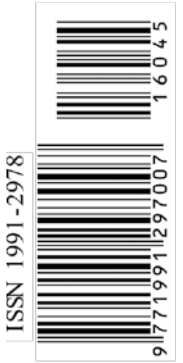


President of the Republic of Belarus,
Alexander Lukashenko, pays official
visit to the Republic of Azerbaijan,
from November 28th-29th



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times



Socio-political Weekly

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Contemporary view of glory of times past

Borisov District sees reconstruction of November 1812 Napoleonic army crossing of River Berezina during Patriotic War, on November 27th, gathering forty-nine military and historical clubs, from Belarus, Russia, France, Poland and Belgium

Investing in relations with good prospects

Specific vectors of development of comprehensive Belarusian-Slovak co-operation discussed in Minsk, as President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko meets Slovak Prime Minister Robert Fico

By Vasily Kharitonov

Our two sides understand each other perfectly. Fortunately, Bratislava has demonstrated good understanding of Minsk. The President of Belarus commented, “I know your country’s position towards us during difficult times, when there was a serious lack of understanding in Europe: what is Belarus, which policy do we pursue, and how we live and work. Your country informed the EU leadership on the true situation in Belarus.”

Robert Fico arrived in Minsk both as the Head of the Government of a country friendly towards Belarus and as the Prime Minister of the country holding EU presidency. He spoke of Belarus’ constructive position in the *Eastern Partnership* and the importance of our country’s participation in the initiative. In this respect, the recent visit was favourable both for bilateral co-operation and for wider Belarusian-European

dialogue.

During bilateral talks with the President of Belarus, it became clear that we have much in common, as noted by both Robert Fico and Alexander Lukashenko. They spoke of the recent past, when the paths of Slovakia and the Czech Republic split — by some quirk of fate.

Daring and spontaneous privatisation of Slovak strategic companies remains in the past. Mr. Fico supports a socially-oriented policy and aims to return key assets to state control.

He proposed that bilateral co-operation develop particularly in the spheres of pharmaceuticals, nuclear energy, production of tyres, wood processing, gas and the defence industry. Mr. Lukashenko supported the initiatives and invited representatives of Slovak business to come to Belarus for substantive negotiations.

Slovakia is interested in closer co-operation with Belarus, across at least five

economic areas. Concrete vectors of development for Belarusian-Slovak co-operation were discussed in Minsk, with the President supporting Slovak proposals for promising joint projects, and being ready to proceed towards detailed discussion.

Mr. Fico notes that Slovakia will welcome Belarusian businessmen and asserts that his country is developing dynamically, overcoming its problems, including the negative consequences of ill-considered privatisation.

The present government is making necessary efforts to restore state control over strategically important sites. Many were sold in the 1990s for a price below their true worth, to companies uninterested in investment into these vital enterprises.

Mr. Fico praised Belarus’ stable and dynamic development, and its considered decision-making regarding privatisation. He views political stability in Belarus as an important factor in our good



Robert Fico in Pobedy Square in Minsk

neighbourliness.

Belarus has a constructive position regarding the *Eastern Partnership* initiative, believes Mr. Fico. Accordingly, he believes it would be valuable to learn Belarus’ opinion on how the initiative should develop. Meanwhile, he advised great

er promotion of Belarus’ successes and tourist potential, so that Europeans discover more about the country.

The meeting between Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Fico looks set to drive forward relations, including investment. Good prospects lie ahead.

National potential is evident in migration sphere

By Alexey Fedosov

International Organisation for Migration (IOM) praises Belarus’ accommodation of over 160,000 Ukrainian citizens fleeing conflict in the southeast of the country, notes IOM Director General William Lacy Swing, on meeting the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN Office and other international organisations in Geneva, Yuri Ambrazevich

The sides discussed a wide range of issues relating to co-operation between Belarus and the IOM, and William Lacy Swing praised Belarus’ role in co-ordinating international efforts to combat human trafficking. He emphasised the positive results of co-operation between the IOM and Belarus via the International Training Centre on Migration and Combating Trafficking in Human Beings of the Academy of the Interior Ministry of the Republic of Belarus.

Mr. Ambrazevich expressed his confidence that the IOM’s new status as a United Nations-affiliated agency, as of September 2016, will enhance co-operation with Belarus. He assured William Lacy Swing that Belarus consistently supports all measures aimed at strengthening the capacity and image of the IOM, which will celebrate its 65th anniversary in December 2016.

Mr. Ambrazevich stressed the importance of projects implemented by the IOM to build Belarus’ national capacity in the field of migration and combating trafficking in human beings. The diplomat noted that Belarus is eager to boost co-operation in developing biometric documents, managing migration risks, providing reintegration assistance, and facilitating people’s voluntarily return to their country of origin.

Process of mutual interest gains momentum

By Dmitry Kryat

President meets delegation of Political and Security Committee of EU Council, led by Chairman Walter Stevens, and holds talks with Head of IPS Engineering Consulting and German IPS Group, Jens Henkel

European businesses have long operated in Belarus, having found reliable partners. Political dialogue has yet to catch up to the level of business interaction, though the process is gaining momentum.

The Political and Security Committee of the EU Council is the key political body co-ordinating the decisions of the European Union Council. It acts as a penultimate agency before which foreign ministers place their signatures upon certain documents. In most

cases, decisions are approved without additional discussion.

The Committee played a decisive role in the abolition of restrictions on the country in February 2016. Accordingly, the recent visit was vitally important, in content and as an indicator of Brussels’ desire to further dialogue with Minsk. The idea was discussed openly during a two-hour conversation with the President of Belarus.

Commission members asked about the areas in which Belarusian partners most welcome investment, and discussed the country’s role within the *Eastern Partnership*. Regional issues also came under scrutiny, with Belarus’ status as a pole of stability and security being obvious to all. The UK’s recent ‘Brexit’ vote also came under discussion, with the President stressing



Delegation of Council of the European Union

Minsk’s interest in EU integrity, it being a vital pole in our multipolar world. Guests were visibly impressed by the frankness of dialogue, and noted, with certain reverence, that the building had hosted the ‘Normandy Four’ negotiations, which brought important historical decisions relating to the Ukrainian crisis.

Stability on the continent is of acute importance, as Mr. Lukashenko underlined,

speaking of his concern for deteriorating relations between western countries and the Russian Federation. He mentioned the Helsinki Process, which was launched in the past to support rapprochement between the West and the East, and led to the creation of the OSCE. Perhaps, the time has come to update the Helsinki Process or begin something similar. He noted Minsk’s readiness to act as a key initiator.

Some European politicians were perhaps seeing Minsk’s constructive mood for the first time, to the benefit of the country and its partners. The President asserted, “After restrictive measures against Belarus were abolished this February, an absolutely new and favourable situation emerged for our co-operation. We have a unique chance to make it truly mutually beneficial, contributing to economic development, to our people’s benefit.”

The European Union seems to understand the validity of this thesis. “We welcome positive developments in relations with Belarus. We’re really neighbours. Belarus borders three EU countries, and you’re a very important member of the *Eastern Partnership*. We’d like to further develop relations with Belarus,” Mr. Ste-

vens said.

On meeting Mr. Henkel, talks focused on promising Belarusian-German joint business projects. IPS Group is a powerful consulting and engineering structure, specialising in the construction of turn-key industrial plants in the petrochemical, chemical, pharmaceutical and renewable energy industries. Its services and, possibly, investments would be welcomed in modernising Mogilevkhimvolokno; by 2020, this problem should be solved.

