashenko recalled, "I explained why this happened. We'd never seen such land chaos as during that time. All kinds of buildings, warehouses, enterprises and housing were built on



BELTA

Land requires caring hand

farmland. We must not use arable land for such purposes. Many generations of

people took care of those lands, which are vital to any state. This is why I have

such an attitude towards this issue."

Mr. Lukashenko remarked that, before signing a corresponding decree, he would like to discuss the rational use of land resources. "It's our wealth. Agricultural lands account for 90 percent of our territory. They should be used efficiently," he urged. The President asked those present at the recent meeting the reasons for revising existing regulations, and asked about Government plans to improve

the use of land resources and raise efficiency.

"It's essential to clean up our lands. They are our brand and our face. All people arriving in our country say that we live in harmony with nature: that we have created good conditions for rest and life," noted Mr. Lukashenko. "Our health relies on clean air and land resources, including forests, which is why I focus on the use of farmland and forest resources. I will toughen my requirements in future."

# Bologna process begins

## Belarus joins Bologna Process, after meeting of EHEA Education Ministers, hosted by Yerevan

By Olga Pasiyak

The Minister of Education of Belarus, Mikhail Zhuravkov, is confident that our national model of higher education is competitive globally. Joining the Bologna Process is a long-awaited event but how will it affect the quality of our university diplomas? Membership provides only the opportunity to share experience.

BSU Pro-rector Alexey Danilchenko explains that our higher education system aims to become more mobile and competitive, raising its status on the world market. Naturally, our universities need to keep pace with changing times, reflecting the needs of the labour market. More young people than ever before are now receiving higher education: not just in Belarus but worldwide. The Rector of the Republican Institute of Higher Schooling, Victor Gaisenk, notes that, since the later decades of the 20th century, the number of those studying at any one time has increased from around 13 million to 82 million! Every day, the figure becomes more impressive.

This is a positive trend, since knowledge brings opportunities, but the financing of study has become a challenge, as has maintaining quality, and prospects for graduate employment. Belarus currently boasts about 400,000 students (400 per 1000 of the

population). This places us in fourth place globally, after the South Koreans, Americans and Russians. The number has increased eight-fold since 1960. In addition, every third student studies without paying tuition fees.

At the first stage of university study, Belarus offers 382 specialties; at the second stage, there are 331, although most are humanities subjects, with communication, law and economics leading the way. About 90 percent of students at private universities are studying these spheres.

Each element requires assessment and documentation, making good management essential. Meanwhile, society has need of more mathematicians, physicists and other scientific specialists. The World Bank has discovered that about 70 percent of companies in Belarus admit to being hampered in their development by lack of sufficiently skilled workers. It appears that our universities have some way to go to 'catch up' with the needs of the labour market. Meanwhile, more funding is needed, since only 5 percent of GDP is spent on the educational system (including 0.65 percent on higher education). Higher-education teaching personnel earn barely the average national salary in our country, rather than the 'ideal', which would be at least double the average. Financial autonomy for universities is also highly desirable.



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

At the Informatics and Radioelectronics University's laboratory



German Gref

## Business talk about finances

By Veniamin Pimenov

### Belarus and Sberbank of Russia satisfied by level of co-operation and ready to discuss further joint steps, notes Alexander Lukashenko on meeting Sberbank's Chairman of the Board, German Gref

The President notes that Sberbank has fulfilled and, even, exceeded obligations taken five years ago, under an investment agreement with the Belarusian Government. He commented, "I must say that Sberbank has fulfilled its obligations as no other Russian company has done; it has even surpassed our expectations, for which I'm very grateful."

BPS-Sberbank assets have increased 2.5-fold in USD terms, with loans up 2.3-fold and capital 1.5-fold. Mr. Lukashenko voiced his gratefulness for the bank's support of Belarusian equipment and noted that Mr. Gref's visit should help Belarus review its action plan relating to the Russian Rouble. He added, "For co-ordination, it will be most useful to work in unison."

Speaking of global economics, the Belarusian President recalled a recent visit by China's President, Xi Jinping. Mr. Lukashenko was heartened to hear that China believes a slow recovery is now evident and the two heads of state agreed to 'navigate together'. Naturally, there have been negative factors affecting Russia and Belarus.

Mr. Gref thanked the Belarusian Government for its support and for offering favourable conditions to business development. Of Sberbank Group, he stated that there are no issues sitting 'like a stone on the soul'. He is keen to continue co-operation, regardless of difficult external economic conditions, and has offered to plan the next joint steps.

# New rules for obtaining a Schengen visa

By Svetlana Devyatkova

## From June 23rd, all consulates issuing Schengen visas will require fingerprints and photos of applicants, for Visa Information System (VIS) database

The recent press conference for Belarusian journalists tackled issues of security and the facilitation of visa issuance. Biometric data will be stored for 59 months

and used in all subsequent visa applications, regardless of place of submission. Spend one minute giving your personal data and it is then available to every consulate and embassy within the Schengen system.

Rodolphe Richard, who heads Political, Press and Information Section at the EU Delegation in Belarus, reassured those who already have multiple entry visas that they will remain valid. The EU representative notes that there

may be initial queues, as a great many people arrive to give their biometric details (including those travelling with groups from agencies) but he promises that it will be a 'temporary inconvenience', which will 'subside quickly'.

Some exemptions will be made: children under 12 years; citizens physically unable to attend; heads of state; members of government; and monarchs and members of royal families. However, if a diplomat lacks visa-free

access to a country, data must remain in the database. From June 23rd, all others will need to submit their prints.

Interpol won't have access to the fingerprint database at present, but the European police will eventually receive access to the system's alphanumeric and biometric data, as well as information on all applications and 'answers' (stored for 5 years). No detailed dossiers are planned to be created.

# Authority won by daily work

7th Congress of the Trade Union Federation discusses role of trade unions in protecting workers' interests and rights and sets further goals

By Vasily Kharitonov

The forum gathered over 500 delegates from all over the country, including many foreign guests. Besides summing up results and setting goals for the coming five years, the forum is a vital meeting place for debating the interests of Belarusian workers. The Chairman of the Trade Union Federation, Mikhail Orda, notes that the organisation currently represents over 4 million people in Belarus (96.5 percent of all those 'employable'). He adds, "We represent all spheres of the national economy, from industry, construction and agriculture to education and health care. Looking at the Trade Union Federation's representation across the regions, we cover the complete map."

The Trade Union Federation enjoys the greatest membership in Belarus, being extremely popular. Trade unions work with people daily, focusing on a range of issues — including settlement of labour relations and solving personal problems. If a company enjoys a strong trade union organisation and has a collective labour agreement concluded, an employer cannot openly break the law. All their decisions must follow this collective treaty. The Trade Union Federation has often helped protect people's interests. Last year alone, its involvement corrected the Council of Minister's ruling on salaries. As a result, the envisaging of lower salaries in cases of low production efficiency was overturned, preventing employees from suffering as a result of directors' marketing or financial policy mismanagement.

The establishment of trade union organisations at non-state enterprises is high on the agenda. At present, over 3,000 trade union organisations operate at public firms — uniting around 800,000 workers. Work is set to continue. The Trade Union Federation boasts huge potential to benefit society. Among its recent activity has been the renewal of monuments and obelisks on the eve of the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory. It has also done a great job in reconstructing the Mound of Glory Memorial Complex. Symbolically, the congress began its session at this sacred place. Enjoying peace and civil concordance, we can solve any possible task.



Alexander Lukashenko underlines important role of trade unions

The International Labour Organisation recently announced that only around 25 percent of the world's employable population is in work; others have temporary contracts or work without agreements, lacking 'social guarantees'.

In his speech at the Trade Union Federation Congress, President Alexander Lukashenko stated that, against the backdrop of the global financial crisis and economic sanctions against Russia, Belarus has done well in overcoming economic decline. "Belarusian experience in overcoming the economic recession is, in essence, unique. Many people lost their jobs in the USA and Western Europe: hundreds of thousands lost their jobs overnight. However, we survived then

and will manage now," he underlined.

According to the President, Belarus has an open-economy, making it heavily influenced by external factors. "At present, we are experiencing some difficulties, primarily due to the crisis affecting our main trade partners," said Mr. Lukashenko. He notes that problems endured by trade partners invariably affect Belarusian enterprises. "Nevertheless, we have experience of working under such conditions," he added. Securing the competitiveness of Belarusian goods on foreign markets is a number one economic priority, emphasised the President. He believes it is vital to increase labour productivity, while ensuring high quality merchandise and services, reducing costs, saving resources, and increasing each employee's personal responsibility and motivation. He noted

that the whole world is experiencing 'job cuts', with some employers failing to place workers' interests to the fore, sacrificing them to ensure profitability and efficiency.

