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School bell or tasks for tomorrow for teachers and pupils

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Budget places are never empty

On September 1st, fifty-three thousand first-year students will receive their student passes in Belarus

By Kristina Khilko

Clever youngsters from remote places

Parents sigh with relief as the application process is completed and half of all Belarusian candidates have chosen a lucky ticket to study for the basic grant; others are now thinking about where they will take the allowance and pay the extra costs to study elsewhere.

In the educational reform period, centralised testing was implemented to rank future students. The procedure is simple, after choosing a higher educational establishment, school leavers had to pass tests in a language (Russian or Belarusian) and nominated subjects. The maximum score for each test is 100 points.



Minsk alumni have many reasons for joy

Nobody relies on luck: the more points you gain, the greater the chances of entering a prestigious faculty. This year, three hundred (out of 90,000) super-intelligent girls and boys earned 100 points in one or two subjects. “Pleasingly, these clever young people live and study not only in Minsk’s gymnasiums and lyceums,” says Belarus’ Minister of Education Igor Karpenko. “Schoolchildren from small towns and villages are increasingly showing brilliant results and entering the best Belarusian universities. No corruption or personal acquaintances can help them. Everyone has an equal opportunity. In two decades, the testing system has proved itself.”

Brainstorm

Alena Apolonik from Baranovichi proudly calls herself a student of the best medical university in the country. Her centralised testing results combined with the school diploma produced an incredible 382 points. While trying on a snow-white lab coat, she recollects her heart beating before the tests — especially in biology. “After three hours of brainstorming, I left the room last — rechecking my answers dozens of times. Two weeks later, I received a message from the Republican Institute of Knowledge Control and could hardly believe my eyes. I’d earned one hundred points! I’m grateful to my teacher Zinaida Kuchur who taught us magnificently.

Furthermore, on seeing how interested I was in the subject, she stayed at school after lessons to help me learn the complicated material. I needed no extra tutors as a result,” she says.

As is traditional, medical universities have the greatest competition. This year, the Belarusian State Medical University’s Pharmaceutical Department accepted future students with no less than 376 points; the Medical Department’s requirement was 360 points. The Belarusian State University’s International Relations Department took the lead in this regard. Budget-paid places for the ‘International Law’ speciality (preparing international lawyers with knowledge of a foreign

language) have been given only to those with at least 384 points (out of possible 400).

“We are pleased with the results of centralised testing in physics and mathematics. These are higher than ever before,” admits Vyacheslav Molofeev — the Executive Secretary of the BSU’s Admission Committee. “This has affected pass boundaries: last year, about 200 points were needed for several specialities of the Mechanical-Mathematical Department; this year, three hundred have been registered.”

The number of those wishing to follow a technical course has not decreased however: in Minsk and the regions, IT specialities have enjoyed impressive popular-

ity (up to five applicants for every place).

Three plus one

This year, a new practice has been introduced which many applicants have appreciated: bonus centralised testing. Previously, higher educational establishments accepted only three test certificates. An additional fourth test could have been taken just in case one subject was failed. With an additional certificate, a young person could apply for a similar speciality or another university. This trick is quite legal, however, other attempts to outwit the examiners were severely penalised.

“This year’s testing has registered no serious issues. Only 30 people failed to reach the finish line (out of 90,000),” Belarus’ Deputy Prime Minister and Chairman of the State Commission for the Monitoring of the Organisation of the Enrollment Campaign in the Institutions of Higher Learning and Colleges in 2017, Vasily Zharko, explains. “Most often, youngsters were ordered to leave the room for well-known tricks such as cell phones and cheat sheets.”

Apart from Belarusian, Russian young people also participated in the entrance campaign. Admission committees accepted their certificates on the same grounds as Belarusians’. Exactly the same result was expected from them. It’s too early to speak of final results but it’s already known that around 2,000 Russians have made their choice in favour of Belarusian universities.

Buses to take to school

By Yulia Matuzova

The path to knowledge is not short for all children; some need to pass a long distance to reach their school. To ease their travel and make it more comfortable, regional authorities are now actively renewing their school bus parks.

“Over a thousand buses will transport schoolchildren this year,” the Head of the Department of General Secondary Education at the Education Ministry, Svetlana Ukleiko, announces.

By late 2017, the Gomel Region plans to buy 46 MAZ-241 buses; seven of them have already arrived in the district centres. In



turn, the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee is going to add another 50 school buses to its fleet by early 2018: by September 1st, 35 new vehicles are to be bought. The Brest Region shall also largely expand its fleet: 46 buses older than 10 years shall be replaced for new vehicles. In the Grodno Region, 15 new buses will be put into operation and, in the Mogilev Region, 20 new vehicles shall be bought.

Nikolay Brilevsky, an engineer of the Technical Supervision Department at the Minsk Regional Executive Committee’s Education Department. Many of the new school buses have been produced at MAZ. Not long ago, they passed a technical ‘upgrade’: taking into account the work in rural areas, buses have become more mobile and their interior is now more comfortable for children.

“In the Minsk Region, 11 school buses and one special vehicle for transportation of children with disabilities are to be supplied as part of the contract for gratuitous aid concluded with Development Bank. In addition, 3 buses have been bought already using the local budget in regions,” notes

Competing for university places

By Alexander Nesterov

Education Ministry announces preliminary results of entrance campaign to universities, with 53,500 gaining entry (2,000 less than last September) and 26,700 receiving full state scholarship

The Education Ministry notes that the ‘Sport and Tourism Activity (Management in Tourism)’ course was most over-subscribed by those seeking state funding (15.2 applications per place) at the Maxim Tank Belarusian State Pedagogical University. Meanwhile, for every place available on

the Belarusian State University’s ‘Design’ course, there were 12.6 applications for state funding. The third most popular speciality was ‘Performing Arts’, at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts, with 11.4 applicants per place. Last year, the most popular degrees were ‘Design (Communicative)’, ‘Performing Arts’ and ‘Electric Supply’.

The next round of the entrance campaign will be held in autumn: from November 15th to December 20th, when agricultural degree places will be selected. Educational establishments are accepting foreign citizens via interview until October 15th.



By Vasily Kharitonov

The Belarusian system of education enjoys popularity amongst young people in the country and those beyond our borders. Thousands of foreign students study in Belarusian universities and our educational establishments compare well in prestigious international rankings. Our country is almost completely self-sufficient as far as providing highly-qualified specialists is concerned. School alumni prefer to receive their higher education in Belarusian universities. The system of professional technical education has been preserved and is currently being improved; our experiences are emulated by other states of the former USSR. However, the current stage of economic development, the arrival of high technologies and the fast growth of the IT sphere has given new challenges to schools, secondary specialised establishments, lyceums, institutes and universities. This concerns the writing of textbooks, the preparation of teachers, the improvement of the school curriculum, greater correlation between business needs and the number and quality of university graduates. How will the issues of education be solved? This was discussed at the Nationwide Conference on Teaching, bringing together more than 800 people. In an open discussion, they shared their opinions and experience. Everyone could visit the exhibition entitled *Education for the Future of the*

Country, and the Smart Bus hardware and software suite. Thematic sections and round table discussions were also offered. The President of Belarus delivered a speech to the participants and answered their questions:

Teachers

“All of us had teachers who not only cultivated love for their subjects but also helped us determine our way in life. That is why teachers by right enjoy great respect in Belarus. This profession is only for dedicated people. The formation of future generations depends on the personality of a school teacher and their professionalism. They not only give knowledge but also carry out a difficult pastoral mission. It is more than just work, it is selfless devotion. The personality of a teacher, their position and view of life are the most important things,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

Scientific thinking

“Today schoolchildren and students are often taught to use only a ready-made set of knowledge. Pupils lack analysis and questioning. Some are unable to formulate their thinking logically or express their opinions without referring to the Internet. As a result, we see a lack of professionals on the one side while, on the other side, we see employers’ dissatisfaction with employees. This is unacceptable in education,” believes the President. “The Internet generation is growing up in an information environment.