The German company also shows interest in other projects, such as in the agricultural sector. “It’s a perfect time to make strategic decisions on the introduction of new technologies and the production of competitive products. The potential is huge,” Mr. Henkel added.

President's visit to Moscow

Presidents of Belarus and Russia discuss most acute issues relating to Belarusian-Russian relations: political interaction, development of integration processes, and situation in the region and in the wider world

By Victor Khromov

Alexander Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin have attended a solemn ceremony at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, to congratulate the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill, who recently celebrated his 70th birthday.

Mr. Lukashenko congratulated the Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill, on his 70th birthday, at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, and presented the Patriarch with a Slutsk sash, alongside a picture depicting Brest's St. Nicholas Harrison Cathedral.

Mr. Lukashenko and Patriarch Kirill warmly greeted each other. "I'd like to congratulate you on behalf of myself and of the whole Belarusian nation. You know how people in Belarus love you," said the President.

"We've brought you special gifts," added Mr. Lukashenko, explaining that Belarus has recreated production of its Slutsk sashes, a wonderful legacy from the past, while the church depicted on the picture has been recently visited by the Patriarch.

Mr. Lukashenko wished the



BELTA

Vladimir Putin, Patriarch Kirill and Alexander Lukashenko at the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour in Moscow

Head of the Russian Orthodox Church health and strength.

St. Nicholas Harrison Cathedral was constructed in Brest in the mid-19th century, as a reduced copy of St. Sophia Cathedral in Constantinople. It has been visited by all

Russia's tsars, from Alexander II onwards, as well as presidents of Russia. In July 2015, on the 74th anniversary of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, Patriarch Kirill visited Brest Hero Fortress Memorial and gave a litany for the dead

at St. Nicholas Harrison Cathedral, 'to honour the defenders of Brest Fortress and all those who died in the Great Patriotic War'.

Having congratulated Patriarch Kirill, the presidents went to the Kremlin for a tête-a-tête conversa-

tion. They had discussed the most problematic aspects of Belarusian-Russian interaction during their telephone conversation on November 9th. Belarusian-Russian relations are at a high level, across all areas of inter-state interaction: politics, economics, the social sphere and culture. Russia is Belarus' major trade partner, with trade turnover totalling \$27.5bn in 2015, and \$18.83bn from January to September 2016.

Mr. Putin first spoke about the recent fall in Belarusian-Russian trade turnover, saying, "This is temporary." He believes that mechanisms of trade-economic co-operation created between our states will help overcome all difficulties. There has been growth in mutual investments and co-operative ties are expanding. "All these are platforms on which we can build," said Mr. Putin.

Mr. Lukashenko added, "We're in rather stormy times, when various crises 'roll' from all sides; we aren't isolated from this, so issues must be solved quickly." He expressed confidence that, together with Mr. Putin, as previously, they will adopt correct decisions.

European week in Minsk

Minsk hosts unofficial days of Europe, with President Lukashenko meeting representatives of German business and a major delegation of the Political and Security Committee of Council of European Union, institutional mechanisms of economic interaction between Belarus and Austria are renewed and, on November 22nd, Minsk hosted a delegation from the Interactional Secretariat of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly

By Maxim Osipov

In preparation for the session of the OSCE PA, to be held in Minsk next July, a delegation visited, aiming to see preparations for the event and assess Belarus' approach towards organisation. This visit, and the forthcoming event in 2017, fit the aspiration of our country to establish good neighbourly relations with western countries.

Two weeks earlier, the Head of the OSCE PA's Ad Hoc Working Group on Belarus, the OSCE PA Vice President, Kent Härstedt, showed clear understanding of the importance of such prospects, saying, "Minsk has invited the OSCE PA to conduct the meeting next summer in Belarus. This means that 350 delegates from fifty-

six countries, including representatives of the US Congress, will arrive in Minsk to take part in the summer session. This will be something unheard-of for Belarus."

Of course, preparations for events at such a level require special attention: taking into account technical personnel, assistants and other accompanying persons, the number of those coming to Minsk will amount to about 700. Among the requirements is accommodation, organisation of nutrition for all participants, adequate and suitable seating and transport support. Special requirements are placed on the venue, which must be suitable in size, in lighting, and in its technical equipment.

This May, Minsk was visited by an ad-



vance party of the OSCE PA International Secretariat: a subdivision providing support to the Assembly's leadership. It organises sessions, observation missions and diplomatic visits for members. In spring, the Secretariat was delighted with preparations, and the current visit promises to reinforce the opinion that everything is as it should be.

MT REFERENCE:

The Belarusian delegation, headed by the

Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic, Marianna Shchetkina, was in Vienna from November 22nd to 25th, to share experience relating to gender issues. The visit was organised by the OSCE ODIHR as part of a joint project dealing with these problems. Belarus has already conducted meetings with delegations from Austria, Finland and Sweden within the OSCE, as well as with representatives of the Secretariat and the OSCE ODIHR.

Bringing us closer

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus ready to provide assistance in pursuit of peaceful settlement of Nagorno-Karabakh conflict, notes President Lukashenko in his interview with Trend News Agency

"I say with all responsibility that we're ready to host meetings of various levels and formats in the Belarusian capital, to promote the settlement of disputes between conflicting parties, where they address us with such a request. This also applies to the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict," Alexander Lukashenko noted. "I openly admit that Belarusians are not indifferent to the situation in Donbass, and feel deep sympathy for Karabakh. This is understandable. Ukrainians, Russians, Belarusians, Armenians, Azerbaijanis, and representatives of many other nations come from one great country, one family called 'the Soviet Union'. We'll therefore make every effort for the sake of peace, normal life and stability," he added.

Belarus' position on the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict remains the same: the problem can be solved only at the negotiating table and in accordance with principles of international law. "As a member of the OSCE Minsk Group, Belarus is ready to provide parties with necessary assistance in the pursuit of peaceful settlement of the conflict. We believe that there

news agency
TREND

is nothing of greater value than national peace and tranquillity," Mr. Lukashenko said.

Belarus has become a peacemaker through its balanced and responsible policy, fully serving its own national interests and promoting stability in the European region. "Even our opponents recognise this undeniable fact. Minsk is rightfully recognised by the international community as the most convenient platform for negotiating a peaceful settlement of the situation in the east of Ukraine," the President stated. Mr. Lukashenko also noted that Belarus is eager to take part in the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route project, as initiated by Azerbaijan. "Yes, we're interested. The movement of goods between states is a rather complicated process, involving a wide range of services. In this respect, the participation of Belarus as a link in the Trans-Caspian International Transport Route is a logical step," he said.

Mr. Lukashenko remarked that Belarus enjoys high transit potential, thanks to its favourable geographic location, its well-developed logistics infrastructure, and its highly-qualified personnel.

What should be done, and how

Machine-building of the country needs a drastic shake-up, as noted at session tackling the development strategy of the Belarusian machine-building industry

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Head of State remarked that he gave instruction to develop Belarusian machine-building organisations at a session last summer, and that the Government has been working on a machine-building development strategy for more than a year, aiming to inspire innovation.

Mr. Lukashenko said, "Leading organisations of industry have received sufficient state support. The state has helped machine-building organisations refinance loans, augment working assets, and create conditions for efficient work. However, progress is not yet significant. Someone should be responsible for this."

In 2014-2015, enterprises' output fell by 50 percent, and fell again in 2015, by 25 percent. Industrial potential was replenished by only 3 percent between January and October 2016.