He asserted, "A system of checks and balances exists to oversee this — via trade union organisations. In line with the law, the latter should avoid unjustified job cuts. Clearly, it's necessary to act from a position of common sense. New technologies are developing and some working functions naturally disappear — being replaced by machinery. However, in this case, dismissed workers should be offered new positions." In his speech, Mr. Lukashenko stated that all changes and new approaches should aim to ensure fair protection and support for workers. "This is the core of Belarus' social-economic model. We'll never set aside these principles." He is keen to see individuals remain at the centre of state policy, viewing the 'state for the people' as a guiding principle rather than a mere slogan. He asserts that our political system has been created to 'guarantee peace and order'. "Our economic model provides the opportunity to work and earn money. We've created a powerful social system, with affordable medicine, education, accommodation and reliable social protection," added the President, stressing that this will continue.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, trade unions should be set up at all enterprises by mid-2016. "Belarus' private sector is steadily growing within the economy, with foreign investors arriving and joint companies established, alongside branches of major foreign corporations. Our countrymen work there and have all rights to enjoy protection of their interests," the President stated. Mr. Lukashenko emphasises that Belarus has made a fully conscious choice in strengthening its union with Russia and establishing the Eurasian Economic Union. At present, the country is expanding its geography of co-operation and enjoying multi-sided strategic collaboration with China and other major world players. "In dialogue with the West, we sometimes face bias and prepossession. With this in mind, the Trade Union Federation needs to strengthen Belarus' image abroad. We need to defend our position and provide true information to the International Labour Organisation."

## Supporting Declaration with a proviso

By Veniamin Mikheev

**Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, who took part in the Eastern Partnership summit in Riga, explains that Belarus has added a special statement to the declaration. "It's a written statement that we've asked to add as an official document," specifies the official, stating that the aim is to make the document 'constructive and future-oriented'. "You can call it a proviso. To avoid making any emotional statements is vital; the statement may be entertaining but building a path to the future is what matters."**

Mr. Makei explains, "Unfortunately, some of our partners believe that loud emotional statements can resolve problems, while we believe these require persistent, huge efforts on a daily basis. They've tried to include some high-sounding accusatory statements within the final declaration of the Riga summit, placing the blame for difficulties within the *Eastern Partnership* at external doors. This simply isn't correct, as we cannot blame purely external factors. Much depends on the European Union; before accusing others, it's wise to examine yourself."

Mr. Makei also pointed out that, during the *Eastern Partnership* Summit, in Vilnius in 2013, the then Ukrainian President Viktor Yanukovich was told that Ukraine either had to sign the agreement on association with the European Union or stay 'elsewhere'. "Not only external factors have driven the *Eastern Partnership* to breaking point today," urges Mr. Makei. "The fact has to be openly recognised. It was clearly voiced by our statement at the summit."

The declaration's text praises Belarus' contribution to negotiations on the Ukrainian crisis, and offers full support towards the OSCE and its efforts, taken through a special monitoring mission and a trilateral contact group. It also supports the diplomatic efforts of the 'Normandy Four' and praises Belarus' contribution to the promotion of negotiations. All sides are called upon to completely fulfil the agreements reached in Minsk in September 2014 and in February 2015. The document also mentions progress in Belarus-EU relations, which tackle liberalisation of the visa regime and inclusion of Belarus in the Bologna Process. Belarus hopes that it will soon enjoy a new level of relations with the European Union, as underlined by Mr. Makei at the plenary session of the Riga summit. He stated, "The *Eastern Partnership* has been instrumental in revitalising, to some extent, dialogue and interaction between Belarus and the EU. Since the Vilnius summit, we have achieved some progress in our relations and have engaged in a number of new tracks, including consultations on modernisation issues and negotiations on visa facilitation and readmission agreements. We've concluded a co-operative arrangement on an early warning mechanism in the field of energy and anticipate the *Partnership for Mobility* project. Our potential for co-operation remains largely untapped though."

## Co-operation should grow with good practical steps

By Vladimir Velikhov

**Belarus ready to develop co-operation with Myanmar across all areas, notes President Alexander Lukashenko on meeting Chairman of House of Nationalities of the Assembly of the Union of Myanmar, Khin Aung Myint**

"We're ready to co-operate with you in all areas, from civil and military education to interaction in ag-

riculture and industrial modernisation. You have huge mineral deposits and we're ready to provide corresponding equipment for agricultural and mining enterprises," noted the Head of State.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, 3-5 key industries could be the foundation for further interaction between Belarus and Myanmar. It's essential to determine these areas on a bilateral basis. "We'll build our trade-economic co-operation around these

spheres," said the Belarusian leader.

The President assured Khin Aung Myint that Belarus is ready to do its best to expand bilateral co-operation while developing new ideas and practical solutions. His guest responded that Myanmar is keen to develop mutually beneficial relations with Belarus, including possible access to the Eurasian Economic Union. Besides agriculture and delivery of equipment, there are opportunities for bilateral interaction in the spheres



Khin Aung Myint

of education and tourism. A committee on co-operation with Belarus has been already established in Myanmar. "We hope to find a way to utilise co-operation potential between our countries in the near future. We need such reliable partners as Belarus," said Khin Aung Myint.



Microcircuit production at Minsk's Integral Plant

# Exporting innovations surely proves profitable and beneficial

## Today Belarus liaises with 149 countries of the world in innovative sphere

By Olga Bebenina

The Belarusian economy is among the most open in the world, exporting around 60 percent of its produce: almost double the global average. The Chairman of the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology, Alexander Shumilin, explains, "Our Government is pursuing a consistent policy to build economic knowledge and enhance citizens' wellbeing through innovative development. With this in mind, all state programmes aim not only to increase exports but to enhance sales of science-intensive and high-tech produce."

In 2014, around \$8.3 billion of such products were exported worldwide and Mr. Shumilin notes that there has been a significant shift towards software and consulting, with 70 percent of service sales relying on IT. It's a pleasing trend. Belarus is focusing not only on countries with high sci-tech potential but on developing nations across Asia, Africa and Latin America. It is extending its export diversity, to cover more science-intensive and sci-tech products,

helping guard against global market fluctuations.

"In February 2015, we took part in Tehran's conference on science, technologies and innovations (as part of the Non-Aligned Movement)," continues Mr. Shumilin. "The event gathered 58 countries and nine international scientific organisations, including the Arab League, and the Abdus Salam International Centre for Theoretical Physics. Belarus' presentation, in Russian, of its sci-tech potential aroused much interest. Most heads of scientific agencies in Africa, Asia and Latin America graduated from Moscow and Minsk Russian-language higher educational establishments so they sometimes know Russian better than English." He comments that this uniting factor opens prospects for new sales markets. While these countries may be little interested in the USA, our developments in the field of agriculture and machinery modernisation, known since Soviet times, arouse true interest.

Belarusians can also learn from their Russian colleagues — particularly in the sphere of entrepreneur-



**Alexander Shumilin**, Chairman of the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology

ship. Mr. Shumilin underlines, "Russia was the first to use non-budget financing successfully for scientific developments and projects. We're now actively co-operating with Russian venture companies, studying their experience. This year, we plan to establish a Belarusian-Russian venture company."

Russia is our long-standing, stable strategic partner in many areas — including science. In 2014, ten sci-tech projects were fulfilled as part of Union State programmes —

*This year, scientists from both states plan to realise programmes on the exploration and mining of natural resources: SKIF-Nedra and SKIF-Geo. These studies are important, since drilling of a single mine costs from \$500,000 to \$2m at present; if in vain, much money is wasted. Prognosis of natural deposits (via probing) is vital for Russia, being rich in natural resources. The Union State budget is allocating around \$12.6m this year, for this goal alone.*

worth 3.151 billion Russian Roubles (around \$100m). This year, scientists from both states plan to realise programmes on the exploration and mining of natural resources: SKIF-Nedra and SKIF-Geo. These studies are important, since drilling of a single mine costs from \$500,000 to \$2m at present; if in vain, much money is wasted. Prognosis of natural deposits (via probing) is vital for Russia, being rich in natural resources. The Union State budget is allocating around \$12.6m this year, for this goal alone.

As a result of the Union State's Cosmos-BR and Cosmos-SG programmes, 19 new cosmic devices have been developed. Among them is Belarus' energy-efficient small-scale impulse plasma engine: the best of its kind for small satellites. In addition, we have developed an on-board complex desk to manage a new generation meteo-satellite, boasting increased durability, reduced weight and production-efficiency.

The Union State has another promising avenue of joint work: the Development and Production of New Generation Micro System Equipment and Unified Integrated Systems for Double Purposes sci-tech programme. Belarusian specialists are now developing 14 samples of technical control-measuring and methodological equipment. To efficiently implement the programme, joint centres are being established: at Mikrosistematehnika (in St. Petersburg) and at Belarus' Planar. According to preliminary estimations, the programme is worth around \$9m in import substitution for the Union State. More than \$50m has been allocated this year to finance Union State sci-tech programmes.

## Almost time for full production

### Svetlogorsk plant to begin trial production in October, with an experimental batch of sulphate bleached chemical pulp, followed by mass volumes in December

By Vladimir Velikhov

More than 85 percent of construction work is complete and equipment has been installed for most lines, with testing now being carried out. Construction of external utilities is also in full swing. "Of the planned \$580 million for purchase of equipment, \$530 million has been spent, with equipment delivered and installed," notes Yuri Kruk, the Director of Svetlogorsk

Pulp and Board Plant JSC.

The total cost of the Belarusian-Chinese investment project is more than \$850 million, with about \$550 million allocated by a Chinese bank. Andritz (Austria), a world leader in equipment and services for the pulp and paper industry, has delivered machinery. Mr. Kruk tells us, "Twelve foreign experts have helped with installation, testing the set up of manufacturing lines."