School bell or tasks for tomorrow for teachers and pupils

What should the future of education look like? This was discussed at the plenary session of the Nationwide Conference on Teaching, featuring the President.

For young people Internet is a necessity in life, they don’t see themselves without electronic gadgets. I believe that these are necessary, interesting and useful. However, it’s more important to teach people to think.”

Congress of teachers

“In autumn, we’ll gather our top scientists, academicians, doctors and candidates of sciences for a congress,” noted Mr. Lukashenko. This important forum will discuss issues concerning the preparation of pedagogical staff at the top level.

Wage issues

Mr. Lukashenko declared his intention to solve the issues around teachers’ salaries next year, “Our education is primarily free of charge and we invest huge amounts of money in it. To some extent we ‘impoverish’ teachers, the situation is reversed in other countries: they spend a lot of money (because of paid education) assisting teachers and lecturers. Which way should we choose? Our approaches will be different.”

New textbooks

“Good textbooks are the foundation for school education. This is what primarily determines the quality of pupils’ knowledge. I remind you that the most important requirement is that the content of the educational material should be of optimal quality in volume, information and depth. By September 1st, 2019, we will have had new textbooks. This doesn’t mean they will be ideal and perhaps they won’t meet the requirements of 2019. Textbooks presuppose constant creativity. We will be continually supplementing and changing,” noted Mr. Lukashenko. During the discussion at the plenary session of the Conference a proposal was heard regard-



During plenary session

new generation will decide differently which language to speak.”

Internet

The President is in favour of tough restrictions on damaging information on the Internet. “We need to pay considerable attention to it. Law enforcement agencies and other bodies must address the issue. We’re now preparing several relevant legal acts. We do not need destructive information about suicides and similar issues. Russia has already made a number of decisions on the problem, perhaps too late. We should not waste time ourselves as tough decisions are needed in this respect.”

Universities

The President doesn’t exclude the possibility of returning to determining the basic profile for each university. It’s necessary to reduce the number of professions which lie outside the core competence of this or that university. “It seems to me it is time to return to the definition of basic profiles for every university,” said Alexander Lukashenko. Moreover, the number of universities needs to be optimised, considering demographic processes and population forecasts.

ing additional social guarantees for those authors who are involved in creating school textbooks. The President responded, “I’m in favour of paying good money for textbooks.”

Tests

The President also spoke about preparation for entering universities, saying that, “Centralised tests should be fully in sync with the school curriculum. Much has been done in this academic year. By the next year, September 1st, 2018, all tests will have been improved and brought into compliance with the school curriculum. This process should be completed soon, especially considering the experience of university enrolment this year.

Enhancement of qualifications

The Head of State focussed on the necessity of giving new impetus to the qualification enhancement of pedagogical staff. “It should be more flexible, able to promptly react to needs, considering the latest achievements of scientists and developments in modern practice. We have already agreed that retraining is not one or two months spent by

a teacher somewhere in the qualification enhancement institute. A teacher should enhance their qualification in a week or ten days maximum.” Moreover, retraining should be conducted by innovative teachers, winners of awards and specialists in teaching methods who should share the best practices available.

Language

Mr. Lukashenko noted that when the decision was adopted regarding the language used by schools, the country’s decision reflected the people’s wishes. “We did not force anyone to choose the Belarusian language. If we had chosen the same way the ‘reforming fathers’ did when the Soviet Union collapsed, we would not have had either of the languages now. Russian is our native language. If someone thinks it only belongs to Russia as a state, then we have a difference of opinion. I treat Belarusian and Russian equally. I think by no means should we reject this heritage because we will lose a great deal. Let us be rich in language and have two mother tongues — Russian and Belarusian. Perhaps in time, life will change and a

‘Synchronisation of watches’ conducted on sensitive issues

The most significant development issues for the Belarusian economy high on the agenda at the recent session with President Alexander Lukashenko and the leadership of the country’s economic bloc

By Vasily Kharitonov

The Head of State reminded the meeting that he had earlier decided in favour of hosting quarterly government sessions with the political, economic and power-wielding blocs of the government. Such events are intended to focus on tactical issues. This time it was decided to discuss topical issues that are in the competence of the country’s economic bloc. “I would like to warn the Prime Minister and all those present here that it has nothing to do with the government having to present a report to the President. The relevant report has been scheduled. It will take place when the time is right,” Mr. Lukashenko pointed out.

It was noted that the development of the economy determines the state of social and political affairs and the material wealth of our people. Accordingly, the President called on individual government officials to answer specific questions.

Development of the economy in general

“How did individual branches of the economy perform in H1 2017? Can we really hit the annual development targets? It seems to me that we have some growth, about one percent, but is it stable or not? What movement can we expect in the future in this regard?” asked the President.

Pricing

“I would like to know how my instructions to control and monitor prices and pricing practices in the country are being fulfilled? On the one hand, inflation is below



the targeted range. This is good. However, on the other hand, people complain that prices are unreasonable for some things. For instance, medications and some bakery products. The price fluctuations may be small yet they do happen,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

Salaries

“Are we getting the targeted level of salaries in different branches of the economy and various regions? Is the stratification of society by revenue getting worse? How has the government responded to my instruction to pay close attention to those workers who are paid the lowest salaries?” asked Mr. Lukashenko.

The Head of State said he wanted to know about salaries in agriculture, education, healthcare and culture.

Flax farming and processing

The Head of State wanted to know how his instructions concerning the flax industry are being fulfilled starting with flax farming and ending with flax processing. He said he wanted to know how flax seed areas are chosen, how technologies are observed and how Belarus-grown seeds are produced.

“I would like to look at the problem from another angle. Do we now have a domestic market and a foreign one for flax products? For both fabric and our ready-made products? If the reports I get are correct, why are flax factories overstocked?” asked the President.

Super-harvesters

“I’ve given instructions to update the ‘Polesie’ harvester line-up by the 2018

harvesting campaign. We need to focus on some models that will sell well on the market. The harvester we tested recently in the Mogilev and Vitebsk regions is a good one. It leaves a clean field and can rival imported harvesters. It is a good thing that Gomselmash engineers are not satisfied with their accomplishments. They say there are ways to improve this harvester,” Mr. Lukashenko emphasised.

The Head of State reminded those present that engines for these harvesters should be produced in Belarus since the relevant factories are available in the country.

“Creating a super-harvester at Gomselmash that will beat foreign competitors is another thing. I’m not going to reveal all the secrets but the designers have already

made some headway with it,” said the President. He gave instructions to schedule a visit to Gomselmash Production Association in winter for familiarisation with vehicle modernisation and the manufacture of new models.