Assembly line of Bobruisk Plant of Tractor Parts and Units

"If we continue developing manufacturing at the same mode and at the same pace, it will take decades to reach the level of 2013. Slow progress

is inadmissible. There should be serious improvement," the President stressed. "I want to know if the Government has any efficient measures for the

upgrade of industry. Do directors of enterprises have any solutions?"

Mr. Lukashenko noted that a major group of directors

and specialists are involved in the design, manufacture, and sale of equipment and vehicle components, alongside representatives of organisations

purchasing and using these products. "I'd like today's session to be an honest, sincere, and comprehensive discussion of existing obstacles and possible solutions," the Belarusian leader said.

The President requested information on development trends in the global machine-building industry, asking how far these had been taken into account in preparing Belarusian strategy, and if there were pending issues to be solved, to ensure the sustainable operation of industry.

"What is the Government doing to solve these problems in the near future? What financial resources will be used to achieve these tasks?" he asked.

Mr. Lukashenko also requested an objective assessment from managerial personnel implementing the Belarusian machine-building development strategy, asking how far they felt able to solve these acute issues.

Useful meetings and productive discussions in French capital

Governmental delegation of Belarus — headed by Economy Minister Vladimir Zinovsky — participates in Week of Eurasia, hosted by Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's headquarters in Paris

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Belarusian delegation included the Ambassador of Belarus to France — Pavel Latushko, the First Deputy Chairman of the National Bank — Taras Nadolny, the First Deputy Finance Minister — Maxim Yermolovich, and representatives of the Economic Ministry. The Week of Eurasia was also attended by representatives of Azerbaijan, Armenia, Afghanistan, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Mongolia, Poland, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Uzbekistan, Ukraine and the Czech Republic.

During the official opening ceremony, the Belarusian delegation's head, Vladimir Zinovsky, delivered a speech on the Government's vision of economic growth, attracting foreign investments into Belarus through the creation of a favourable investment climate.

For the first time in the history of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and



Discussion during the Week of Eurasia in Paris

Development, Belarus shared its expertise: *Improving the Professional Skills of Small and Medium-Sized Businesses Through Business Support Services*.

In Paris, there was a night of Belarusian cuisine for members of governmental delegations taking part in the Week of Eurasia, with Belarusian dishes cooked by the chef of Minsk's Europe Hotel, Dmitry Sadovsky.

In addition, works by famous Belarusian artist Roman

Zaslonov, who lives in France, were demonstrated and an artistic team from the Belarusian diaspora, *Slavyanskaya Dusha* (Slavonic Soul) performed.

During the Belarusian delegation's stay in Paris, meetings and talks were held with the Head of the Directorate for Trade of the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, David Drysdale, on improving the credit rating of Belarus, under OECD classification, as well as with heads of other delega-

tions, including the Minister of Trade and Industry of the Czech Republic, Jan Mládek.

Meanwhile, the First Deputy Finance Minister, Maxim Yermolovich, negotiated with the French Finance Ministry on the establishment of co-operation with the relevant French government agencies: those responsible for the provision of insurance guarantees in implementing export-import operations and participating in determining the credit rating of foreign states.

It definitely takes longer than one day to create truly effective market

\$2.5m project to institutionalise venture capital financing in Belarus

By Alexey Fedosov

The project relies on a broad definition of venture capital financing, envisaging promotion of the world's best practices in regulating and using venture capital financing, while raising awareness of the main risks.

"We also plan to establish a professional exchange with colleagues and to provide assistance with developing a society for venture investors. We'll set up a local or regional venture fund, conditions permitting," explains Matthew Sumpter, the USAID Country Director for Belarus.

Mr. Sumpter notes that assistance is planned for start-ups, with local and foreign venture investors being sought. He adds, "We can't create an effective market for venture capital financing in a

single day. The Government and private entities will have to put in extra effort but we're ready to find a path together."

The project will be implemented by the BelBiz group of companies in association with partners, and was presented as part of Global Entrepreneurship Week in Minsk.

Venture capital financing is understood as long-term, high-risk private investment in the charter capital of new, small high-tech companies showing a lot of promise or in venture companies that have already established a reputation.

Such companies focus on developing and manufacturing science-tech products, with investments fueling the development and expansion of such companies, with a view to reaping benefits from growing value.

Transforming waste into tangible income

Belarus building recycling and separating plants, alongside reclamation centres for recyclable materials

By Vasily Malashenkov

Divide and rule

Dump sites may be sources of treasure for future archaeologists; they'll be able to find out all they need to know about us: what we ate, what technologies we mastered, and what medications we were taking. Our major cities are producing tonnes of waste but what can we do about it?

In *The Heart of a Dog*, Sharikov noted that all should be categorised. These days, we have the technology to separate and recycle plastic, glass, paper and food waste.

The first steps towards implementing such a system in Belarus were made more than a decade ago. Colourful containers, intended for different types of rubbish, appeared in courtyards. Sadly, people didn't always bother to separate items thoroughly, and much ended up at dump sites.

The Director of the Centre for Environmental Solutions, Yevgeny Lobanov, tells us, "The waste recycling system is not yet fully organised but we've achieved a great deal. Reclamation centres for recyclable materials are operational, while recycling plants and sorting stations are being built; there are already more than eighty nationwide."

One Brest plant is recycling paper, glass, plastic and metal, compressing materials to give them a second life. Meanwhile, retailers are no longer throwing out expired



SERGEY LOZUYIK

Special containers for separate waste collection now popular

products. Yogurt and sausage can be converted into biogas, allowing the plant to generate electricity. It even has an excess (of about 70 percent) which is being sold to the local electric network.

In Belarus, fifteen percent of household waste is recycled; up from only five percent ten years ago.

Fuel of the future

In 2012, Presidential Decree #313 was signed, obliging manufacturers to better plan their waste

disposal. Businesses stopped transporting to dump sites; these days, 80 percent of industrial waste is disposed of in other ways. Only Belaruskali and Gomel Chemical Plant are yet to comply.

The Head of the Waste Management Department within the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Andrei Bas, remarks, "On August 22nd, the Council of Ministers approved a document on RDF-fuel. [relating to shredding solid waste, and removing harmful contaminants]. In Belarus, cement plants want to use this process, which should reduce production costs."

At least 26 percent of household waste can be used in this way, with 41 percent of all household waste being recycled. Enterprises using recycled materials are planned for Krichev and Krasnoselsk, supplied by recycling plants in Brest, Mogilev, Gomel, Grodno and Baranovichi. However, some environmental specialists are against such projects,

believing that this is only waste incineration that is harmful to nature.

TOP-5 USEFUL HABITS:

- 1 Do not buy coffee or tea in paper cups. They appear recyclable but are made from a composite material which is almost impossible to recycle.
- 2 Use a good flask instead of buying a bottle of drinking water every day. Install a filter at home or buy purified water in reusable, large bottles. Lots of resources are used for producing disposable containers, with most plastic ending up in dump sites.
- 3 Use cloth bags or reusable bags instead of disposable ones at supermarkets.
- 4 Do not buy man-made cloths for cleaning, use secondhand clothes instead.
- 5 Presents without additional packing are a global trend. Making somebody happy is more important than the glare of foil, bows and boxes.