The plant will be able to produce

about 400,000 tonnes of pulp, of which 75 percent is planned for export, primarily to Europe, the Middle East and China. Mr. Kruk adds, "At this time, 12 leading world traders in the pulp market are competing for the right to sell our production. Each is ready to buy our total annual output."

Once the enterprise has reached capacity, its output volumes should rise five-fold, with an extra 500 workplaces created. Each work-



Construction site of plant in Svetlogorsk

er's annual output will be worth \$130,000. Belarusian timber and its processing waste is being used as the raw material for pulp manufacture,

with 2.5 million cubic metres of timber chemically processed. This will comprise around 20 percent of cut wood in Belarus.

# Buyers continue waiting for fall in property prices

A typical Minsk property buyer tends to say: 'We'd like a two or three roomed apartment, in a brick or frame-block house, built no earlier than 2000, near the metro. It should not be on the ground floor, should have its own entrance and decent neighbours, at a cost of no more than \$1,000 per square metre, with no renovation required'.

By Aelita Syulzhina

Buyers are dictating their preferences, including financial, while sellers are reluctant to compromise on price. A common advert reads: 'New apartment for sale, with improved lay-out and standard fittings, non-corner site, with two apartments per floor. Overlooking parking and inner courtyard. Near public transport, school, kindergarten, shopping centres and wonderful nature! \$1,380 per square metre!'

The mismatch of supply and demand is already obvious, with just 2,000 apartments changing hands in Minsk over the first quarter of 2015: down 15 percent on last year. Regional centres are even more 'stagnant', with sales down by a third on 2014. Since salaries aren't growing, only those desperate to buy are entering the market. Others await better times, with sellers hoping demand will rise and buyers hopeful of a 'trough'.

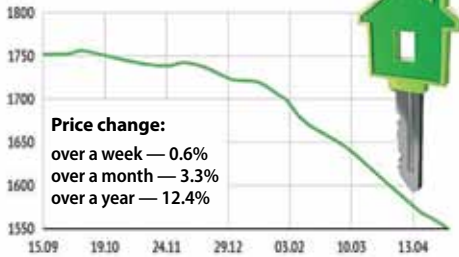
Yuri Zharkov, the managing partner of ViVa Invest Group and Director of the Viva Konsalt Real Estate Agency, comments, "Today, even those who've been long planning to buy an apartment are waiting for a fall in prices. They have the money but are convinced that they'll

see property prices drop in a few months' time, in July or August."

As salaries plateau, purchasing power falls and



Dynamic pattern of average price per square metre in Minsk's flats



The point of equilibrium may arrive by 2021, settling at a price of about \$2,000 per square metre for a panel house of average level (cur-

ways passed on to the buyer. Meanwhile, infrastructure is usually lacking in new residential districts, requiring private builders to pay for connection to services: another expense conveyed to buyers. The outlook is for little new housing in Minsk, and that created being certainly expensive.

In July-August, house prices should 'trough', but rise again in September: even more significantly by the end of the year. Nikolay Prostolupov, the Chairman of the Council of the Belarusian Real Estate Association, predicts, "We are about to see buyer activity fall, alongside prices, with the trend remaining until the new year if no administrative measures are taken. With the average monthly salary standing at Br6 million, it's impossible to call Br18-20 million per square metre affordable. A panel box home built by MAPID OJSC costs \$550-600 per square metre, so why does it sell for \$1,000-1,100? Simply, builders are being obliged to finance infrastructure usually paid for from the city budget: roads, water pipes and various other networks (such as we pay for with our taxes). In the current situation it's too optimistic to expect the budget to undertake this expense."

Mismatch between demand and supply has clear 'numeric outlines'

businesses tend to falter as a result of reduced consumption. Those involved in production, especially, see fewer sales and, unsurprisingly, there is a knock-on effect on the property market. Nevertheless, builders continue to construct accommodation,

and real estate companies behind new housing are reducing their prices, to attract solvent consumers. As building material prices were not indexed to the devaluation of the national currency, the cost price of building has fallen (in US Dollar equiva-

lent). Of course, in reducing prices, profits that would be used to finance further projects are lost. The market also lacks future building sites, besides money to develop them, so there may be a future period in which new buildings are scarce.

rently priced at \$1,000). The explanation is simple. To build from scratch, land must be purchased at auction, which is no cheap venture. Minsk lacks vacant lots, and all new houses 'need' underground parking these days: an expense al-

## Optimistic assessments for foreign investors

International financial organisations are showing growing interest in implementing projects in Belarus, notes Poland's Deputy Foreign Minister, Konrad Pawlik, at Minsk seminar for Polish investors

By Vladimir Khromov

"Recently we've seen growing interest from international financial organisations regarding the realisation of projects in Belarus," underlines Mr. Pawlik. He adds, "We hope that the improving economic situation in Belarus will raise the country's credit rating, helping intensify Polish-Belarusian economic partnerships."

In his view, international financial organisations' interest in Belarus derives from optimism regarding our economic development. Sceptics would have us believe that the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, the World Bank and the Inter-

national Finance Corporation are looking about for alternate 'recipients' of investment funds because of conflict in the region but, in truth, these organisations are realising Belarus' potential and prospects.

Mr. Pawlik emphasises that 'the rhetoric of reform should translate into real action' and notes that Poland's economy has benefitted greatly from co-operation with international financial organisations. Various sectors of the Polish economy, including those not sufficiently attractive from a commercial point of view, have allowed the country to not only upgrade its economy but to introduce international standards in terms of attract investment.



At seminar for Polish investors, hosted by Minsk

Mr. Pawlik has invited investors to take advantage of the opportunities being offered by international organisations in Belarus, being convinced that this will inspire further dy-

namic development of Belarusian-Polish economic relations and effective use of existing potential. He also welcomes Belarus' use of opportunities being offered by the Polish

banking system and the Export Credit Insurance Corporation (KUKI). He notes, "In view of the excellent results of co-operation in this field and the assessment of Belarus as

a responsible borrower, we've decided to lower interest rates on loans to Belarusian projects to a minimum level."

The seminar in Minsk aimed to present investment opportunities being offered in Belarus through international programmes run by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development and by the International Finance Corporation. Representatives of the Department of Foreign Economic Affairs (of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus) and the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation also presented opportunities for investment, as did specialists from the Mogilev and Grodnoinvest free economic zones.

# Clinic on wheels servicing villages

Unique mobile mini-clinic, equipped with own heating and lighting, based at Vitebsk Regional Diagnostic Centre



By Yelena Begun

The Kupava van is 14m in length, plus its MAZ cabin. The reliable 'duet' is now ready to serve the region, bringing highly skilled medical aid to remote areas, at a cost of over Br4 billion.

Yuri Derkach, who heads Public Health Services Department for the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee, notes that a network of medical institutions have helped fund the innovation, thanks to growing revenue from medical service exports. He explains, "Over the six months, the mobile medical centre will travel all over the Vitebsk Region, providing examinations for women, to help diagnose oncological



diseases, including breast cancer (which is widespread today). All those living within the border regions of the Russian Federation will receive attention and, thanks to expanded export services, the mobile clinic will pay for itself within three years."



Mobile medical mini-clinic with contemporary equipment developed by Belarusian Adani firm

Vladimir Orekhva, Chief Doctor of Vitebsk's Regional Diagnostic Centre, tells us that the first mobile screenings have already taken place, in the Lepel District. Lists of patients were compiled in advance, saving them unnecessary journeys to Vitebsk.

The mobile medical complex has its own laboratory, ultrasound-room, gynaecology room, mammography room and registration office. It can examine 60-80 people daily and is targeting those who might otherwise not make an arduous journey to an inter-regional centre (the only such places to have the latest equipment for conducting mammograms).

## Learning from overcoming odds

By Valentina Grigorieva

For many years, Gomel's Victor Averin, a Doctor of Biological Sciences, worked on overcoming the consequences of the Chernobyl nuclear power station catastrophe, liaising with Russian colleagues to develop radiation security systems. His work to protect the public from possible future technogenic accidents continues today, alongside western colleagues.

Just four years ago, the tragedy at the Japanese Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power station reminded us that vigilance must continue in this sphere. It was unexpected that such an event could occur in a highly developed country, and has since inspired various measures and legal acts to promote unified efforts in



Victor Averin with students

such cases of emergency. It brought about the launch of an international commission on nuclear security, comprising experts from the USA, France, the UK and Japan, with Victor Averin representing the CIS. Meetings and discussions are held in France and in Japan.

Mr. Averin tells us, "Our work documents in detail, step by step, the regulation of all services in emergency situations relating to nuclear power engineering, to allow

prompt and efficient action to be taken, and to reduce consequences to a minimum." A final document should be ready next year, for use by all states using nuclear power. Naturally, Belarus (now building its own nuclear power station) will become party to the document.

Mr. Averin has been engaged in promoting radiation security since 1989, having initially occupied the post of deputy director of scientific

work at the Belarusian Institute of Radiology. From 2007, he held the title of director. The Institute has prepared dozens of programmes on the safe development of affected territories, including technologies to aid the farming of contaminated soil. Victor has written hundreds of articles, and dozens of books and monographs on overcoming the consequences of radiation (based on the Chernobyl nuclear power station case). His doctoral thesis was devoted to minimising people's exposure to internal contamination via livestock.