Financial stability and exports of goods and services

The Head of State said he wanted to know how financial stability is being secured in the country and what measures are being taken to bolster the national currency. The export of goods and services was also mentioned. “Export proceeds have improved thanks to the price factor. Additionally, no serious changes have occurred as far as efforts to penetrate new markets of merchandise and services are concerned,” stated the President.

Judging by the Prime Minister Andrei Kobayakov’s report at the session, in the first six months of this year, a clear trend was registered for the restoration of economic growth. GDP has increased by 1.1 percent and six out of seven of the most important figures have been achieved in the H1.

The foreign trade balance was positive and the budget was carried out with net surplus that will be directed to pay a currency state debt. Gold-and-currency reserves are close to \$7bn while inflation is slowing and is expected to be at 7 percent. The President is keen to know of any trends, predictions or problems hidden behind this ‘façade’.

The President issued specific instructions. The priorities for the Government for the second H2 include: preservation of the rates of economic growth, provision of macroeconomic balance and reduction of inflation. A forecast for socio-economic development for 2018 has been already developed. Because of the openness of the Belarusian economy, external factors should be considered when making plans. The Government hopes to see economic growth in Russia and the Eurozone. The world price for oil is forecast at \$46 per barrel while one US Dollar is expected to cost 60.5 Russian Roubles. Proceeding from these parameters, GDP growth in Belarus is expected at 103.4 percent while labour productivity will reach 102.8 percent and this real income indicator is the most important condition for the growth of populations.

Export geography is expanding borders

By Alexey Fedosov

Belarus hopes to launch poultry supplies to China by next summer

The Head of Foreign Economic Affairs for the Agriculture and Food Ministry, Alexey Bogdanov, tells us,

“We delivered over \$2 million of dairy products to China in H1 2017: up 72-fold on the same period of the previous year. Moreover, Belarus has been certified to export beef to China.” He notes that Belarus is working on selling poultry to China, saying, “There are plans to certify poultry ex-

ports; we may fulfil this task by next summer and will then launch.”

“Our strategy to develop exports for the next few years focuses on three main regions: primarily, southeast Asia (China, Vietnam, and Japan), but also the Middle East (the Gulf states), and Africa. These three

regions are of great interest to us,” underlines Mr. Bogdanov. He explains that Europe is also a promising avenue, due to strong currency and high purchasing power. However, trade barriers prevent large volumes of products entering this market. Meanwhile, Belarus is working on

boosting exports to CIS states.

Work continues, with supplies delivered to Kenya, Somali and Guinea. Record supplies have been recently dispatched to Vietnam and Hong Kong. Exports of Belarusian agricultural products are set to rise by more than 11 percent in 2017.



Orsha Linen Mill supplies produce to 35 countries of the world

Opposing inflation as part of optimistic prognosis

By Alexey Zhemchuzhnikov

According to the National Bank, inflationary expectations are declining, despite remaining quite high. At the same time, incomes are growing, as is consumer demand. Increased food prices in June are likely to hamper further inflation, believes the National Bank.

It states that positive trends were formed in the monetary and credit sphere in the first half of the year: “The fall in inflation and confidence in the sustainability of this process have allowed us to accelerate the dynamics of lowering the refinancing rate in the first half of the year. This has contributed to reduced interest rates in the credit and deposit market.”

However, against the background of excess liquidity of banks, the dynamics of lending remain relatively low. In particular, in the corporate segment, lending is constrained by the low solvent demand of enterprises.

There are many positive trends in monetary policy. For example, deposits in foreign currency continue to fall compared to those in Belarusian Roubles. This reflects the processes of dedollarisation. In addition, according to the results of the first half of the year, gold-and-currency reserves have grown and the National Bank’s currency obligations have decreased.

In the second half of the year, the regulator intends to continue the policy of slowing inflation and maintaining macroeconomic balance. “The possibility of lowering interest rates will be determined by the development of the macroeconomic situation as a whole, the rate of price growth against the medium-term goal (no more than 5 percent in 2020), as well as prospects for the country’s balance of payments,” the Bank adds.

Thread must endure

Bellegprom Concern is working on making jeans from linen, and customers are keen to snap up linen dresses and jackets under the ‘Made in Belarus’ brand. Where such garments used to be sewn from imported linen, Belarus is now producing enough linen to satisfy domestic demand. However, while our linen is suitable for tablecloths and tea-towels, it needs further refinement to be soft enough to wear comfortably beside the skin. Our *MT* reporter investigates.

By Polina Kononova

Flax is sometimes called northern silk. Our flax beautifully blossoms in fields but cannot yet rival that grown in the rest of Europe. Climate and soil in Europe enable producers to retain 70 percent of the world’s flax market and endure the highest quality linen production. At the moment, our linen mills are frozen in anticipation, awaiting high quality raw flax. Harvesting is in full swing, with the moment of truth coming within 5-6 weeks.

“Flax is the soul and eyes of the Belarusian people. Have you seen how it blooms?” the Director of the Institute of Flax, Ivan Golub, smiles. However, figures are hidden behind these lyricisms. The yield this year is only just above that of 2016, at 10-11 centners per hectare. It’s vital to finish harvesting in time, and the crop is already running two weeks late, due to the cold spring, which has obliged farmers to use various methods to accelerate ripening.

In the past, flax covered 250,000 hectares of land in Belarus. Speaking of whether the present territory should be enlarged, Mr. Golub explains, “In the past, the yield was 3

centners per hectare. After Orsha Linen Mill’s reconstruction, it should be possible to increase the area from today’s 46,000 hectares to at least 60,000. The factory needs high quality fibre, at a yarn weight of at least eleven. If more crops and retted stalks are ensured, we’ll gain better choice.”

Since Orsha factory doesn’t want to use coarse fibre, the Flax Institute proposes to export it to China. According to the Deputy Director for Quality and Raw Materials at Orsha Linen Mill, Natalia Vilyugina, our raw materials rival those we import. However, a great deal more fine quality flax is required.

“I wouldn’t say that our raw materials are worse than those we import. Pruzhany Flax Plant has recently bought a new crop, which is just as good as that from abroad. The problem is that we simply lack enough volume. We split and break the fibre; the higher the index for splitting, the finer the yarn becomes. Standards are becoming much tougher, as everyone wants the best quality. Meanwhile, agricultural producers would like to return to the standards of four decades ago.”

According to Ms. Vilyugina,



some flax factories are able to produce high-quality raw materials, while others are relying on exports. However, she doesn’t agree that we can rely on sales to China. Local manufacturers want to receive high quality flax fibre. As for increasing acreage, staff at Orsha Linen Mill are convinced that, if flax factories adhere to adjusted standards for retted stalks, then 50,000 hectares should satisfy domestic needs and allow for

exports. Yield is what’s important, and the best Belarusian producers are managing 30-35 centners per hectare. Europeans produce 65-70 centners; as a result, about 70 percent of fabrics are made from long fibre, against just a third in Belarus. Our facilities mostly receive thicker fibres, which aren’t as desirable, being suitable only for tablecloths, tea-towels and upholstery. Finer linen is needed for shirts, dresses and bedclothes.

Substantial blow to monopolies planned

By Alexey Fedosov

Approximately a year ago the Trade Ministry was renamed the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, along with its new name, the department was also entrusted with the new function of counteracting monopolies

Considerable effort is being put into the project. A draft law has been prepared aimed at developing competition and counteracting the domination of the market giants.