IN BELARUS

50 million tonnes of waste are produced every year
7.2 million of these tonnes are classified as 'dangerous'

There are 450kg of household waste per capita per year

There are 80 large registered landfill sites in the country



There are 200 waste processing sites

There are about 300 illegal landfill sites

Over 890 hectares of land are used to store waste

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection and the National Statistical Committee

Meticulous and responsible attitudes combine

By Maxim Osipov

German attention to detail and Belarusian responsibility form basis for successful co-operation between our two countries

Germany is not just a leading trade partner for Belarus. For two decades, hundreds of thousands of Belarusian children have travelled there for rehabilitation. Moreover, Germany is the top supplier of high-tech equipment for Belarus, and hosts much of our personnel train-

ing, fitting us for the 21st century.

Ten years ago, a joint Belarusian-German programme of management training was launched; since then, around 300 Belarusian managers have enhanced their skills, returning to their various companies (under various forms of ownership) to apply their expertise.

The recent 9th Day of German Economy in Minsk was devoted to the theme of *Professional Staff in Belarus*, explains their state, potential and co-operation.

"The main objective of the Days



is to present the activity of German companies in Belarus to the local business community," explains its

organiser, the Chairman of the German-Belarusian Economic Club, Hovsep Voskanyan. He tells us that the Days promote 'the effective development of trade and economic relations, industrial co-operation and investment liaisons between Belarusian and German companies'.

Such forums bring recognition for Belarus. Professionalism is a crucial factor in successful business operation, as well as being an important criterion for investment. The forum encourages new contacts and expands partnerships.

Business seeking serious solutions

By Polina Kononoga

Businessmen and analysts describe global economy as 'perfect storm'

A 'perfect storm' is that rare combination of circumstances drastically aggravating a situation. Businesses are facing many difficulties, including narrowing markets and difficulties in acquiring loans. It's time to find serious solutions, as discussed at the 6th International Entrepreneurship Forum, recently held as part of the Global Entrepreneurship Week in Belarus, gathering local and foreign experts.

Belarus' Economy Minister, Vladimir Zinovsky, reminded those gathered of the ambitious task set before the Government, to ensure that small and medium-sized businesses account for 40 percent of the country's GDP by 2020. He noted, "This figure is considerably lower, at 28 percent, and we won't reach the goal unless we improve legislation, facilitating the development of entrepreneurship." Mr. Zinovsky enumerated the most acute problems, naming difficulties in small businesses accessing loans, and the complexity of the tax system.

Co-operation expands borders of possibilities

By Sergey Overyanov

Store of Belarusian goods to open in Azerbaijan's Ganja by late 2016

Belarus and Azerbaijan have potential to enter a new level of bilateral trade and economic co-operation. Ganja Automobile Plant already produces vehicles jointly with MAZ, for example. Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko, noted, on meeting the Azerbaijani delegation, led by Ganja's Mayor, Elmar Valiyev, his desire to see Belarus supply more agricultural equipment to Azerbaijan. He added, "There are certain plans for the sector."

Mr. Valiyev commented that the Azerbaijan delegation had visited Gomel (Ganja's twin city) and Minsk, and that a store selling Belarusian products is soon to open in Ganja. Similar shops are operating in Baku, the capital of Azerbaijan. The Mayor praised the high quality of Belarusian food products and added that Azerbaijan is ready to supply goods in demand in Belarus.

The Azerbaijani delegation was keen to find out more about Belarusian dairy and meat companies, Belarusian agro-expertise, and the development of agro-towns. Ganja Automobile Plant plans to continue its co-operation with MAZ, expanding its lineup with new bus models. "Our relations with Belarus have been developing in all the areas, including industry, agriculture, science and culture," the Mayor added.

Intellectual pursuits

Interdepartmental *Artificial Intelligence Centre* exhibition sees academic institutions, universities and private businesses present such innovations as a 'smart stop' card, new methods of cancer diagnosis, a boost for those with hearing impediment, and monitoring systems for emergencies

By Yulia Vasilishina

The Artificial Intelligence Centre was established a year ago, as part of the United Institute of Informatics Problems and the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Physiology. The unifying platform for experts in the field of intelligent technologies is headed by the General Director of the United Institute of Informatics Problems, Alexander Tuzikov (a corresponding member of the NAS).

Petraleh software, presented by the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics' Department of Electronics, aims to help those with hearing problems. Using ordinary headphones, a tablet or a mobile phone, the software



ARTUR PRUPAS

Artificial Intelligence Centre exhibition



ARTUR PRUPAS

Design of 'smart stop'

tests hearing by generating various tones, determining the frequencies at which the user can hear. It then uses these to alter incoming aural information through the mobile phone, using optimal settings for the user. Maxim Vashkevich, an Associate Professor of the Department, says the application has versions for iOS and Android and is already used

by over 300,000 people globally. It can be downloaded through the app store.

Brest State Technical University presented a mobile robot for monitoring reservoirs, while the BSU demonstrated a 'smart stop' card, which is an electronic certificate, a digital signature carrier and means of payment. The 'smart stop' card,

developed by ITProektstroy (a private company) is part of the *City Code* project operating at Gomel's 'Fabrika 8 Marta' public transport stop. This features solar panels (as an alternative energy source), three monitors (one touch screen with a city map for planning routes, and two advertising screens), a menu for standby transport, and video CCTV. Wi-Fi is also planned. Interestingly, 95 percent of all components involved are domestically produced. Mogilev and Grodno are soon to receive similar transport stops.

Sergey Gerasyuto, who heads the United Institute of Informatics Problems' Robotics Department, notes that 4G Internet development is allowing mobile robots to be managed from anywhere in the world.

Other developments on show were an online platform for processing text and speech, called Corpus, by, alongside a system for remote monitoring of crops (forecasting harvests), and a system of biomedical image analysis.

Revenue from waste

By Olga Makarova

Her experiments and conclusions surprise even the most experienced National Academy of Sciences researchers

Not long ago, the talented girl from Glusk took second prize at the national stage of the International Junior Water Prize, in Stockholm. The jury selected the top fifteen works of 111, with Victoria Gomonova's project among them. According to the rules of the competition, the paper needed to be written in English, using specific biological and ecological terms. Victoria coped wonderfully with all challenges.

During her ninth year of school, Victoria realised her passion for the sciences and, one year later, was representing her country at the international *Water for Life* conference, in Dushanbe. She then began focusing on processing the sludge remaining after sewage treatment. Though toxic in the first year, such waste can later find use in industry and agriculture.



Victoria Gomonova

She explains that it can be used as a fertiliser, with greenhouses placed directly on top of storage sites. Victoria adds, "Jointly with my scientific supervisor, I discovered that post-sewage treatment sludge is an excellent resource for biofuel production."

Victoria conducted experiments at her school, which has its own boilerhouse and burns wood to heat the building. According to calculations, the school could be heated with 1.5 fewer 'sludge briquettes' than the necessary volume of wood. Moreover, Victoria's project envisages filtering harmful emissions, to avoid contaminating the atmosphere. The filtered materials can then be used to produce building materials: foam and aerated concrete and road surfaces.

Victoria Gomonova is currently a student of the Biology Department but has no plan to give up her scientific investigations. Quite possibly, she'll soon have new projects to share with us.

Youth and talent generate great ideas

13th international *Youth in Science* scientific conference, hosted by Belarus' National Academy of Sciences, opens with demonstration of best developments by young scientists

By Olga Korneeva

Scientists representing CIS and non-CIS states delivered over 400 reports, demonstrating what can be achieved by applying determination, knowledge and talent. From these, twenty-five innovations were then chosen to participate in the finals of the *100 Ideas for*

Belarus national competition.