Since last year, Victor Averin has worked as Dean of the Frantsisk Skorina Gomel State University, generously sharing knowledge and experience with young people, so that the next generation may know all that has been done to overcome the consequences of the greatest technogenic catastrophe of the 20th century.

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

## What is a Chronic Fatigue Syndrome



I know that long periods of feeling overstrained can be a sign of the serious disease known as Chronic Fatigue Syndrome. Can you tell me more?

S. Smirnov, Terekhovka settlement, Dobrush District

Chronic Fatigue Syndrome is common in civilised countries, being characterised by long periods of weariness, unabated even by long rest. It was first 'coined' as a diagnosis in 1988, with over 100,000 cases registered in the USA by 1990. About 80 percent of patients were women. The National Centre of Chronic Fatigue was then created. In Russia, the first article describing CFS as a professionally recognised pathology, caused by stress, appeared in 1991.

Occurrence of CFS is connected with the central nervous system, with the zone responsible for inhibitory processes becoming less active. It is often brought on by an overload of emotional or intellectual stimulation, to the detriment of physical activity.

Those living in big cities are more likely to suffer: businessmen, and those with high levels of responsibility (such as doctors and train or air traffic controllers). Contributing factors include poor sanitary-ecological conditions, chronic disease and viral infection. Symptoms tend to be a feeling of weakness, sluggishness and apathy, depression, fits of anger and aggression, with partial loss of memory.

but will return when working again at full capacity.

**Consult your doctor if you believe you are suffering from several symptoms:**

- defective memory or ability to concentrate;
- pharyngitis (sore throat);
- inflamed lymph nodes on the neck and in axillary regions;
- inexplicable muscular pain;
- pain in joints (without swelling or reddening);
- headache;
- insomnia;
- extreme exhaustion last more than 24 hours after a usual working or educational day.

It can be difficult to diagnose CFS, since symptoms are similar to those of other diseases. Your doctor should first exclude other possible diseases. CFS is usually diagnosed when 4-8 of the above listed symptoms have continued for at least 6 months. CFS is often accompanied by depression.

**Treatment is no easy matter, and requires regular monitoring by your doctor. The programme tends to include:**

- a greater balance between rest and physical activity;
- a calorie restricted diet;
- full-body or segmental massage (together with hydro-procedures and physiotherapy);
- psycho-emotional or psycho-therapeutic sessions;
- medication, such as day tranquilisers,



antidepressants, enterosorbents, or antihistamines (in cases of allergy);

- elimination of symptoms limiting oxygen uptake (such as a blocked nose).

The causes are still under investigation but nutrient deficiencies can be a contributing factor, especially lack of certain vitamins. Food allergies can play their part, as can excessive physical or mental load, and virus infection. The 'virus theory' is prevalent among experts at present, with particular reference to Epstein-Barr virus, cytomegalovirus, human herpesvirus 6, coxsackie virus, hepatitis C, enterovirus, and retrovirus.

CFS symptoms often appear after the patient has appeared to suffer from flu, or herpesviruses have been detected. Meanwhile, immunological indicators have been found during laboratory research. Muscle pain is common, at least partially, as a consequence of the abnormal interchange of energy in cells. Fatigue may abate after some period of holiday or rest

To prevent development of CFS, try to take regular physical exercise (to improve the function of your heart, lungs and muscles). Take up a new hobby, to divert your mind from study or work issues. Similarly, spend time with friends, or go to an exhibition, or to the theatre. Try to understand what is disturbing you, so that you can, little by little, tackle the source of your stress. Learn to relax, such as by trying yoga, focused breathing, exercises for muscular relaxation, massage or meditation. Avoid sleeping pills, which can cause addiction, and give up drinking alcohol and smoking.

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

# Training with dolphins

A special world, filled with aquatic games, dolphins' smiles and sea splashes

By Nadezhda Dekola

**It's a full time job looking after the sea mammals at Minsk's Nemo Dolphinarium. Those who care for the animals have to love the aroma of fish and feel comfortable in a wetsuit. Among the 'artistic inmates' are fur seals Goroshek and Yelochka, sea lion Nicolas, and five Pacific bottle-nosed dolphins: Gerkules, Vita, Hugo, Dzhun and Taka. All enjoy showing off before an audience. Senior coach Yevgeny Fishchuk tells us more.**

**What's the difference between the work of a coach and an animal trainer?**

An animal trainer uses a system of rewards and punishments while coaches base their training on the interests of the animal. We do not force dolphins to do anything. They swim for a while, playing with the cheerful two-legged creature, who likes to stroke, scratch, feed and entertain them. It's fascinating to build a close relationship with an animal, although certainly not easy. Your bond must be based on more than extra feeding; rather, you need to rely on amusing the animal you're working with. They like to jump and dance, so we simply reveal their natural disposition. Dolphins become bored easily, so you have to be inventive, or they'll just swim away.

**How do you communicate with animals in a language clear to them?**

We learn dolphin language! In truth, dolphins have a slightly higher IQ than humans, so they perfectly understand gestures. To show them a point in space, we use a long pole, as an extension of our hand. Each coach has a whistle, which is audible even underwater. Our other methods are a trade secret, transferred from senior coach to pupils...

Dolphinarium shows always inspire great emotions in the audience, regardless of age or disposition. Even serious men in suits are moved, although some complain about being splashed. Others are disappointed not to have gotten wet! Of course, the coaches' foremost concern is to protect the dolphins from harm. They sometimes have to stop mid-show to remove undesirable items thrown into the 5m deep pool: popcorn, bread rolls, cookies, bottles — even car keys! Naturally, this disrupts the performance, so audiences are warned beforehand. Likewise, there are strict rules to follow when swimming with dolphins. Placing your fin-



VITALY GIL



VITALY GIL



VITALY GIL

**There are few days-off when caring for animals at Minsk's Nemo Dolphinarium, who demand full-time attention from their coaches**

gers into their eyes or mouth is never wise, and you should be careful not to scratch or bite them. The coaches do their best to train the dolphins to

return any 'foreign' items found in the pool though, giving a 'fishy treat' in exchange: best quality sea fish, frozen right after being caught.

On average, dolphins consume about 12kg of fish daily, varying by sex, age, weight, and physiological state. Fish are carefully defrosted, examined and cut up before being offered, to ensure that nothing harmful is present.

**Yevgeny, how long is your working day?**

It varies by day, given tasks, the state of the animals and, even, their mood. There are days when we're all tired: pupils and staff. When that hap-

pens, it's best to call it a day. At other times, you arrive at 9am and stay until midnight, wanting to spend time with the animals after a show, swimming together, relaxing or, seeing that they are keen to work, taking advantage to learn a new routine. Staff on night duty might sometimes notice something unusual, in which case we return, being on 24-hour call. Quite often, we only return home to sleep, and then dream of our 'pets'.

Each artiste has their own coach, who knows their character, habits and abilities intimately. These experts understand their charge's mood. While a skilled expert can work with any dolphin, the animals themselves only 'trust' their handler, and can be aggressive if they feel threatened.

Yevgeny recalls, "Sometimes, ridiculous situations happen. Once, while working with sea lion Nicolas, I broke the bones in my foot. To get round the problem [of needing to appear with his charge], I appeared in a pirate costume, with a crutch, so the audience would think it was all part of the show!"

No special education is needed for the job of coaching animals; most importantly, you need to have true love for them and the ability to interact, as well as being willing to devote yourself utterly. You need to be physically fit, with some courage, good health and no other occupations in life. All the rest, you can learn from senior coaches. Yevgeny graduated from the Odessa College of Arts and Culture (named after K.F. Dankevich) and the Odessa State Agrarian University. In his last year, he began working at the city dolphinarium and realised that it gave him the perfect combination: working with animals and performing on stage. He then met his wife, psychologist Yulia Fishchuk, who was keen to engage in dolphin therapy and ended by becoming a sea mammal coach too. The youngest in the team is Yelena Selivonenko, from Minsk. Just two years ago, she couldn't even swim; after six months, she was performing in the show...

Opinions differ on the subject of dolphinariums, since some think them 'cruel'. Coaches at the Minsk sea theatre are convinced that their work is beneficial though, since their charges are all 'rescued' animals who would otherwise have died. They are safe from nets and hunting and their contentment is evinced by often having offspring while living in captivity. Yulia smiles, "I've asked Vita to give birth to a little dolphin, but she has not agreed yet."

## New television technologies in focus

By Dmitry Korobov

**Belarus following in broadcasting steps of others**

In early 2010, analogue broadcasting ended in Austria, Norway, Holland, Denmark, Luxembourg, Finland, Latvia, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Spain, Slovenia, Sweden, Japan, Estonia and Malta. While the process took over a decade in Spain and the UK, Belarus is set on

completing its 'digital' switch-over within two and a half years. Meanwhile, unlike those nations who pioneered digital broadcasting by taking a commercial approach (leading to bankruptcy for operators) Belarus plans to offer free connection.

Our 'late start' has advantages, allowing us to learn from others' experience (such as the DVB-T first digital standard, which was used in Sweden and Finland in the 1990s).

Belarus is launching with T2 standards, which are more advanced, offering better coverage and picture definition, reducing interference to near zero.

Belgium was among the first to move to 'digital'; having a great many cable networks, no one noticed the switching-off of terrestrial analogue broadcasting. The Scandinavian countries have unusual experience, since they occupy a huge territory,

with low population density, making cable too expensive for some villages.