Deputy Minister of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade, Ivan Vezhnovets, notes, “The major goal of innovations is to develop new instruments of antimonopoly, clear regulation of activity of the antimonopoly authority and the elimination of gaps in legislation. For many years the main way of regulating the activity of dominating economic entities was price regulation — via declaration of prices and establishment of a marginal ratio of profitability. However, practice shows that direct interference in business activity is not

always efficient.”

The Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade suggests instead introducing rules of non-discriminatory access towards goods which are manufactured or sold by the giants (whose market share is over 70 percent). In other words, the ministry will shift from price regulation to the establishment of rules of behaviour on the market. The new approach will bring corrections to the work of the Ministry itself.

“We will have a new function but we should understand that price

regulation won’t disappear. There are instances where it’s not feasible to conduct price regulation. However, as far as the consumer market is concerned, control over prices will be preserved.”

According to Mr. Vezhnovets, a separate topic is antimonopoly investigations. Their numbers are similar to those of economic crimes.

“We’re now guided by the Law on Appeals of Citizens and Legal Entities where the time for the examination of applications is limited. We suggest setting a three-month

term of examination of such applications with possible extension,” he explains.

In the first six months of 2017, twelve violations of antimonopoly legislation were registered. Up to 70 percent of such cases concern unfair competition. The unfair behaviour of market players is primarily revealed upon applications from businesses. 55 cases are currently under consideration in the central office, so there’s much work to do. It must be said that the review of the law under such conditions will be very timely.

Donating cosmic gifts

Cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky is holidaying in Cherven, and has arrived with gifts: items from his personal belongings which have travelled into the Earth's orbit, for donation to a branch of the National History Museum: Minsk's Museum of Modern Belarusian Statehood

By Alina Kassel

Many people arrived at the museum, located at 38 Karl Marx Street, for the invitation-only event, wishing to shake Mr. Novitsky's hand and have their photo taken with him. He brought a Belarusian flag, a glove from his uniform, his T-shirts and, even, the bag in which his belongings were stored while in space.

"I'm also presenting the crew emblem, as kept at Baikonur until the spacecraft launch. I asked the chief designer of manned programmes for a few things to bring to Belarus, so you now have a flight suit (as worn by cosmonauts after removing their spacesuit), a heat-insulation suit (to ensure you don't freeze during an unscheduled landing in winter) and a suit to rescue the crew in case of ditching," he said.

The new space exhibition at our museum has also received photos of Roskosmos and NASA, and of Oleg Novitsky and his wife Yulia. These show preparation for flight, launch, landing, and meeting the crew. Of course, truly personal items — such as letters, photos, and small gifts from friends and loved ones — have not been donated.

"It's forbidden to take just anything into space," the cosmonaut explains. "There's a certain list of products permitted for the ISS.

These should weigh no more than 1kg and be no larger in volume than 0.5 litres. I was 70 grams within my weight limit for personal items." Mr. Novitsky smiles, sharing details of his flight.

The Deputy Director of the National History Museum, Alexander Khromoy, has called the donation a historic event. "A new exhibition has been born at our museum. We'll be able to show our guests that Belarus is a space state. We hope you'll be not only our honorary guest but a creator of our joint history," he said, presenting the cosmonaut with a book featuring the museum's collections. "Our new edition will be supplemented with the articles you've donated."

Jointly with his colleagues, Mr. Novitsky has conducted over fifty experiments although, sometimes, the crew didn't know the purpose behind such testing. "Most experiments can be carried out on Earth, with just a few conducted in space. An experiment might be repeated from year to year, being long-term. We endeavour to get the most out of each scientific programme," he explains.

The cosmonaut took official photos of the Earth, which wasn't an easy task. "I was so delighted when I got a good shot," he admits. "We had to catch a moment when there



Cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky

were no clouds and when the ISS was passing over the necessary location. The weather might look nice from Earth but it's not the case from above."

Recalling his teenage years, Mr. Oleg Novitsky recalls wanting to become a military pilot, reaching the sky and stars. "When I was graduating from the Aviation Academy, cosmonauts were being enrolled. It was impossible for me to miss such an opportunity and I happily passed all the exams. What can I advise young people? It doesn't matter where you're born: in a small village or in a large city. Work as hard as you can, set goals and achieve them. Give up smoking and take part in sports. Even before entering aviation school, in Cherven, I was able

to run for up to 12km, which helped me greatly later. Interestingly, former cosmonauts continue going to the gym and often live for 90 years or more."

Mr. Novitsky said that, while staying in Cherven with his family, he used to run daily. "My mother cooks well and feeds us heartily, so we need to keep in shape!" Finally, being asked about his first steps on returning to Earth and whether he'd like to return to orbit, he comments, "Those were the most pleasant steps. It's true. I was able to walk but it was hard to stay upright. Actually, I recovered quickly. Shall I go into space again? A commission scheduled for January will show whether I'm ready to fly or not. If so, I'll immediately start preparations."

In conditions — very close to combat

By Olga Sarukhanova

Less than a month is left before the large-scale Russian-Belarusian military exercise, Zapad-2017, with preparations in the final stage

This project has been planned by the Defence Ministries of the two countries for more than a year and the academic year will finish for the Union State military with the joint strategic exercise Zapad-2017.

A 'rehearsal' — preparatory exercise — was scheduled for late August, with units from the Russian part of the regional group of troops already having arrived in Belarus.

Recently Belarus has hosted a joint special exercise with military authorities, military units and departments and organisations of rear and technical provision of the Armed



Forces of both states. Soldiers and officers practiced actions in the rear, alongside technical provision for manoeuvres. They also rehearsed how to 'curtain' military sites on the roads, conduct evacuations, quickly repair broken machinery and weaponry and to deploy a field main pipeline. Security forces have also recreated a situation and conditions close to combat.

The Zapad-2017 large-scale exercise will be held in the region of both countries from September 14th-21st, aiming to prepare and use task forces in the interests of ensuring the military security of the Union State. The military will 'polish' in practice the issues of compatibility of headquarters at various levels and systems of troop management while also per-

forming tasks to reinforce state border protection. Events of this format are held every other year.

Six firing ranges will be involved in Belarus and several more in the Russian Leningrad Region. Engineering departments of the Western Military District have already equipped grounds with training mine fields, anti-tank ditches and barbed wire. In total, several thousand 'mock-up weapons' were used to recreate the real situation, noted the Russian Defence Ministry.

Chief of the General Staff, First Deputy Defence Minister of Belarus, Oleg Belokonev, stresses again that manoeuvres are open and transparent and are exclusively of defensive character. Journalists are invited as observers, alongside military experts of the EAEU and CSTO states, in addition to NATO representatives.

Coxsackie confused with angina

By Olga Pasiyak

"There have been no cases of Belarusian tourists being infected with Coxsackie virus," states Tamara Amvroseva, who heads the Infectious Diseases Laboratory, at the Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology. Specialists are monitoring the situation, which has been much discussed in the media. They have stated that there is no need to signify an emergency, let alone an epidemic, as there is no laboratory confirmation that it was the Coxsackie virus contracted by the tourist from Ukraine (as the Turkish Ministry of Health reported).