Projects varied from those with social application to nanotechnologies. Vladimir Bogach, a researcher from the Institute of Energy, presented a device to produce charcoal: the first of its kind for Belarus. He tells us, "Around fifty foreign facilities operate in Belarus. Ours outperforms



VLADIMIR SHLAPAK

Participants of the conference

analogues on a number of criteria, displaying greater energy efficiency, using less fuel, and being fully automated. We're testing a prototype and, by the end of the year, aim to launch production at

Shchuchin plant."

Kristina Ryabova and Anna Zhurnya, employed by the National Academy of Sciences, demonstrated a range of innovative products for sports nutrition: Izoaktiv isotonic

drinks, protein shakes, and a high-protein pancake mix. The emphasis was placed on domestically produced components, reducing the price by 25-50 percent compared with using imported products. Irina Rovba, a graduate student of the Scientific-Research Centre of Resource Saving Problems, at the NAS' Institute of Heat and Mass Transfer, showed a variety of sheet-reinforced materials, with the widest range of applications. Among them was warning-coloured protective tape for cables laid underground, ensuring against damage. Importantly, all developments at such forums need to demonstrate practical application.

Connecting with pristine nature

Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve is Belarus' other forest reserve, as unique as the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, which is included on the UNESCO World Network of Biosphere Reserves

By German Moskalenko

To follow a bear trail

Within ninety minutes' drive of Minsk, you reach the cool, fresh air of Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, surrounded by pristine forests, untouched by man for the past half century, and roamed by wild elk, bear and bison. You can take a tour all year round, seeing grouse in spring and deer in autumn. One of the local mysteries is Lake Postrezhskoye, which has no fish, and where birds and animals rarely appear on its shores.

Photo-safaris are gaining popularity, and you can admire the beauty of nature while hiking, cycling or horse riding. The Nature Museum is worth a visit, or you can watch animals in open-air cages, chatting with guide Bolotnik: a relative of the Leshy and Kikimora.

To travel the 'Varangians to the Greeks' route

In the reserve is a watershed between the basins of rivers from the Baltic and Black seas. Two hundred years ago, the Berezina water system, a unique engineering construction, appeared on the region's map. It represents a network of man-made channels that connect seven lakes and two mighty rivers: the Dnieper and the Zapadnaya Dvina. Running 162km, with a dozen and a half locks, it's part of the ancient waterway 'from the Varangians to



Walking along ecological path



Host of the forest

the Greeks', now being used again to transport goods and timber to Riga port, and for canoeing.

You can learn more about this unique monument to hydraulic engineering at Lepel Regional Museum of Natural History.

To hear Khatyn's bells

In this part of the country, there are many Great Patriotic War memorials. Mass graves and monu-



Czech participants of the project

ments are found at almost every kilometre. On the way to Polotsk is located the Khatyn Memorial, one of the most tragic places. Just a few dozen kilometres further down the road is the village of Dalva, also burned by the Nazis, together with

its residents. It boasts a memorial and museum.

During the war, the reserve was part of a vast partisan zone, where Soviet power remained. One of the partisan capitals was the town of Begoml, which the Nazis razed to

the ground. The former landlord's stone house is one of the surviving buildings and now hosts Begoml Museum of People's Glory.

To see a tsmok

The Lepel District is a land of lakes and rivers, part of the vast region of the Belarusian lake-lands. Legend has it that, in ancient times, tsmoks (translated as 'dragons' from the Belarusian language), the nearest relatives of Zmei Gorynovich, lived on the shores of Lake Lepel. They often scared people reaching the land. For this reason, a tsmok was immortalised in bronze right on the shore.

Lepel's military sanatorium is equally well-known, located in a pine forest on the shores of two beautiful lakes. Built before the war, at the order of Klim Voroshilov, it has always enjoyed a good reputation, among not only the military but civilians, from Belarus, Russia and other countries. All come to relax and recuperate.

To relax in Masherov's residence

The hotel complex of Plavno is historically linked with the name of the former Belarusian party leader Piotr Masherov. He built a fairytale castle, where he stayed several times. Its windows overlook picturesque Lake Plavno, which has a beach on its shore, a sports ground, and boats, catamarans and bicycles for hire. Meanwhile, within a few kilometres is the famous forest hunting ground of Barsuki.

Schedule for New Year

By Dmitry Umpirovich

For Belarusian Railways, New Year begins on December 11th, with new timetable for passenger trains

Rolling stock is being updated, improving passenger comfort and speed; several economy class trains are being transformed into business format, explains Belarusian Railways' press service. It has announced that the morning Gomel-Mogilev route is to receive the latest in diesel trains (testing being complete) in the second half of the year. Meanwhile, on the Vitebsk-Mogilev route, train #645/646 will be replaced by business train #705/706, with the route extended to Polotsk, with daily service.

Minsk-Gomel remains a popular route, so extra carriages are being added to



InterCity business class electric train runs between Minsk and Gomel

trains #707/708 and #709/710 (fourteen carriages) on Fridays, weekends and pre-holiday days. In periods of high demand (for example, from 22.12.2016 to 01.09.2017, from 23.03.2017 to 03.04.2017, from 27.04.2017 to 10.05.2017, from

01.06.2017 to 08.31.2017, and from 26.10.2017 to 08.11.2017), the following international trains will run daily: #50/49 (Brest-St. Petersburg), #78/77 (Grodno-Moscow), and #132/131 (Brest-Moscow).

Belarusian Railways

notes that, from January 1st, discounts for travel in compartment and sleeping cars between Belarus and Russia will rise to 20 percent if tickets are bought more than a month in advance, and to 15 percent for tickets bought at least twenty-one days in advance.

Aircraft legend is now retiring

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Belavia Airline announces date of last Tu-154 flight, the legend of Soviet aviation industry, carrying around 150 oil workers from Novy Urengoy to Gomel, on December 29th, before being replaced by Boeing-737s on charter programme to Siberia

"We're deciding what to do next with the aircraft," comments Igor Cherginets, Belavia's Director General. "Most likely, our three Tu-154s will be pensioned off. They could become museum exhibits but no one has yet applied to us with such a request. One such exhibit is already on display near the National Airport."

What will happen with the current crew of twenty-two? According to the commander of Belavia's air detachment, Oleg Saltovskiy, some will retire, due to age, and some will take land-based positions. Five, including one commander, will be retrained to pilot the Boeing aircraft while some plan to move to other companies, to pilot Il-76s and An-74s.

The new 'cornflower' Boeing 737-800s (delivered from Seattle) have already replaced aircraft from Soviet times on Belavia flights. The third such aircraft will arrive in late December. Within the former USSR, only Yakutian Alrosa Air Company continues to use Tu-154s to transport passengers.



Students and teachers from University of Havana honour the memory of Fidel Castro

Cuba mourns Fidel Castro

Cubans bid farewell to historic leader Fidel Castro

Havana's Revolution Square fell silent as word spread that the island nation's leader, who governed for close to five decades, had passed. Mourners will be able to pay their respects to the man many lauded as a national hero and 'the grandfather of all Latin American revolutionaries' at a series of events early next week, before his ashes make a cross-country tour from Havana to Santiago.

His failing health had been the subject of much media speculation in the years since he ceded power.

Recent footage of the leader at a rare public appearance for his ninetieth birthday celebrations illustrated his frailty.

Raul Castro, the leader's brother who succeeded him as President of Cuba, announced the revolutionary's death to the country, closing his televised address with the

words 'Hasta la victoria siempre' — words made famous by Che Guevara, meaning "Until victory, always".