In some countries, the transition to digital broadcasting led to problems; for instance, in the USA, the appointed 'switch-over' day had to be postponed when it was discovered that some adapters failed to work in some states. With its 'mobile' population, 'television chaos' ensued. For some time after analogue TV was

turned off, a significant number of Americans were left without a TV signal.

Finland spent five years preparing for the introduction of digital TV; nevertheless, 2.5 percent of the population were yet to purchase digital consoles by 'switch-over' day. Half bought the necessary equipment within a month but about 1 percent of Finns chose not to subscribe to TV as a result.

# Coastguards say Santa Barbara oil cleanup could take 'months'

The cleanup continues along Santa Barbara's sullied beaches following the spill of some 2,500 barrels of oil onto the land and into the sea

It is one of only five climates of its type in the world, but California's Gaviota coast in Santa Barbara county, is facing an ecological disaster from which say some experts it may never recover. Some locals are already calling it a 'nightmare'.

The Houston-based Plains All-American pipeline company says nearly 400,000 litres of crude oil have spilled on land and at sea.

"We continue to recommend avoidance of the affected areas as exposure to oil and or its fumes can result in health impacts," said the Director of Santa Barbara County Public Health Department, Dr. Takashi Wada. About a fifth of the spill is thought to have made its way into the Pacific, and coastguards say restoring the sands and waters to health could take months.

"Skimming vessels have so far recovered 7,700 gallons of an oily water mixture, and we've removed 90 feet of contaminated soil in the area of the release. We anticipate that we have about 300 more feet of soil to remove from around the pipeline," said the Senior Director of Operations for the Plains All-American Pipeline Company Rick McMichael.

The pipeline was built in 1987 to take crude south from the en-



Emergency crews cleaning up oil that spilled into the ocean off near the Santa Barbara coast

ergy-rich Californian coastal zone for refining in Texas. The company says this is the pipeline's first malfunction. The location of the spill is symbolic; it was here in 1969 that a much bigger spill launched the environmental movement in the USA.

"We apologise for the damage that has been done to the wildlife

and to the environment and we're very sorry for the disruption and inconvenience it has caused on the citizens and visitors to this area," said PAAP's boss Greg Armstrong.

"I'm the chair of the local Sierra club, but I'm also a mom that lives out in Goleta near where this happened, and that beach is a place

that my kids grew up there. We go camping there with my kids' class and watch the whales and dolphins offshore, so it is really sickening to see the devastation along our coastline," said Katie Davies. Ecologists are furious that this last pristine outpost of southern California has been devastated.

## Airbus calls for Britain to stay in the EU

**Europe's leading planemaker Airbus has entered the debate about a British exit from the EU by slamming the idea as dangerous for jobs and the UK economy**

Airbus said a 'Brexit' would mean the company would have to reconsider its long-term UK investments. Airbus employs 16,000 people in Britain. It is one of the first industrial companies to come out in favour of Britain staying in, and the news come on the day the country's largest business lobby group called on company bosses to defend EU membership, and to tell voters membership was the best guarantee of future prosperity.

## Drought — suffering California in Nestle protest

**Protesters in Los Angeles have demanded the company Nestle stop its water bottling operations**

California is suffering its fourth year of a serious drought which has prompted the state's first ever mandatory cuts in water use. Holding signs reading 'Nestle: Leave California's precious water in the ground' and 'Stop stealing our water!', protest organisers have accused the company of acting irresponsibly by exporting its bottled water out of state.

Nestle President Tim Brown has responded saying the company was working to improve its production efficiency to use less water and anticipated saving 144 million gallons of water per year as a result of new technology.

## Cambodia: bomb removed from Mekong River

**A bomb found at the bottom of the Mekong River in Cambodia has been carefully removed from the water**

A fisherman had spotted the MK80 series aircraft bomb, the type that was dropped from US forces planes during the Cambodia-Vietnam war.

On March 18th, 1969, American B-52s began carpet-bombing eastern Cambodia.

'Operation Breakfast' was the first phase in a four-year bombing campaign that drew Cambodia headlong into the Vietnam War.

The US dropped 540,000 tonnes of bombs, killing anywhere between 150,000 and 500,000 civilians.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



At Tarangire National Park in Tanzania

## Drones are perfect to protect elephants in danger

**A drone hovers above Tanzania's Tarangire National Park; its function is to herd on-the-move elephants away from danger**

The bee-like buzzing ushers the world's biggest land animal away from the threat posed by human beings. Elephants are poisoned, attacked with spears and arrows or shot for raiding crops and wandering into villages. The drone is the perfect protector monitoring the mammals while covering difficult terrain. Initial trials of the drone have thrown up some positive results.

Nadia De Souza is a researcher for Biodiversity and Wildlife Solutions, "So far they seem to be responding really well, I mean, all of the trials that we've done so far, they've moved away

from the drones really quickly whether they were in the fields or whether they were just out of the crops so it's been pretty positive so far but we still need a lot more data to collect and be certain of the statistics."

Biologist David Olson believes it is only a matter of time before the smart creatures get used to the drone's bee-like buzzing. So moves are being put in place to train rangers to fly drones carrying chili powder. Elephants don't like chili!

David Olson, a biologist with Biodiversity and Wildlife Solutions, believes that drones are a realistic option to protect elephants because their maintenance costs are low and they can survive tough conditions in the wild.

## Five global banks to pay 5bn Euros for rate rigging

**Five of the world's biggest banks have been fined over 5 billion Euros**

Four of the banks: Citigroup, JP Morgan Chase, Royal Bank of Scotland and Barclays pleaded guilty to manipulating the foreign exchange market.

The US Justice Department said traders at the banks described themselves as 'The Cartel' and used coded language to influence exchange rates and increase profits.

"This behaviour by traders who were very senior, who were acting on behalf of the parent banks, which enriched the parent banks significantly, was so systemic and so egregious that we felt the entire institution had to take responsibility at the highest levels," said Loretta E. Lynch, US Attorney General.

The fifth bank, Zurich-based UBS, pleaded guilty to a different count of wire fraud.

The Justice Department has been negotiating with the banks for months over how to resolve the forex allegations.

"At this latter stage, it's debatable how much reputational damage is going to continue to be done as investors and traders tend to gloss over the total



Barclays office

figures," said market analyst Alastair McCaig. "As far as the banks themselves are concerned, it does mean that we are, I guess, a step closer to them being able to draw a line in the sand over some of these irregularities and these indiscretions."

In total, US authorities fined seven banks over ten billion Euros for failing to stop their traders sharing information about client orders and coordinating trades to boost their own profits. The investigation has pushed the foreign exchange market closer to automated trading.



# Good time when bankers help culture

Development Bank of Belarus plans to annually release editions dedicated to cultural treasures and outstanding personalities, notes Chairman Sergei Rumas, speaking at book-album launch for *Alexander Kishchenko. Chronicler of the 21st Century*, at National Art Museum



By Veniamin Mikheev

The edition celebrates the work of Alexander Kishchenko and has been released by Four Quarters Publishing House, as part of a new project by the Development Bank, entitled *Cultural Heritage of Belarus*. This envisages an annual series exploring the contribution of prominent personalities, historical events and artistic treasures. Mr. Rumas explains, "It's more important than ever that we remember the cultural history of our country and the great people of Belarus. The shadow of various economic and financial crises will pass and daily problems will be solved but we must never forget our national culture, without which we can't fully exist."

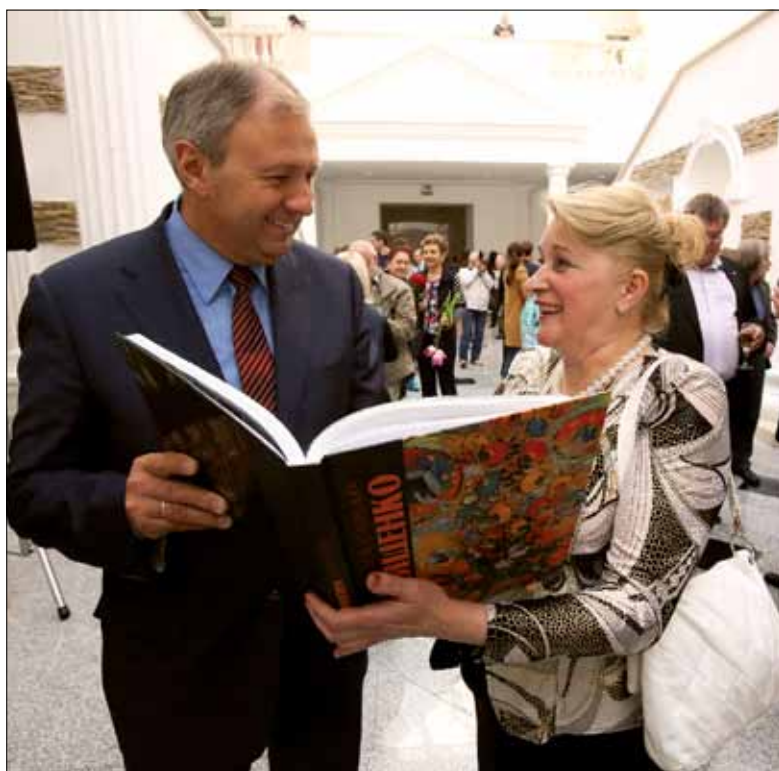
Alexander Kishchenko was a prominent Belarusian painter, laureate of State Awards and owner of a Frantsisk Skorina Medal. Mr. Rumas tells us, "The book is a worthy tribute to the memory of the great master. I hope that, with the help of this edition, everyone will be able to appreciate his personality and art."