Ms. Amvroseva believes that the problem in Turkey may exist on a smaller scale than is thought. In Belarus, cases of gerpangina have been registered but, according to preliminary data, this is not the Coxsackie virus but a commonly contracted ECHO virus. "There's no need to be afraid of an epidemic," she says.

Belarus annually registers 20 to 30 different types of enteroviruses. There are over 70 types in all, divided into four groups: Coxsackie A and Coxsackie B, ECHO and 'unclassified' viruses. The most dangerous of these is the enterovirus of the 71st type, which causes severe CNS and can result in death. However, for the entire period of observation, since 2008, no such virus has been registered in Belarus.

MT REFERENCE:

There is no specific vaccine against enteroviruses. Therefore, much hope is pinned on observation and laboratory monitoring. Personal and public hygiene is important, and it's crucial not to use antibiotics, since these depress the immune system, allowing the infection to progress. Children under the age of 14 years are most vulnerable. Infection is spread through ordinary contact, as well as by air and water, and through food. A person may be contagious with enteroviral infection, even without visible, clinical manifestations. This year, outbreaks have been registered in Russia and Ukraine, but most often in Asian countries, such as Thailand. In Belarus, in the first seven months of 2017, 36 percent fewer enterovirus infections were registered (against the same period of 2016).



To avoid small birds feasting on berries, bilberry plants are hidden under nets, looking like a wide lake of green waves

Bilberry is queen of fields

I take one berry, look at another one and notice a third... The old fairy-tale proverb is especially topical these days in Belarus.

By Anna Kurak

The time is upon us to gather small sweet fruits. Blueberries, which grow all over Belarusian forests, are closing their season, while bilberries are only beginning to ripe. Interestingly, despite Polesie being famous for its marshes, bilberries are rare. However, there is a place in Belarus where a full truck of this berry can be easily gathered. It's a field of miracles!

Time for mushrooms and berries

Belarusian farmer Ivan Grib is busy bilberry harvesting on his Olshany farm, in the Brest Region. Growing on an industrial scale, he began his business with cucumbers,

like his neighbours, selling mostly to Russia. However, with so many competitors, Mr. Grib decided to reorient his agro-farm. Knowing that few bilberries grow in the area, Mr. Grib planted a couple of bushes seven years ago. They grew well and he now has over ten hectares of land (equal to around 15 football fields) covered in bilberries. Last year, he harvested about eighty tonnes, most being sold to Russia. Residents of Moscow, St. Petersburg and even Anapa love Olshany berries; the bilberries are truly the calling card of Mr. Grib's farm.

Bilberry therapy prescribed by doctor

Mr. Grib hires villagers for seasonal work but other Belarusian

farms accept anyone. The owner of one of these farms in the Brest Region, Yuri Sharets, believes it's an excellent opportunity to escape from city bustle and offers a kind of therapy. Seven years ago, the Moscow doctor of medical sciences exchanged the noise of the capital for bilberry plantations in Belarus, and has never regretted his decision.

"We spent most of our life in Moscow, eating food from a supermarket. Everything changed when we established a farm. We then realised what quality vegetables, fruits and berries look like; we know their real price. We're inviting everyone to our farm, to learn the same thing," says Yuri's wife, Nina.

Anyone can come to doctor

Sharets' farm, learning about the useful properties of bilberries and seeing how they're grown. You can gather berries to take home (paying at a much lower rate than the market price, at 300 Russian Roubles per kilo). Such agro-tourism is gaining in popularity, especially among residents of large cities, who are ever wishing to escape to nature.

Precious berries

This useful berry helps not only farmers earn money but also villagers from neighbouring areas. Many people are needed to harvest and, during the season, anyone can get a job. Old and young people help pick the berries, allowing pensioners to supplement their allowances,

and schoolchildren to earn their first pocket-money.

Picking berries seems an easy job at first glance but they're fragile. You need to pluck them carefully and place them gently in your basket, to avoid bruising. In fact, bilberries are among the most expensive, being ten times the price of imported watermelons and grapes at Minsk's Komarovka market.

Bilberries appeared in Belarusian fields in the late 1970s, having been raised initially at the Botanical Garden and at experimental areas, before moving to collective farm fields. Belarusian agrarians have now cultivated over sixty varieties and they are grown at over a hundred farms countrywide.

Bride of all brides

The 'best bride' has been selected in Slonim, for the third time, with fourteen beauties promenading from Pervomaiskaya Street to the central town square, and an improvised wedding organised, involving Belarusian traditional elements



By Vladimir Kozyrev

Stylists, hairdressers and make-up artists gave master classes and young girls pondered the relevance of family in contemporary society. There were contests for throwing a wedding

bouquet into a hoop, dancing and the chance to show off intellectual abilities. Yana Andrilovich, 18, and a third-year student at the Belarusian State Economic University, was named 'Best Bride-2017' and was awarded a tourist trip to Paris.

A wonderful estate

By Vladimir Velikhov

For several years, Ganka estate, near Minsk, has been named best in the 'Hospitality' nomination for rural tourist households

Host Anatoly Gonets has conducted a military band, been a captain, and even headed a pharmaceutical firm, but suddenly abandoned everything, leaving Minsk to head to the countryside, where he and his wife bought a ruined old house. His creative approach has resulted in an amazing new business.

"When I was in Israel, on a kibbutz, I took note of how things were run and pondered on introducing something similar in Belarus. I encouraged hosts of other agro-estates in the idea and we created a tour-

ist cluster. Each estate is unique. One grows organic potatoes, beets and carrots, which we pay for at 60 Kopecks per kilo, buying his entire stock. He benefits from not having to take his produce to market, where it may rot before finding a buyer. Another farmer produces cheese using Dutch technology; a third has his own hives," Anatoly explains. He bakes bread on his Ganka estate, using ancient recipes, in wood-burning stoves. There's no competition between estates. If someone has no room to accommodate eager guests, he sends them to his neighbours. People arrive intending to stay for a week but often linger for two or three. There's even an arrangement with a nearby sanatorium, so tourists can go for relaxing treatments.

Houston braced for more floods in wake of Harvey

Authorities in Houston, Texas, are bracing for another deluge as efforts to evacuate residents after the first wave of flooding continue

Hurricane Harvey was downgraded to a tropical storm, a categorisation that little conveys the trail of destruction it left in its wake. More than 76 centimetres of rain has already fallen in some parts of the city. Rivers and channels overflowed their banks causing chest-deep water



in some streets. With a further 38 to 63 centimetres predicted over several days, the National Weather Service has said that Texas could see a year's worth of rainfall in just a week.

With emergency services stretched thin, local people are on the frontline. With roads impassable, however, many residents have been told to stay put, avoiding attics where

they could become trapped, but getting up onto the roof of their house if necessary. Authorities have urged people not to call 911 unless their lives are in immediate danger.

US-backed forces to start offensive for Syria's Deir al-Zor soon

US-backed Syrian Democratic Forces will launch an offensive to oust Islamic State from Deir al-Zor province 'very, very soon', an official from the alliance said

Ahmed Abu Khawla, head of the Deir al-Zor military council which fights under the SDF, said the assault might begin 'within several weeks' in parallel with the battle for Raqqa city. The SDF alliance of Kurdish and Arab militias has been fighting to seize Raqqa from Islamic State with the help of air strikes.