For many Latin Americans Fidel Castro was a hero, a David who took on the Goliath of US imperialism and won. In Bolivia, where the socialist government is a close ally of Cuba, the media lamented the death of 'El Comandante'.

President Evo Morales led a

minute of silence before summing up Castro's legacy, "Fidel Castro is a great teacher in principles and values, a teacher of revolutionaries, his fight has not only been for the Cuban people nor for the people of Latin America. The fight of Fidel has been for the people of the world that fought for freedom."

In Ecuador there was a similar affection for Castro and an equal sadness at his passing.

US shoppers put election behind them with retail therapy on Black Friday

With the US election behind them, Americans headed to the malls for some retail therapy on Black Friday

Traditionally one of the busiest shopping days of the year begins on the Friday after Thanksgiving, but many stores opened on Thursday to beat online sales.

It is big business, with November and December counting for as much as 40 percent of annual revenue in the retail industry.

According to the National Retail Federation (NRF), more than 137 million shoppers are expected to head to the tills over the four-day weekend, up from 135 million last year (based on a survey of shopping intentions). Last year sales figures after the Thanksgiving weekend fell by 11 percent on 2014; however, the Commerce Department marked that sales were actual up by 4 percent by the end of the holiday season.

Their chief economist said that 'increased geopolitical uncertainty, the presidential election outcome and unseasonably warm weather' could impact spending patterns in 2016.

The biggest demographic is those in the 18-34 age bracket. "Millennials continue to drive the trend of hitting the stores — both on their feet and online — as soon as the turkey is finished," Prosper Principal Analyst Pam Goodfellow said. What began as a US tradition, has spread across the world with Black Friday deals making their way to Europe, Latin America, South Africa and New Zealand in recent years.



As wildfires rage Israeli police arrest 13 suspected arsonists

Wildfires tore across central and northern Israel forcing thousands of residents to flee the city of Haifa, as leaders blamed arsonists for some of the blazes and branded them 'terrorists'

A thick haze of smoke hung over Haifa, which

overlooks the Mediterranean Sea. Schools and universities were evacuated and two nearby prisons transferred inmates to other jails.

A lack of rain combined with very dry air and strong easterly winds has spread the fires across the centre and north of the country, as well as parts of the West Bank.

Hundreds of homes have been damaged or destroyed but no deaths or serious injuries have been reported.

Police in Israel have arrested 13 people suspected of arson. Wildfires have rampaged across central and northern Israel, at least some of which have been started deliberately.

Deadly torrential rains cause destruction in northern Italy

Flooding caused by torrential rain in northern Italy has claimed at least one victim while five people are still missing, according to local authorities

The regions of Piedmont and Liguria were the hardest hit with homes evacuated and businesses closed. The Tanaro River broke its banks in several places, isolating the town of Garessio, where water flooded ground-floor residencies and shops.

Waves of muddy water battered stone and wooden bridges and at least 25 roads were closed.

Liguria's Regional Minister for Civil Protection, Giacomo Giampedrone, described the situation as 'critical' and heavy rain in the region of Lombardy is expected to continue.



Days of torrential rain in Italy have covered entire villages in mud. Some of the worst hit areas are in the northwest of the country, including Rezzo in Liguria.

Two people died as a result of the flooding and three more are still missing. Large swathes of the country were affected from the Alps all the way to Sicily.

Though the situation is said to have improved, there are still fears that deadly landslides could be triggered at any moment.

The agricultural organisation, Coldiretti, estimate the cost of extreme weather events in Italy over the past ten years at 14 billion Euros.

In Genoa, a landslide from the hills in the north threatened to level several buildings.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Celebrating 150th anniversary since the birth of Leon Bakst

French capital is hosting several events dedicated to the 150th anniversary of the birth of Belarus-born outstanding painter, stage designer and book illustrator

By Alexander Pimenov

Grodno-born Leon Bakst is most famous for his sets and costumes for such ballets as *Cleopatra*, *Scheherazade*, *The Blue God* and *Sleeping Beauty*, as part of *Sergei Diaghilev's Russian Seasons*, which were a great success in Paris and London in the early 20th century. His sets and costumes influenced stage art and theatrical sets for years to come.

The birth date of Leon Bakst entered UNESCO's List of Memorable Dates for 2016-2017 following the 38th session of the UNESCO General Conference.

From November 21st, the Grand Opera Palais Granier began its hosting of an exhibition dedicated to the life and creativity of our famous fellow countryman, entitled *Bakst: From the Russian Ballet to Haute Couture*. It is the first exhibition of its kind in France since 1924 (the year Leon Bakst died). Bakst's sets and costumes many times graced the Grand Opera's stage, making it a fitting venue.

On display are theatrical costumes, set sketches, designs and drawings by Leon Bakst, as well as collections from leading fashion houses, inspired by Leon Bakst's sumptuous costumes.

The exhibition has been organised jointly with the National Library of France and the Paris Opera. The Belarusian Ambassador to France and Belarus' Permanent Representative to UNESCO, Pavel



Leon Bakst

Latushko, attended the opening of the exhibition as an honorary guest. The exhibition will stay open through until March 5th, 2017.

Mr. Latushko has signed an agreement with the President of the National Library of France, Laurence Engel, on co-operation with the National Library of the Republic of Belarus.

An exhibition of children's drawings, *Theatre Art Through Children's Eyes*, coincides with Bakst's anniversary, and is being hosted by UNESCO's headquarters, organised by Belarus' Permanent Representation to UNESCO and with the support of Grodno Regional Executive Committee.

Exhibits include works by young Belarusian painters studying at schools of arts in the Grodno Region: Alena Logish, Valeria Gorodnicheva, Ilaria Gorbacheva, Alexey Dobruk, Selim Ilyasevich, Maria



Diverse creativity of Leon Bakst

He is rightly called a trendsetter of theatre and fashion.

According to Mr. Latushko, the originality of the *Theatre Art Through Children's Eyes* project lies in the perception of beauty outside of stereotypes and established rules.

The children's drawings attracted genuine interest from visitors, who noted the talent of the young artists (the youngest being just ten years old) in showing their vision of theatre life in the city of Grodno: the homeland of Leon Bakst. Participation in the project may inspire some to become world known painters of the future.

The exhibition in Paris was organised with assistance from the Grodno State College of Art, whose teachers, Lidia Shakh, Yulia Golevskaya and Anna Kokhanovskaya, were welcomed by guests at the solemn ceremony at UNESCO headquarters.



At exhibition of L. Bakst's works

Kumpan, Dmitry Pereginets, Alexandra Koblukovich, Yekaterina Zaborovskaya, Maria Dukhovnik, Anastasia Malyabskaya, Darya Kirsanova, Veronika Orlovskaya, Vladimir Balyk, Alesya Cherkes, Alena Denisova, Anna Strignatskaya, Sofia Tsar, Angelina Beityuk

and Valeria Dubitskaya.

Opening the exhibition, the Belarusian Ambassador to France and Belarus' Permanent Representative to UNESCO, Pavel Latushko, emphasised the importance of Leon Bakst's creative work for the world's theatrical and stage art.

Chain reaction

Grodno Drama Theatre hosts young illusionist Kirill Shvets

By Olga Korneeva

Mr. Shvet's tricks go beyond making pigeons and rabbits disappear, and card tricks; he recently re-enacted Harry Houdini's death-defying act, using a tonne of water and 10kg of chains. He admits that it's taken eleven years of intense training to pull off the amazing feat, learning how to hold his breath underwater for almost four minutes. The Grodno actor boasts victories from many international festivals and competitions.