The painter's creativity comprises hundreds of works, from easel to monumental painting, frescoes, mosaics and tapestries. Among them are: *Relay of Generations*, which adorns a Belarusian sanatorium in Crimean Miskhor; *Partisan Belarus* mosaic panel, on the façade of Minsk's Tourist Hotel; four panels, entitled *A City-Warrior*, *A City of Science*, *A City of Culture* and *A City-Constructor*, on the sides of residential houses along Minsk's Nezavisimosti Avenue; and *Anthem to Labour* triptych, on the sides of residential houses in Novopolotsk.

Mr. Kishchenko created the *Tapestry of the Century*, made by hand, from wool, which was first presented in 1996 and for which he was given the State Award of Belarus. The unique canvas became listed in the Guinness Book of Records as the biggest worldwide, and was recognised as a national treasure. Upon it, he depicted the most famous personalities of past and modern times, as well as significant global events. The 19x14m canvas depicts Noah's Ark, the Christ and Antichrist, the Kremlin, the Pope of Rome, Churchill, Gorbachev, Stalin, Hemingway and Castro: over 80 portraits in total.

In May 2014, the Development Bank hung the work in its office, gaining visits from over 2,000 people within a fortnight. Its hanging position allowed the full scope of the work to be viewed for the first time over several levels (avoiding the need for binoculars).

The *Tapestry of the Century* was exhibited during the Ice Hockey World Championship, allowing foreign visitors to enjoy the record-breaking work free of charge. It



weighs 300kg and is as high as a six-storey house, making it unrivalled worldwide. It took almost six years to weave the 266m square work, which contains around 806km of thread. Woven from natural sheep's wool, its value is thought to be in excess of \$1m.

Belarusian and Polish cinematographers have dedicated their attention to Mr. Kishchenko. One film captures the process of hand weaving his *Tapestry of the Century*, at the Borisov Works of Applied Arts. Remarkably, the author built his own huge loom in the shape of a cube for the project.

Mr. Kishchenko summed up his creative life and the whole century in this work, admitting in 1995, at its presentation, that it might be his 'swan song'. Sadly, since his death, the grandiose canvas has only twice been on display to the public: both times in Minsk. Undoubtedly, it deserves to be seen by the entire world.

Nina Kukharenko, the widow of Alexander Kishchenko, as a professional artist herself, helped her husband create the *Tapestry of the Century* at the 'technical' stage, preparing sketches on cardboard, for later use by Borisov masters. Ms. Kukharenko was her husband's muse, drawn

many times in his works; she was his pupil, apprentice and assistant, his friend and wife. His creativity was amplified when it resonated through Nina. Now, she is the keeper of his huge legacy; she voluntarily took up this



**Album dedicated to Alexander Kishchenko, released by Four Quarters Publishing House, launches Development Bank project entitled *Cultural Heritage of Belarus*: an annual series exploring outstanding personalities, historical events and artistic treasures**

about 400 paintings in his studio, in addition to tapestries. The *'Tapestry of the Century'* is an historical and cultural treasure. People often ask to visit to view it, also coming to drink tea, and they always leave happy.

All my husband's works have a positive energy, as he loved life and admired so many things. I'm often asked for materials on my husband: a film was shot recently about him and his creative legacy has been recorded in a textbook on the history of Belarus — in the section on culture. His *'Tapestry of the Century'* and *'Chernobyl Tapestry'* (which hangs in the UN Headquarters) were landmark pieces but his creativity was multifaceted. Many think that you simply graduate from university and are an artist! However, my husband believed that it took years to understand your artistry and bring it to full fruition.

I've long dreamt of creating an album dedicated to Mr. Kishchenko's work, including his monumental and picturesque pieces. Now, thanks to help from the Development Bank, this dream has come true. The album is also necessary for students, so that they know of the former existence of such a unique artist in Belarus.

What is our land without its fertile cultural layer? If you remove this, not even a seed will grow. However, the soil needs to be cultivated to continue bringing forth worthy crops.

mission and cannot imagine it otherwise. She honours the memory of her beloved husband and remains proud of everything Alexander Kishchenko created, wishing his creative legacy to be passed to all people on the planet, fulfilling her spouse's wishes.

**You are now treasurer of the legacy of People's Artist Alexander Kishchenko. It's an honorary but busy mission. How do you manage?**

It's very difficult but also very important. I hold a large burden of responsibility. It's a lot for one person to cope with so I'm very grateful to the Development Bank and its Chairman, Sergei Rumas, for their huge support in releasing this wonderful album, dedicated to the creativity of People's Artist of Belarus Alexander Kishchenko.

Of course, I write to the Ministry of Culture and to museums, trying to organise exhibitions. Alexander Kishchenko was a prolific artist, leaving



# Mill grinds fashion

## Collections by young fashion designers awarded at 24th Republican *Fashion Mill* Contest of Fashion and Photo

By Irina Ovsepyan

The show featured diverse genres, techniques and styles, avant-garde trends, and elements of luxury and practicality; the collections awarded were certainly original, although perhaps not to everyone's taste.

Designer Svetlana Gned-enok, who headed the jury, admits that prints and patterns are currently in vogue, with young designers using hand-painting technique and embroidery which are not always easily replicated on a larger commercial scale.

Foreign guests praised the talent and mastery on show, especially considering that most entrants were aged around 20 years old. Dzhemal Makhmudov, from the Russian Silhouette Charity Foundation, admitted, "I love what I've seen. When I visited the *Fashion Mill* last, most collections were haute couture; this year, they are far more functional. The level of the competition is definitely being raised, with higher standards. Moreover, there is respect for our national cultural heritage and various hand-made elements. Such skills are often forgotten abroad but Belarus is promoting the trend, which is much to our advantage."

Among the hand-made articles were fairy-tale style dresses by Gomel's Sergey Kurokhtin, thick felt and embroidered images by Slutsk's Oksana Pikhterova, motifs inspired by artist Gustav Klimt, impressive applique prints from Vitebsk's Maria Lukashuk, hand-embroidered silk clothes for children by Baranovich's Polina Khotkovskaya, and complicated models by Minsker Olga Chugueva.

Grodno's Darya Gaiduk presented a wonderful evening collection for girls, devoting much time to decoration. She tells us, "It took me three months to realise my dreams,



VLADIMIR SHLAPAK

**Young designers' diverse collections awarded at 24th Republican *Fashion Mill* Contest of Fashion and Photo, featuring avant-garde, luxurious and practical pieces, as well as fashion as pure art, with designs ready for mass production**

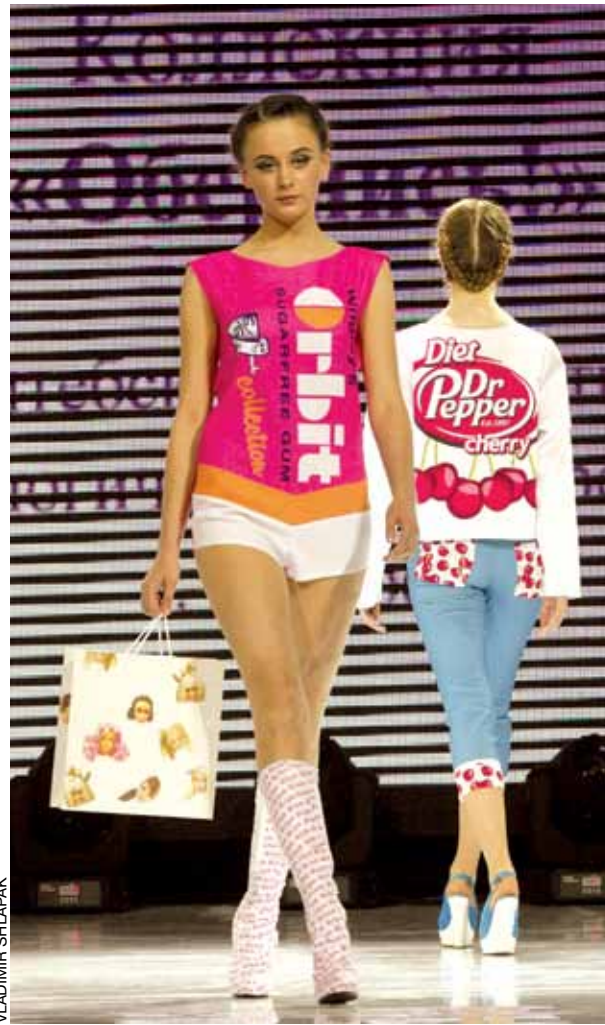


VLADIMIR SHLAPAK

with most time devoted to embroidery."

This year, the *Fashion Mill* brought together many participants and laureates of past shows: Barbara and Katarina Bylevskaya brought their bright new collection, as did Anna Zhuk, Sergey Drachev, Diana Kozharovich, Maria Kutsko and Natalia Kostsova. All received awards (some for the second time). Naturally, the prizes brought great pleasure, helping encourage them on their fashion path, rewarding their persistence.