Japan automaker Subaru to book \$741.5 million special loss over Takata recall

Subaru Corp said it would book a special loss of 81.3bn Yen (\$741.45m) in the first half as it expects increased expenses related to the global recall of airbag inflators made by Takata Corp after the air bag maker filed for bankruptcy in June

As a result, the Japanese automaker said it expected full-year net profit to come in at 228.5bn Yen, down from a previous forecast for 285bn Yen and lower than last year's 282.35bn Yen. In May, Subaru said that as of March, it had accrued expenses of around 73.5bn Yen related to the recall of Takata inflators, but later said the bankruptcy filing by the auto parts maker would create uncertainty over whether it could claim compensation from Takata.



European Union states begin returning refugees to Greece

European countries are poised to begin the process of returning refugees to Greece, as migrants seeking reunification with their family members — mostly in Germany — step up protests in Athens

In a move decried by human rights groups, EU states will send back asylum seekers who first sought refuge in Greece, despite the nation being enmeshed in its worst economic crisis in modern times.

Germany has made nearly 400 resettlement requests, according to officials in Berlin and sources in Athens' leftist-led government. The UK, France, the Netherlands and Norway have also asked that asylum seekers be returned to Greece. Greece's Migration Minister

said that the first returns were expected imminently.

"The paperwork has begun and we expect returns to begin over the next month," said Yannis Mouzalas. "It will start with a symbolic number as an act of friendship [towards other EU nations]. Greece has already accepted so many [refugees], it has come under such pressure, that to accept more would be absurd, a joke if it weren't such a tragedy."

Mouzalas said he had no idea where the returnees would be placed or whether they would ever leave Greece. Officials say privately that acceptance of the transfers has been non-negotiable given Greece's EU membership and receipt of funds from Brussels.

At ancient pyramid in Peru, remains of 20th century Chinese labourers found

Archaeologists exploring Peru's pre-Columbian past recently unearthed a glimpse of a less prominent chapter in the Andean country's history — the remains of 16 Chinese labourers from around the turn of the last century

The bodies, thought to be those of indentured workers brought to Peru to replace slave labour, were found buried at the top of an adobe pyramid first used by the ancient Ichma people, Roxana Gomez, the lead archaeologist of the site, said. Peru was one of the biggest destinations for Chinese labour in Latin America in the 20th century, a market that thrived after slavery was abolished in the country in 1854. The Chinese found at the Bellavista pyramid in Lima were buried in the late 1800s and early 1900s and had likely picked cotton at a nearby plantation in 'very difficult' conditions, said Gomez. In a possible sign of how the Chinese gradually emerged from dire poverty in Peru, the first 11 bodies were shrouded in cloth and placed in the ground, while the last five wore blue-green jackets and were buried in wooden coffins, Gomez said. "In



one Chinese coffin, an opium pipe and a small ceramic vessel were included in the funerary ensemble," said Gomez. Chinese labourers in the 20th century were generally not allowed to be buried at Lima's Catholic cemeteries, forcing them to improvise burial sites, according to Peru's Culture Ministry. The remains of Chinese labourers were previously found in Lima at other adobe pyramids known as 'huacas'. Built by the indigenous societies that once ruled much of Peru's Pacific coast, huacas were used as administrative and religious centres where members of the elite were often buried with gold objects.

Tesla's 'long-haul' electric truck aims for 200 to 300 miles on a charge

Tesla Inc next month plans to unveil an electric big-rig truck with a working range of 200 to 300 miles, a sign that the electric car maker is targeting regional hauling for its entry into the commercial freight market

Chief Executive Elon Musk has promised to release a prototype of its Tesla Semi truck next month in a bid to expand the company's market beyond luxury cars. The entrepreneur has tantalised the trucking industry with the prospect of a battery-powered heavy-duty vehicle that can compete with conventional diesels.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



One hundred works — for a centenary of the painter

National Art Museum hosts solemn opening of the exhibition of the Great Patriotic War soldier, painter and scene designer of the State Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the BSSR in 1938-1956 (now, the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre), Mikhail Blishch (1917-1966), dedicated to the 100th anniversary of his birth



Georgy BLISHCH, a son of Mikhail Blishch

My father had an aspiration towards high art rather than amateur art. He believed that everyone should be a professional in his job. Most of his works were given away during his life. He was very generous and, moreover, there was nowhere to keep his art. When father was alive the pictures could only be sold by order of the Union of Artists. Therefore, he presented many of his pictures to others and we have very few of his artworks.

By Veniamin Mikheev

The exhibition space of this diverse show includes more than 50 paintings, stenographic and graphic works from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus and the Museum of Theatrical and Musical Culture — a branch of the National History Museum — from the archives of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the Republic of Belarus, the funds of the Belarusian State Archives-Museum of Lit-

erature and Art and the Belarusian Union of Artists, as well as from the private collection of Lyudmila Babarykina and the painter's family collection. The exhibition is enriched with photos from the family archive, as well as photos and theatre programmes from the Belarusian State Archives-Museum of Literature and Art.

In his time, Mikhail Blishch decorated scenery for the country's Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatres and created many notable costumes such as in the *Laurencia*



for soloists, which continue to be popular today. It is no accident that his drawings are part of the current exposition at the National

Art Museum alongside portraits, landscapes, stained-glass work and monumental paintings — in total, around a hundred works commemorate the master's centenary jubilee anniversary. Photographs from the family archive are an insightful and special addition.

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Mikhail Blishch's creative activity went through fire and water in the truest sense of the word. In the years of the Great Patriotic War the painter had to defend his Motherland. However, he never lost his passion for painting even while in the trenches.

Mikhail Blishch remains possibly one of the least studied figures in Belarusian art. This makes it even more interesting to penetrate the depths of his original creativity — both in form and content.

Revolving vinyl records

This year, sales of vinyl records are likely to be impressive. Large corporations are noting the retro-mania trend, with Sony announcing plans to release records after a break of nearly thirty years. Vinyl records lost their battle against tapes and CDs in the late 20th century, becoming artefacts for collectors and demanding music lovers; at that time, nobody could imagine sales of millions of copies. However, in recent years, sales of records have begun to rise sharply. Why makes people fall in love with vinyl in our digital age?



By Victoria Salnikova

Player wins

“On the territory of the former Soviet Union, and in many other regions of the world, production of records, at some point, stopped: between 1995 and 2012. Actually, the vinyl subculture has existed all these years and has generally weathered the crisis. There was not a single year when turntables and records were not produced at all in the world. In around 2005, the vinyl renaissance happened,” explains journalist and vinyl collector Anton Razmakhnin. He believes that the revival of interest in vinyl almost coincided with the decline of the CD: the Internet has become ubiquitous and broadband, making content easier and cheaper to obtain by download. According to forecasts by the international consulting firm Deloitte, this year, worldwide revenue from the sale of vinyl will reach \$1 billion: a true record this millennium. The company estimates that 90 percent of income will come from records and the remaining 10 percent from playing devices and accessories. The share of vinyl records on the market stands at 15-18 percent of the total revenue from sales of music on physical media.

The Head of Ultra Production label, Andrey Belonogov, comments. “Of course, it’s a trend, but new factories producing vinyl records are being launched all over the world and the number of shops and supermarkets selling them is increasing. In addition, manufacturers of new machines for new equipment lines are becoming more active. In the past, everyone used old equipment. In the next few years, we’ll observe rapid development in the vinyl market.”