Right in front of his audience, he was handcuffed, and his feet chained, while his shoulders were spanned with a metal hoop. The

chains were fastened with eight locks, and he was lowered headfirst into a tank with transparent walls, filled with water.

The aquarium was then covered with fabric and, when the cloth was removed, within four minutes, the tank was empty.

Mr. Shvets then appeared before the audience, wet, but without his chains. The illusionist tells us, "The idea of repeating Houdini's most well-known act has



During the performance

been my dream since childhood. I saw the trick in the film *Prestige* and decided that I could perform it for an audience."

Yanka Kupala fighting Nazism

By Lyudmila Ivanova

People's poet Yanka Kupala survived two terrible wars: WWI and the Great Patriotic War. Though Kupala didn't see the end of WWII, his poetic verses inspired soldiers. He wrote, in one of his poems: 'I call you to victory; may the days shine upon you with happiness'.

The *My Eternal Call* exhibition, dedicated to the poet, has opened at the Belarusian State Museum of Great Patriotic War History and will run until January 2nd. A joint project with the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, its senior research officer and curator is Pavel Korolev. He notes, "There are dozens remarkable exhibits: even a fragment of the floor from Moskva Hotel, where the poet died tragically. Both the war years and pre-war years have found their

reflection in the exhibition. There are many picturesque works created by famous Belarusian painters and some were made in Kupala's lifetime. We have items of his personal belongings, including those which miraculously survived from his house, destroyed during the war. Manuscripts from military times are also on show. I think it's interesting to see the personal belongings of Yanka Kupala's niece, Yadviga Romanovskaya, who was a frontline surgeon. Some of these items were donated to her by her uncle."

Leaflets and posters in which Kupala's works were published are also on display, in addition to issues of *Razdavim Fashistskuyu Gadinu* (Let's Crush the Fascist Beast) newspaper and other artefacts, enabling visitors to empathise with the atmosphere of those tragic and heroic days.



Exhibition of Mikhail Karpuk's works at National Art Museum

Sketches are always colourful, even on black-and-white TV

Mikhail Karpuk's *On Screen and Off* exhibition, hosted by National Art Museum, displays about forty original graphics and sets from his private collection, created from 1959 through until 2002

By Veniamin Mikheev

Decorative art is closely connected with centuries of theatre, with fine arts, and with cinema and television. The name of Mikhail Karpuk has been long linked to our national pictorial traditions, as art director for more than twenty-five years, devoting himself to Belarusian television and cinema.

His innovation and creativity allowed him to be successful in organising the sets of various concert programmes, of popular and classical genres, as well as television stage sets and a range of feature films and documentaries.

Mikhail Karpuk's rich use of colour and skillful combinations made works come alive, even on black-and-white television (for which he created colourful sketches). His sets for television, film and theatre displayed harmonious unity, working with playwrights and directors and other technical staff.

He was talented as a director and operator, decorator and architect, wardrobe supporter and make-up artist, historian, critic, and ethnographer. Though he worked under various directors, aiming to fulfill their vision, he was able to bring his individuality to his work. His understanding of various art forms, as well as history and culture, allowed him to reach deep into the themes of his work, enriching them.

Despite being busy in his work for television and cinema, Mikhail Karpuk found time for personal creativity too. The exhibition of the oldest Belarusian artist of cinema and television, hosted by the National Art Museum of Belarus, aims to show, primarily, Karpuk's life behind the scenes.

He created realistic sketches



in pencil and pastels, subtle in colour, soft, with smooth lines. Infinitely enamored with the beauty of his homeland, he never tired of glorifying it, demonstrating his admiration.

Mr. Karpuk worked as art director of Belarusian television (1956-1970), and at Belarusfilm Studio (1972-1983). He began taking part in exhibitions in 1963 and became a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists in 1969. He is currently a member of the Belarusian Union of Cinematographers, and lives in Minsk.

Listing his works cannot but impress us. Having begun work in the 1950s, he designed the teleplay sets for *Booth '27'*, based on Ivan Franko's play (1956), *Court* (1957), *The Song of Music* (1958), *Symon, the Musician* by Yakub Kolas (1958), Alexey Tolstoy's *Obscurants*, and



Yakov Bogomolov by Maxim Gorky (1960), *Years of Wanderings* by Alexey Arbusov (1961), *In Search of Pleasure* by Victor Rozov (1961), *Memoirs of Two Mondays* by Artur Miller (1962), *Heart on Palm* by Ivan Shamyakin (1964), Alexey Tolstoy's *Crash* (1966), and Gerhart Hauptmann's *Weavers* (1969).



ate (1973), as well as *Parachutes on Trees*, which was based on the book of the same name by Napoleon Ridevsky (1973). He also made sets for *Last Summer of Childhood* by Anatoly Rybakov, and *Shot* (1974), as well as *Ask Yourself*, based on the story by the same name, by Stepan Klebanov (1976), and *Three Cheerful Changes*, based on works by Yuri Yakovlev (1977). He worked on *Iron Games*, directed by Leonid Martynyuk (1979), and *End of Indian Summer*, directed by Diamara Nizhnikovskaya (1983).

His talent brought to life the short documentary film *Behind Three Road Strips*, based on the novel by the same name, by Vasily Belov (1978), and a number of concert programmes.

Works by Mikhail Karpuk are today found at the National Art Museum of Belarus, as well as at the Belarusian Union of Artists, at Mogilev Regional Arts Museum (named after P.V. Maslennikov), at the Yakub Kolas

State Literary-Memorial Museum, at the State Museum of the History of Theatrical and Musical Culture of the Republic of Belarus, and in private collections, in Belarus and abroad.



Rich palette of Mikhail Karpuk

He created sets for such television films as *All the King's Men*, based on the novel by Robert Penn Warren (1971), for an adaptation of the novella *Annushka*, directed by Boris Shadursky, and *Red Ag-*

Mikhail Karpuk, art director, graphic artist and painter, was born on March 5th, 1930, in the village of Mykshitsy, in the Kamenets District of the Brest Region. He graduated from Minsk Art College (1956), and the Moscow State University of Printing Arts (1962). His teachers included Lev Leitman, Konstantin Kosmachev, and People's Artist of the RSFSR Andrey Goncharov. His graduation thesis was the illustration of the album *Minsk and Minsk Residents*.

Team of the future

National basketball team through to 2017 European Championship finals, ensuring succession of squad's performance at top tournaments, as begun in 2007

By Alexey Grishin

In the final round of the selection tournament, Belgium defeated Poland in an away match, enabling Belarus to keep second place in Group G, and sending the team to the Czech Republic. The draw for the final tournament matches will be held on December 9th.

We asked leading basketball specialists their recommendations for the coming seven months, to ensure a successful performance.

Andrey Vavlev, head coach of Tsmoki BC (Minsk): *It's important to remember that the European Championship in June, like the World Championship (for which teams will be selected in the Czech Republic) doesn't influence places at the Olympics. For those matches, it's vital to present the very best line-up. However, it's no easy task, as our junior teams have been long 'floundering' in lower divisions. The country's championship doesn't correspond to the requirements of the*

national squad.