Sponsored by the Education Ministry, the *Fashion Mill* is unique in being open to all, and offering support to up-and-coming designers free of charge. Nadezhda Vasilchenko, the Director of the National Centre for Children's and Youth Art (which annually contributes to the *Fashion Mill*), explains, "Dedication and industry are vital to gaining success in the fashion industry but our *Fashion Mill* helps young designers become familiar with foreign fashion schools. Successful contestants gain the



VLADIMIR SHLAPAK

chance to visit international fashion houses. We are open to anyone whose ideas prove interesting."

This year, 400 people applied for selection rounds,

with 88 reaching the finals. It's unlikely that all will become great designers but if even a dozen create names for themselves, the event is a true success.

## Sacred memory of war

By Veniamin Verlikhov

**Single Victory for All: Kazakhstan-Belarus, devoted to 70th anniversary of Great Patriotic War Victory, released by Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House**

The edition has been prepared jointly with Kazakhstan's Embassy to Belarus. The Publishing House's Director, Vladimir Andrievich, explains, "The book tells of those from Kazakhstan who fought in Belarus during the Great Patriotic War. We have not offered a complete description of their military service but have tried to present some historical pages relating to Kazakh soldiers — including 83 who were awarded the title of USSR Hero for having shed their blood and lost life fighting for Belarus. That war was a tragic event in Soviet history but managed to demonstrate the eternal brotherhood of nations, true friendship, unity and patriotism of nationalities and nations."

The book contains biographical references and photos of the 83 Kazakhs and those born in Kazakhstan who received the USSR Hero award. It throws light on Kazakh participation in the partisan movement and their supreme bravery during Belarus' liberation in 1943-1944. Readers can learn how Belarus cherishes the memory of those Kazakh soldiers, through sculptures, monuments, obelisks, collective graves, cemeteries and streets named after heroes.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kazakhstan to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Ergali Bulegenov, notes in the book's foreword: "Belarusian and Kazakh nations made an invaluable contribution to the Victory over Fascism. From the very first days of the war, Kazakhstan fulfilled its sacred duty, supplementing the active army. Mobilisation in our republic was realised in the shortest possible time, with over 1.7 million Kazakhs taking part in the fight against Hitler's Germany. During the war years, over 20 divisions and shooting brigades were established on Kazakh territory, in addition to almost 50 regiments and battalions. Over 500 Kazakh soldiers were awarded the title of USSR Hero for their heroism on battlefields and 83 received the title for fighting for Belarus' liberation."

In Belarus and Kazakhstan alike, memories of that war are cherished and honoured. Belarus intends never to forget soldiers and officers from fraternal Kazakhstan, whose fates were closely connected with the lands of Belarus. Streets are named after them and memorials and plaques have been unveiled. Their graves are kept in good order, being visited by relatives and official Kazakh delegation members.

Mr. Bulegenov states, "We are endlessly thankful to the Belarusian nation and leadership for the entrenchment of Kazakhs' deeds and those of all Red Army liberators. Our shared memory of the war extends to reverence for all those Belarusians, Kazakhs and representatives of other nations who died; they are an endless source of unbreakable friendship for the nations of Kazakhstan and Belarus."

## Finals without Uzari and Maimuna

By Dmitry Korobov

**No Belarusian entry in grand-finals of Eurovision-2015, as Uzari and Maimuna fail to do well in semi-finals**

Neither the audience nor jury appeared impressed by the Belarusian composition, *Time*, despite bookmakers predicting a 15th place finish and ticket to the finals. The duo are disappointed, as Uzari commented on his Internet blog afterwards, saying:



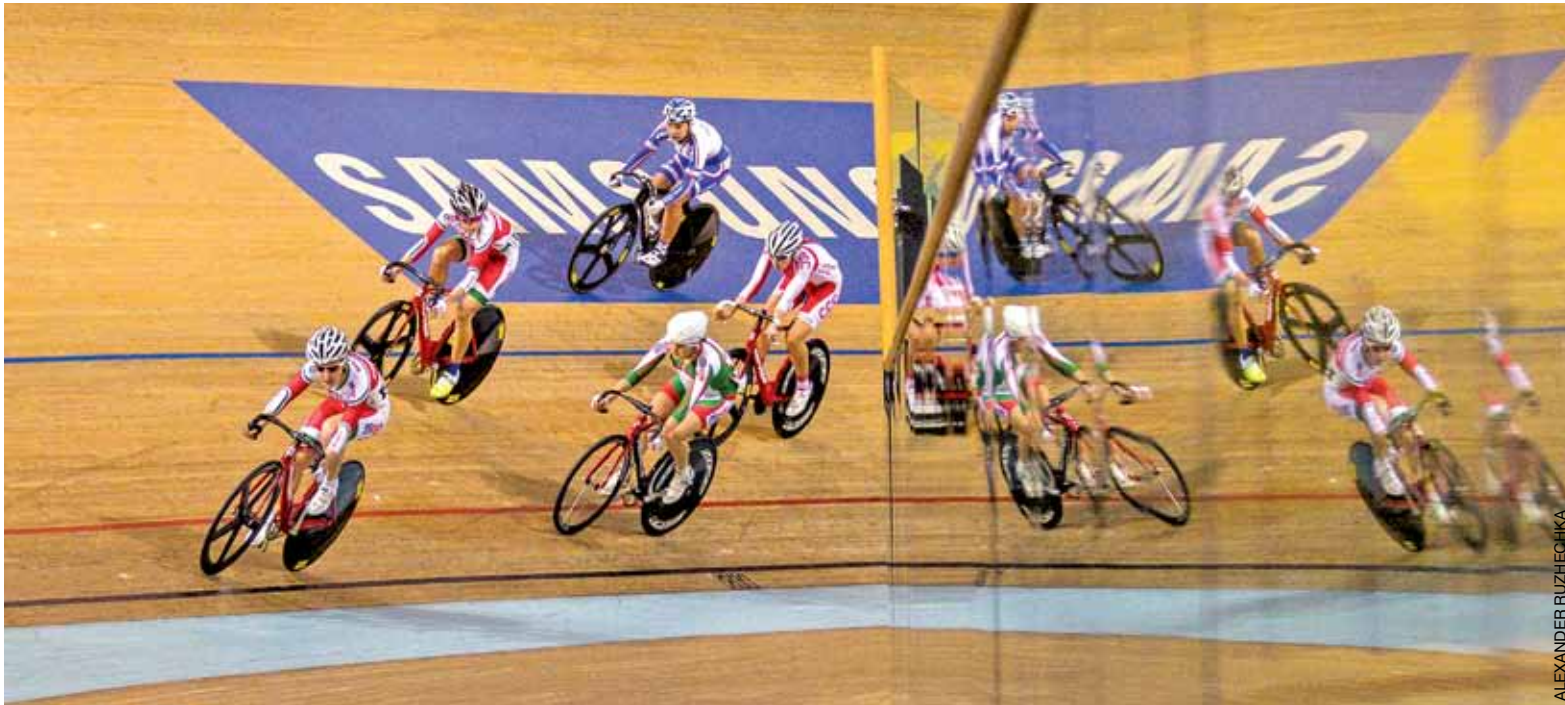
BELTA

**Uzari and Maimuna fail to ignite passion in audiences or jury**

"Hello! It's now around 1am and we've just returned from Stad-halle Arena. It's been a long and

truly complicated day, which has proven unsuccessful for us. However, I can say with confidence

that I've done everything possible. We are grateful to our team. Guys, you are the best! We thank all those who worried for us and supported us — even crying because of our failure to reach the finals. We are also grateful to Polina Gagarina for her support. We shared a single dressing room. It was pleasant when, after the results were announced, Ms. Gagarina's backing-vocalists began singing our song. Polina, in turn, embraced me and many times said, 'You've sung so well'.



Cyclists' mirror reflections at Minsk-Arena velodrome

# Good speeds on home track

Minsk-Arena Sport Complex velodrome hosts rating-making international track cycling tournament: Minsk Grand Prix

By Kirill Karin

The competition gathered 150 cyclists from 16 countries, competing in the omnium (elimination race), sprint, scratch (mass start race), git (time cycling), point race, team sprint, keirin (final sprint to the finish at top speed) and madison (race for endurance). All are on the official calendar of the International Cycling Association and are used to win Olympic rating points.

On the first day, Belarus won eight medals in the men's and women's point race, and in the junior scratch and men's team sprint. On the second day, omnium medals

were forthcoming. Tatiana Sharakova — who led the women's team — confidently completed the final point race, being ahead by a whole lap and guaranteeing herself first place in the final qualification round. Silver went to Russia's Gulnaz Badykova and Lithuania's Ausrine Trebaite captured bronze.

In the men's omnium, Belarusian Roman Tishkov won, followed by Artem Zakharov. Bronze went to Ukraine's Vladislav Kreminsky.

Meanwhile, the Belarusian team's third gold was won by Vitaly Prokopchuk, for the junior point race. Silver went to Alexandra Karpovich and bronze to Vladimir Sokolov and Oksana Safonchik.



Serious struggle at velodrome

In the scratch, Anton Muzychkin won silver.

The Belarusian team won 16 medals during the two day cycling competition. The next Grand Prix

tournament (highway) — held under the aegis of the International Cycling Association — will be hosted by Minsk, from July 4th-5th.