Craving for elitism

Experts are convinced that, though the number of vinyl lovers is expanding, it remains a niche audience. According to forecasts, in 2017, vinyl records will be bought by around 20 million people worldwide —



by collectors and by those wishing to emphasise their individuality.

Vinyl collectors have a subculture, which began to emerge during the crisis. They have some interesting ‘cockroaches’ in their heads: for example, they love original records and first editions. It’s believed they’re of better quality.

Information on factory production spreads through

word of mouth.

Moreover, vinyl lovers often value covers as much as the records inside. “In this respect, Japanese collectors reign: records aimed at their market were accompanied by special booklets, stickers and covers. These are collectors’ items, fetching a

high price,” adds Mr. Belonogov.

Moreover, vinyl lovers prefer new audio equipment and records. Accordingly, new factories are producing new circulations of records, mostly for ‘fashion-following’ vinyl lovers rather than true members of vinyl subculture.

Buying but not listening to

It’s really interesting to learn what people are guided by when buying ob-

solete physical media. According to research by Deloitte, most people crave physical possessions to ‘show off’ — such as a whole shelf of discs (rather than showing them on their smartphone). Interestingly, half of those who’ve bought records in the past month have not yet listened to them. Moreover, 7 percent of

buyers have no record player at home.

The report states that vinyl records are like paper books in creating a ‘shop window’, demonstrating love for an artiste or author, such as is impossible in the case of digital copies. According to the head of Ultra Production, the popularity of vinyl is based on several reasons: retro-mania, love for rituals; and the new politics of the music market.

“In our age of digital releases, music lovers want not only to listen to music but to ‘feel’ it — making listening to a favourite album a ritual. You can spin a record in your hands before placing it on the player and then study the cover. The time of CDs is either finished or is due to finish very soon. In this respect, vinyl has come

replace them. Coloured discs of different sizes, a huge choice of players and original cover designs indicate a new stage of market development,” he says.

Time to catch up

Unlike other countries, the CIS vinyl market is only just launching. Releases are the exception rather than the rule. “If an artist or band releases an album on vinyl (as our Western colleagues do), we can say that we’ve reached European level. Many artistes aren’t lagging behind in this respect. However, not all are following suit,” continues Mr. Belonogov.

In the West, you can record vinyl on demand, using a service such as Vinylize, which works with SoundCloud. In Russia, one particular company focuses on vinyl production, while other companies are exporting vinyl records. Forecasts are optimistic, with Mr. Belonogov believing that, in 3-5 years’ time, the CIS will come closer to the modern European market in terms of production and sales. “I think the interest in vinyl won’t fade in the next decade or so. New technologies are being introduced, including in respect to vinyl.

For example, players with remote control are now common, enabling music lovers to pause, rewind tracks or select a track. Records are being produced with decorations or in multi-colours. We’re mastering these technologies,” Mr. Belonogov notes.



Gold, silver and bronze successes on the carpet

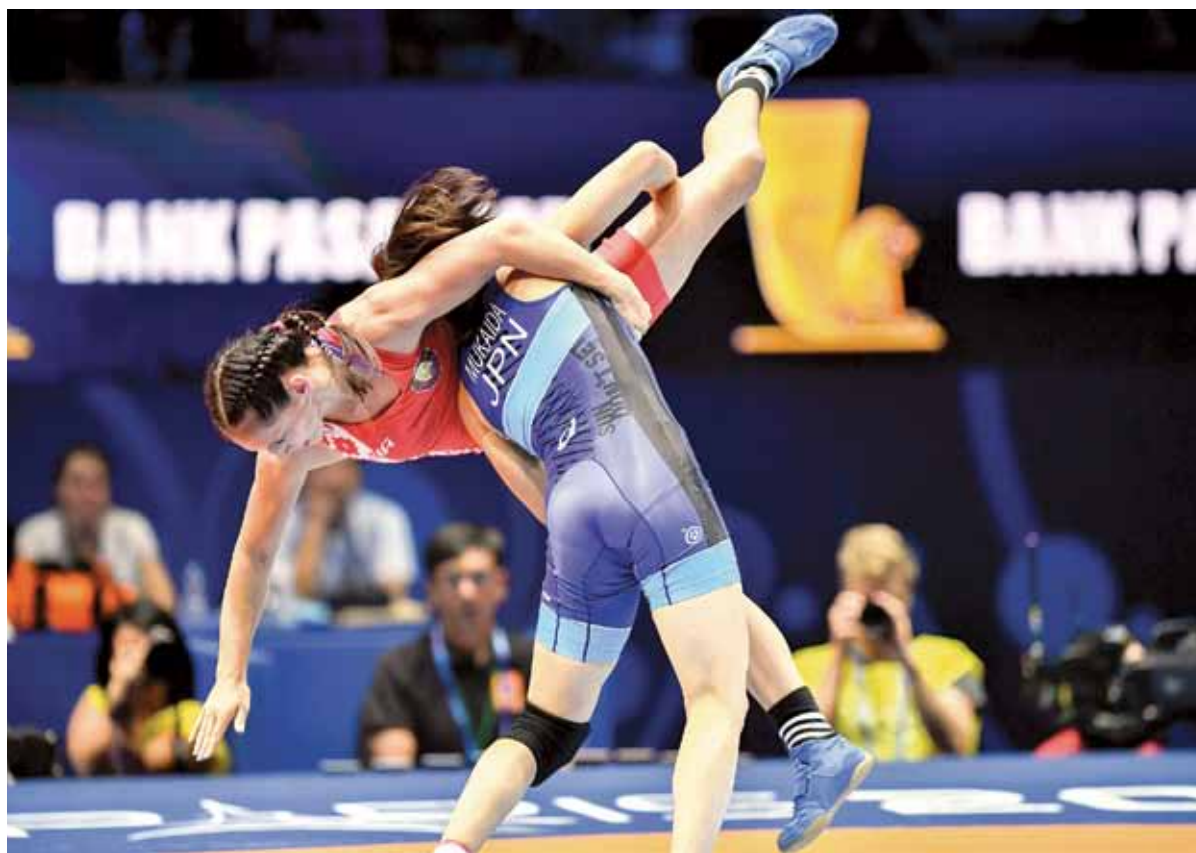
World Wrestling Championships, held in Paris, brings good news as Vanessa Kolodinskaya wins gold

By Igor Svitov

In the under 53kg category, Vanessa Kolodinskaya won an easy victory over Moldovan Iulia Leorda; also defeating Maria Prevolaraki from Greece in the next round. In the semi-finals, the Belarusian gave Romania's Estera Dobre no chance of a win, proving herself stronger than the Japanese Mayu Mukaida in the final bout.

This season, Vanessa has been acknowledged as the strongest wrestler at the European Championships in Serbia. She was also a world champion in 2012, in the under 48kg category.

The Belarusian team's gold is the first medal of its kind in the world event.



Overall, our team gained four medals in Paris. Earlier in the tournament, Belarusian wrestler Radik Guliev (80kg) — won silver in the Greco-Roman

style competition. Another silver, in the 75kg category, went to Vasilisa Marzalyuk, while Irina Kurochkina (55kg) took a bronze medal.

Violetta Chirik was also close to earning third place but lost against Turkey's Evin Demirhan in the play-off match.