Alexander Shimkovyak, Honoured Coach of Belarus: *It would be a mistake to sacrifice early success for some future aim. Without victories, people quickly forget the national squad; its very existence would be in jeopardy. The team's rejuvenation has been too much delayed. Young players have been present in each variant of the line-up but, frustratingly, spent too much time on the bench. Clearly, coaches don't trust them. This began with Anatoly Buyalsky and I'm afraid it will continue. Initially, they avoided the youngsters at all. They then swung from one extreme to another, dropping Maria Vasilevko and Ksenia Malashenko, both aged 16, 'in at the deep end'. Each coach selects basketballers to fit their plans but young players have no chance to prove themselves if they aren't trusted. We should gather promising candidates for the national team into a separate team and try them out for six months, at tournaments in Europe.*



Belarus-Belgium match kicks off

Stronger together in host application

By Kirill Karin

Belarus and Russia applying for joint hosting of European Men's Handball Championship

Belarus and Russia plan to fight for the right to host the EHF European Men's Handball Championship in 2022. The Executive Committee of the Russian Handball Federation met on November 23rd in Moscow, deciding that the Russian Handball Federation and the Belarusian Handball Federation will set up a working group to apply to host the tournament.

According to the Head of the Russian Handball Federation, Sergey Shishkarev, the leadership of the European Handball Federation is ready to seriously consider Belarus and Russia as joint hosts. Mr. Shishkarev adds that promotion of the hosting application will begin soon, via a new working group.

He tells us, "I suggest setting up a working group to form our joint application. It's necessary to tackle this without delay. Within six months, we need to approve our application at all levels. We definitely have a shot at success."

The Chairman of the Belarusian Handball Federation, Vladimir Konoplev, asserts that the Belarusian Head of State and the Minister for Sports and Tourism have provisionally supported the intention of jointly hosting the European Men's Handball Championship.

Smell of snow is felt in the air

Biathlon World Cup first stage sees Belarusian duo of Darya Yurkevich and Sergey Bocharnikov enter top ten in supermix

By Semen Bondarev

The start of the race was far from a success for the Belarusians, as Darya Yurkevich was immediately given a penalty loop and Sergey Bocharnikov failed to shoot well.

However, they then improved the situation, Darya taking her team into twelfth position after accurate shooting, and Sergey entering the top ten in supermix, outpacing the Latvian during the final loop.

First place went to French duo Martin Fourcade and Marie Dorin Habert, fol-



lowed by Lisa Theresa Hausner and Simon Eder of Austria. Germans Erik Lesser and Franziska Preuß finished third.

On November 27th, the new biathlon season began in Östersund with a mixed relay, the Belarusian squad ranking 14th.

Let them have it!

Belarusian women first win two bronze medals at EUBC European Women Boxing Championship, held in Bulgarian Sofia

By Igor Svitov

The medals mark an historic moment for Belarusian boxing, they being the first for women in the sport. Male boxers have brought home various medals from world and European championships, and even from the Olympics. We are home to more than one professional world champion. Now, women are claiming their rightful place in the ring. They began in 2012, facing undisguised scepticism, but attitudes may change following their success at the European Championship in Sofia.

Yulia Apanasovich (under 57kg) and Victoria Kebikova (under 81kg) defeated Britain's Raven Chapman and Russian champion Lyubov Yusupova in the quarterfinals. Sadly, they failed to continue victoriously through the semi-finals. Nevertheless, competition in the ring is stiff, with the number of participants at top tournaments having grown significantly since the Olympic Games in London, where women's boxing was first introduced into



Belarusian women's boxing comes out of the shadows

the programme. The success of our women boxers is worthy of note.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Boxing Federation, Dmitry Tikhomolov, is hopeful for the women's boxing team, saying, "We've been expecting results from the girls for several years, but medals weren't forthcoming. These awards should significantly change the situation in women's boxing in Belarus. Those in training have a great example before them

but there's still some way to go of the shadows. We believe we to bring women's boxing out have real Olympic prospects."

MT REFERENCE:

Belarus is to establish a professional boxing club, its members performing in World Series Boxing (WSB) tournaments. Recently, the Belarusian Boxing Federation took a fundamental decision, allowing documents, budgeting and other issues to be tackled. It's too late, this season, for Belarusian athletes to apply for participation in the most popular and prestigious professional series, under the auspices of the International Boxing Federation. However, the Belarusian Federation expects to settle all details and to perform in WSB next year, giving our Belarusian boxers the opportunity to fight for Olympic tickets.

Festival of the week



24th International Modern Choreography Festival in Vitebsk, IFMC-2016, finishes with a gala-concert on November 27th

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street
Until 19th December. *On Screen and Behind* Until 30th January. *Celestial World on the Earth* Until 5th February. *Russian Pictorial Art of 19th-20th Century*

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 20th December. *Love is Flight*
Until 15th January. *Time of Silent Stars: from Black-and-White to Red*
Until 29th January. *Belarusian Trade in History*
Until 28th February. *Time of Miracles: Winter Holidays and Entertainments*
Until 1st June 2017. *From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble*

BOOK MUSEUM OF BELARUS' NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 22nd December. *Light Trace*

HOUSE OF PICTURES

89/3 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 11th December. *Great Classics of 20th Century: Pablo Picasso, Huan Miro, Vasily Kandinsky*

EXHIBITION HALL OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 13th March. *Noisy Feathered Rainbow*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 K.Marx Street
Until 22nd January. *Exhibition of Carnivorous Plants*

WING OF LOSHITSA PALACE-AND-PARK COMPLEX

Chizhevsky Street
Until 9th December. *Speaking Machines: History of Sound Recording*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF 1ST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 4th December. *World of Ancient People*

OUTLET

44 Zhukov Avenue
Until 31st December. Exhibition of reptilians: *Tropics*
Until 31st January. *Hidden Reality*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 10th December. *Family in Culture of Eurasian People: 20th Century*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 7th December. *Belarusian actors in Russian cinema, Russian actors in Belarusian films*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
01 and 02.12. *Sonnets*. *Small Death*. *Six Dances* 03.12. *Eugene Onegin* 04.12. *Small Prince; Doctor Aybolit* 06.12. *Night of Romances* 07.12. *Love and Death* 08.12. *Players* 09.12. *Romeo and Juliet*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
05.12. *Groom from the Afterlife*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
01.12. *The Makropoulos Case* 02.12. *Who Laughs Last* 03.12. *Forgetting Herostartos* 04.12. *Abduction of Yelena* 06.12. *Pygmalion* 07 and 08.12. *Two Arrows*

MODERN ARTS THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
02.12. *Two Henpecked Husbands* 03.12. *Love and Pigeons* 08.12. *Mad Triangle*

CONCERTS

PALACE OF THE REPUBLIC

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
03.12. *Alexander Revva and Mikhail Galustyan*

PALACE OF SPORTS

4 Pobediteley Avenue
05.12. *Rock for Sport*
06.12. *Thomas Anders*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
01.12. *White Angle with Black Wings*
02.12. *Adam's Jokes* 03.12. *This All is She*
04.12. *Feint-Kruaze* 05.12. *All Stars Game* 06.12. *Pelican* 07.12. *The Broken Nest* 08.12. *Grandfather*

BELARUSIAN ARMY DRAMA THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
02 and 03.12. *Inspector*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
03.12. *Little-Red-Riding-Hood* 04 and 06.12. *The Kid and Karlsson on the Roof*
07.12. *Marynka-Krapiunitsa* 08.12. *Birds*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
05.12. *Pinsk Gentry*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
01.12. *Artistic night of Yuri Stoyanov*
02.12. *Yelena Vasilek* 07.12. *Picnic*

HOUSE OF CULTURE OF MINSK AUTOMOBILE WORKS

117A Partizansky Avenue
06.12. *Pure Voice*