## Traditional colours

By Igor Grishin

**National Olympic Committee of Belarus announces costume design for teams in archery, beach volleyball, boxing and rhythmic gymnastics, at First European Games in Baku**

At the European Games in Baku, the Belarusian team will be wearing outfits made by Lithuanian Audimas: known for its costumes for the Sochi Olympics,

Youth Olympic Games in Nanjing and the 2015 Winter European Youth Festival. Traditional Belarusian colours are being used in the design, with national symbols incorporated in red and green, as well as ornamentation in red on a white background. The outfits are to be worn during the opening and closing of the European Games, at medal presentation, during training and when team members are relaxing.

## Achieving victory at one more stage

By Kirill Pirogov

**Belarusian cyclist Vasily Kirienko wins 14th stage of Giro d'Italia bicycle race, with British Sky team**

The Belarusian covered the staggered start 59.4km race within 1 hour 17 minutes and 52 seconds. Kirienko's Italian Grand Tour success follows on previous wins at stag-

es of the 2008 and 2011 Giro d'Italia.

He tells us, "It was a very long and difficult distance. After the finish, I waited for Alberto Contador, who leads in the overall standings. However, this was my day and this victory is a landmark event for me. I tend to do well in individual races but haven't won for a long time, so it's especially pleasant to do this at the Giro."

## Sambo wrestlers make successful holds

**Belarusian sambo wrestlers claim thirteen medals at European Championship in Zagreb**

The Belarusian team has earned five gold, two silver and six bronze medals. Dmitry Smolin (under 68kg weight category) and Stepan Popov (under 74kg) took gold, as did Yekaterina Prokopenko (under 60kg). Tatiana Matsko (under 64kg) defeated Russian Uiyana Bessonova to claim gold, while

Yelizaveta Moiseenko (over 80kg) beat Svetlana Moiseenko of Russia in the decisive match.

Silver medals went to Andrey Kazusenok, who lost to Arsen Khandzhyan in the finals, and Olga Namazova, who lost to Ukrainian Tatiana Savenko.

Belarus finished third in the women's team standings, behind Ukraine (first place) and Russia (second). The men's team came second, after Russia.

## Losing only to the champion

By Yegor Glebov

**Chelyabinsk hosts World Taekwondo Championship, bringing medal for Belarus**

Victoria Belanovskaya claimed bronze after beating Vietnam's Thi Ha Nguyen, Carmen Marton from Australia, German Rabia Gülec and Rewan Refaei from Egypt. She was defeated only in the semi-finals; losing to Turkish Irem Yaman: the new world champion.

The national team of Belarus took 14th place at the World Championship in terms of total medal ranking.

## Fan support always important

**Home matches of Dinamo Minsk club most visited last season in the Kontinental Hockey League, as noted at closing ceremony of KHL season, in Moscow**

Last season, the average audience for the Belarusian team's home matches was 14,181. The Vice President of the KHL, Georgy Kobylansky, awarded forward Alexander Radulov, from CSKA, a prize for being 'most useful player'; last season, his indicator of usefulness was '+37'. During the solemn ceremony closing the Kontinental Hockey League season, prizes were awarded in 27 categories.

## To be continued

**Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation and Canadian specialist Dave Lewis sign new, 3-year agreement**



Dave Lewis

The Chairman of the Ice Hockey Federation of Belarus, Igor Rachkovsky, tells us, "In December, we signed a contract with Dave for a year. However, after the World Championship in the Czech Republic, the coach agreed to new conditions. Lewis is a very good coach and psychologist and is pleasant to deal with."

Under the leadership of Dave Lewis, the national team of Belarus took 7th place at the recent 79th World Championship: their fourth such achievement while playing in the strongest division. The best placing of the national team at the world forum remains 6th place, which they saw in 2006, in Riga. In the group stage, the team scored 14 points, beating Slovenia, Denmark, the USA and Norway, while losing to Slovakia in overtime, to Finland in shootouts and to Russia in main time. In the playoffs, Lewis' team lost to the Canadians (0:9).

# Festival of the week



Gomel hosts first festival of crafts, bringing together participants from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan

## Exhibitions

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 31<sup>st</sup> May. *Da Vinci Inventions*

Until 8<sup>th</sup> June. *Christianity and Christians in Creative Activity of Russian and Belarusian Artists of the Middle of the 19<sup>th</sup>-early 20<sup>th</sup> Century*

Until 8<sup>th</sup> June. *Contemporaries of Coryphaeuses* Until 28<sup>th</sup> June. *I'm Simply in Remote Trip...*

Until 13<sup>th</sup> July. *Touch of Britain. 18th-19th Centuries British Art*

Until 31<sup>st</sup> July. *Art at Finger Tips*

Until 6<sup>th</sup> September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*

Until 2<sup>nd</sup> November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*

Until 30<sup>th</sup> December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

Until 30<sup>th</sup> December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

### NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 9<sup>th</sup> June. *Exotic World*

Until 28<sup>th</sup> August. *Boletus: Beauty is their Family*

*Peculiarity* photo exhibition

### MINSK CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

10 Revolutsionnaya Street

Until 29<sup>th</sup> June. *From Me:* exhibition by sculptor Vladimir Zhanov

### WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25<sup>th</sup> December. *A Prophet of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz. Illustrations and Medals*

### NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 31<sup>st</sup> May. *Radziwills and the Book*

Until 10<sup>th</sup> June. Exhibition of engravings by painter Apollinariya Mishina (St. Petersburg)

BELTA

## Theatres

### NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

31.05. The Tsar's Bride 01.06. Anyuta

02.06. Tosca 03.06. Spartacus

04.06. Strauss Invites

### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

29.05 and 04.06. Yunona and Avos

30.05. Dubrovsky

01.06. Blue Cameo

02.06. Women's Revolt

03.06. The Gypsy Baron

### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

29-31.05. The Seagull

02.06. The Dinner Game

03.06. Don Juan

04.06. World War Two

### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

29 and 30.05. Eternity Double

31.05. Russian-Style Cabbage — Best

02.06. Pygmalion

03.06. Love Circle

04.06. Ninochka

### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

29.05. An Unnamed Star

30 and 31.05. The Makropoulos Case

02-03.06. The Battlefield

04.06. Who Laughs Last

### REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

30.05. Vasen-Extasen and One in Square

31.05. I Love You, K.M.

02.06. A Two Dogs' Tale; Silent Love

03.06. The Sea Wolf; Dzed

04.06. Adam's Jokes; All Mice Like Circus

# Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

## May and June of decades and centuries past come to life

**May 29th.** In 1900, General-Colonel Alexander Bogolyubov was born — a participant of Belarus' liberation from German fascists during the Great Patriotic War and a USSR Hero.

**May 30th.** In 1896, People's Artiste of Belarus Kontantin Sannikov was born in Rogachev — a director, actor, teacher, founder of the Belarusian State Theatre and a USSR State Award holder.

**May 31st.** In 1948, Belarusian writer Svetlana Aleksievich was born. She wrote *War's Face is Never Womanly*, *Last Witnesses* and *Zinc Boys*. She holds the USSR State Award.

**June 1st.** In 1897, Great Patriotic War veteran Pavel Batov was born. He was a twice USSR Hero and an army general.

**June 2nd.** In 1920, Piotr Zakrzhevsky was born in Bobruisk — a Belarusian scientist in the field of melioration.

**June 3rd.** In 1935, Belarusian poet, prose writer, critic and literary expert Vasil Zuenok was born in the village of Mochulishche (Krupki District).

**June 4th.** In 1937, Belarusian architect and sculptor Valentin Zankovich was born.

His major works include the memorial complexes of Khatyn (which brought him a Lenin Award in 1970), Brest Fortress-Hero and the Katyusha, as well as the Minsk — Hero-City Memorial.

**June 1st.** In 1918, the Belarusian State Conservatory opened.



**May 29th.** In 1946, construction began on Minsk Tractor Works.

**May 29th.** In 1970, Belynich's Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya Art Museum opened.

**May 29th.** In 1992, the Belarusian Capella Theatre and Concert Association was created.

**May 30th.** In 1780, Yekaterina II and Austrian Emperor Joseph II laid the first stones of Mogilev's St. Joseph Cathedral.

**May 30th.** In 1932, the Park of Culture and Recreation opened in Borisovskiy Tract (now known as Chelyuskintsev Park).

**June 1st.** In 1840, the first Belarusian theatre opened — established by Wincenty Dunin-Marcinkiewicz. It united all types of stage art: drama, music, singing and dancing.

**June 2nd.** In 1922, the Belarusian State University's Pedagogical Department was established, transforming into the Belarusian State Pedagogical University in 1992.

**June 1st.** In 1965, the Lida Paints Factory opened, having begun construction in May 1963.

**June 2nd.** In 1934, Dinamo Stadium opened in Minsk. During the Great Patriotic War, it was destroyed but was restored from 1947-1954.

**June 2nd.** In 1970, architects Y. Gradov, V. Zankovich and L. Levin and sculptor S. Selikhanov were given the Lenin Award for their work on Khatyn Memorial Complex.

**May 31st.** In 2001, Minsk hosted a summit of the heads of Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan and Tajik-

istan. Constituent documents for the establishment of a Eurasian Economic Community were adopted

**June 1st.** In 1836, the first stone was laid in the foundations of Brest Fortress, under a project approved by Emperor Nikolay I in 1830.

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