European autumn for BATE Borisov

BATE Borisov defeats Ukraine's Oleksandriya in a Europa League away play-off match to go through to the tournament's group stage

The opening match ended in a 1:1 draw in Borisov. However, the first half of the return match was not successful for the Borisov team: the Belarusian champions didn't create any chances near their rival's net and even missed a couple of shots. In the 34th minute, Stanislav Dragun's mistake allowed

Oleksandriya to open the scoring with a penalty.

BATE began the second half in a similar fashion, only improving when Nikolay Signevich came onto the field. As soon as he appeared, more free space was created near Mirko Ivanić who immediately showed his skill, twice hitting his opponent's net within 5 minutes.

At the end of the match, the hosts rushed onto the attack, but their attempts were neutralised by the BATE



During the match

defenders. The referee added seven minutes extra-time but Oleksandriya posed no further threat to the Borisov team. After the game, BATE players joined their fans to celebrate the vic-

tory. In Group H of the Europa League, BATE will play against the London team, Arsenal, German Koln and Serbian Red Star from Belgrade following the results of the draw held in Monaco.

Love and concord!

By Alexey Grishin

The number of desirable brides has decreased in the country. In general, information that our 'golden fish', Alexandra Gerasimenya, is going to marry appeared more than a year ago. At a press conference after returning from the Rio Olympic Games (where Alexandra claimed bronze) the athlete said that she was affianced to Yevgeny Tsurkin, one of the leaders of Belarus' national swimming team.

It turned out that they have been together for several years already but preferred not to advertise their relationships. Everything is good in its season. Though Alexandra and Yevgeny many times published photos on their pages in social networks the wide public didn't know anything that athletes are connected more than by friendship. "This shouldn't bother anyone, except for my friend and myself. The lesser information the better," noted Ms. Gerasimenya.

In February 2016, the couple disclosed their love affair, exchanging in the Facebook congratulations on the occasion of St. Valentine's Day. Despite this, Alexandra didn't name the concrete date of wedding. She only said that it's a bad idea to marry in the leap 2016 year, also referring to the fact that before making such a decision it's necessary to acquire one's own housing.

Alexandra ponders philosophically about her future, as priorities do change in life. Of course, she would like to earn Olympic gold, in addition to her gold medals from European and World championships. However, the champion prefers not to speak about the Games in Tokyo so far.

Anyone can win On path to European Games-2019

By Sergey Kanashits

In just two years, our country will host a major sports event, welcoming the 2nd European Games — a grand tournament not quite equal to the Olympics but comparable in spirit and atmosphere.

Time flies as sports fans know. Not long ago, we awaited the World Ice-Hockey Championship in Minsk. May 2014 brought joys and excitement, leading us to eagerly anticipate 2021, when our

country will join Latvia in organising the world ice hockey forum.

Before that happy event, we have the 2019 festival of sport to look forward to, with preparations already underway, including reconstruction of Dinamo Stadium (to become an ultra-modern arena of world level). Belarus has proven many times that, as regards hospitality and ability to host events of all scales, it's unrivalled.

The prestigious European Games is being held a year before the Olympics in Tokyo. Accord-

ingly, many sports categories will count towards qualification for the Games, such as for the judo nominations. A preliminary agreement with the European Union states that a European Championship will be held in Minsk as part of the event, attracting the world's top judo wrestlers.

The logo for the 2nd European Games has been presented in Minsk, based on the idea of following your dreams, with the motif of the magical fern flower, said to bloom on the summer night of



Ivan Kupala. Those finding it will have all their dreams come true.

Athletes from all over Europe will gather in Minsk in June 2019, following their dream of winning medals. The official motto of the Games — Bright Year, Bright You — is inspiring and both Russian and Belarusian versions are planned. A mascot is yet to be chosen, with a contest planned, from which a winner will be selected. Entries should comply with Olympic values and the chosen

slogan needs to be submitted before November 15th, 2017, with the application form and a photo of the design. For more details and conditions, view the website of the Ministry of Information of Belarus, or that of the National Olympic Committee, or BELTA. The top three designs will receive invitations to the 2nd European Games and sets of ceremonial and sports uniforms of the national team of Belarus. The Games are afoot!

Festival of the week



International team of fireworkers demonstrate bright and spectacular shows as part of *Navalnitsa* International Fireworks Festival in Logoisk

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 19th September. *Marc Chagall: Colour of Love* Until 20th September. *Masters of Polish Drawing* Until 24th September. *Mikhail Blishch: 100th Anniversary* Until 1st October. *City. Architecture: We*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 3rd September. *IND-BEL-ART*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 9th October. *Anatoly Dribas: My Minsk*

YAKUB KOLAS STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

5 Akademicheskaya Street
Until 2nd September. *Hurry to Meet Poet* Until 30th September. *In Waves of Endless Movement: Along Kolas' Automobile Paths*

STATE MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 29th September. *Land of Anatoly Kaplan's Corners* Until 23rd September. *Book Nation: 1588 Statute and Its Old Editions* Until 1st October. *Lermontov in Moscow* Until 29th December. *Kandrat Krapiva: from Childhood to Youth*

VAN GOGH HOUSE

9 Zybetskaya Street
Until 1st October. *Vincent Van Gogh: Artist of Star Sky*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street
Until 11th September. *Miraculous World of Butterflies*

YAKUB KOLAS SQUARE

Until 9th September. *The Artist and the City: Golden Collection of Belarusian Pictorial Art*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 1st September. *Made in USSR* Until 10th September. *Pictures and High Fashion* Until 23rd September. *Leaving Nature*

KOMSOMOLSKOE LAKE

Pobediteley Avenue
Until 17th September. *Art-Islands* project

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

84 / 1 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th June 2018. *Legacy of Belarus: Devotion to Minsk's 950th Birthday*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN FOLK ART

Raubichi village
Until 17th September. *Miraculous Samarkand*

THEATRES

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
03.09. Paulinka 05.09. School of Taxpayers
06.09. Jeweller's Jubilee
07.09. The Black Lady of Nesvizh

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
05 and 06.09. Nobody Ever Said Life Would be Easy

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
02.09. Intriguers 03.09. Prostokvashino Holidays 07.09. Mechanical Man

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
07.09. Fool

CONCERTS

UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square
24.08. *Frédéric Chopin* 27 and 28.08. Days of National Cultures

TNT ROCK CLUB

9 Revolyutsionnaya Street
24.08. Rage Against the Machine tribute-concert 25.08. The Apples / Double C 26.08. Machines on Mute & Merlyn Monroe 27.08. Ru.St band 30.08. BB Ship 31.08. The Yankees of Moor

TSENTRALNY

13 Nezavisimosti Avenue
05.09. TheatreHD: Angels in America. Part 2: Perestroika

Z.I. AZGUR MUSEUM-WORKSHOP

8 Zair Azgur Street
07.09. Anti[gone]

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
31.08. Inn Keeper 02.09. Private Lives 03.09. Testosterone 05.09. Bridegrooms 06.09. Oedipus 07.09. He and She

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
06.09. Eternal Song
07.09. Doctor Raus' Career

RE:PUBLIC

62 Pritytsky Street
25.08. Disco from 1980s and 1990s
26.08. Disco from 1990s and 2000s
29.08. Amon Amarth

SVOBODY SQUARE

Minsk
26.08. Classics by the Town Hall

YANKA KUPALA PARK

24, 25, 30.08. Cycling School. Minsk