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President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko during his meeting with President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain

Never too many good proposals

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko makes two day visit to Pakistan, to meet President Mamnoon Hussain and Prime Minister Nawaz Sharif, accompanied by major Belarusian delegation of ministers, businessmen and heads of private and state companies, signing around two dozen documents to boost bilateral co-operation

Visit to enhance status of relations

By Marta Astreiko

According to President Mukherjee, Belarus is an important international partner of India

Belarus is an important international partner of India, emphasised the President of India, Pranab Mukherjee, on speaking to BelTA on the eve of his official visit to Belarus. He underlined, "India was one of the first countries to establish diplomatic ties with Belarus after its independence in 1991. Former Prime Minister of India Rajiv Gandhi visited Minsk in 1985, as part of his visit to the Soviet Union. I'm greatly honoured to be the first Indian President to visit Belarus. My visit is intended to take our relations with Belarus to a higher level."

In his words, India is a vast market and economic giant that wishes to see rapid and significant enhancement of its ties with Belarus. "Belarus is the centre of Eurasia; it's a bridge between Europe and Asia. The development of mutual co-operation will undoubtedly benefit both our peoples. I hope that the first official visit of the Indian President to Belarus will promote our bilateral relationships and expand our interaction across many areas," added President Mukherjee. His visit to Belarus is taking place on June 2nd-4th.

Reliable partner at the centre of Europe

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus and Indonesia agree to activate co-operation across all areas

President Alexander Lukashenko's recent meeting with the Speaker of the Regional Representatives Council of the People's Consultative Assembly of Indonesia, Irman Gusman, has stressed the long-time partnership of our two countries. No topics are closed in our bilateral relations and we have enjoyed diplomatic relations since 1993. In 2011, Belarus opened an embassy in Indonesia, with 'a return move from Indonesia now expected', underlined the President.

Economics are the foundation for all contact between states. Last year, Belarusian-Indonesian trade reached about \$215 million. Although modest, both sides believe there to be huge potential for expanding this trade-economic co-operation. Spheres have been outlined, with bilateral trade set to rise by 70 percent.

Mr. Lukashenko recalled that, during his visit to Indonesia in 2013, our countries reached an agreement to shift from simple trade to co-operative ties. "Our machine building companies are ready to enter the Indonesian market, setting up joint companies," he noted, adding that joint companies can help move forward Belarusian-Indonesian contacts.

The Head of State sees



Irman Gusman

major prospects in inter-regional collaboration with Indonesia, emphasising, "Enhanced inter-regional contacts could bring serious progress in Belarusian-Indonesian interaction. Inter-

During my visit to Indonesia, in March 2013, we agreed that we'd shift from simple trade to co-operative ties and establishing joint enterprises and assembly productions. Our machine building companies are ready to enter your market of Indonesia to establish joint projects. It would be a good step forward in our bilateral relations. Inter-regional interaction, which always brings good results, could become a serious step in Belarusian-Indonesian collaboration. We know this from our work with other states.

regional interaction always brings good results; we can cite contacts with other states as an example."

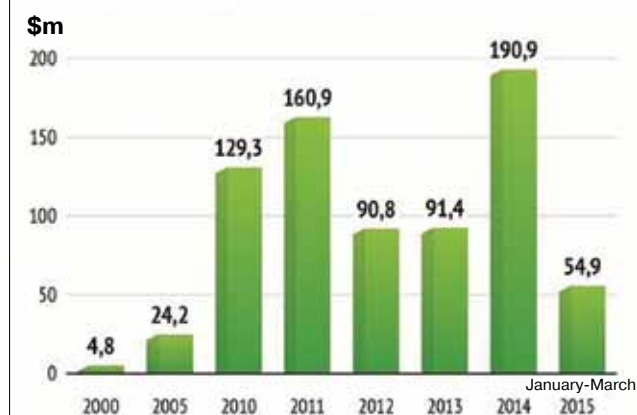
Mr. Lukashenko underlines that the next session of the Belarusian-Indonesian Joint Commission for Trade, Economic, Scientific

and Technical Co-operation will take place in early summer. "Topics explored in recent years and agreements reached during the parliamentary visit of the Indonesian delegation should be on the agenda of the session," the Head of State is convinced.

The President has assured the Indonesians that Belarus is interested in advancing relations, asserting, "You have a reliable partner at the centre of Europe. However, the depth and breadth of our relations will depend on the goodwill of your leadership."

Mr. Gusman has agreed to advance bilateral trade to a new level and notes that Belarusian equipment and technologies would be use-

Exports of Belarusian goods to Indonesia



to greatly raise the figure. I hope that by the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Indonesian diplomatic ties, in 2018, we'll have raised trade turnover to \$1bn."

The Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament believes that consistent efforts are required on both sides at all levels: through diplomacy, our parliaments, and the private sector. He views our geographical locations (Belarus at the centre of Europe and Indonesia as an important country in Southeast Asia) as useful in accomplishing our goals.

Mr. Gusman assured Mr. Lukashenko that Indonesia will soon open its embassy in Minsk, aiming to promote bilateral contacts. He notes that Belarusian-Indonesian contacts should not be limited to trade and investment but should include science, education, culture, youth policy and sport. "This is an important supplement which

can shape our future," he said.

The Speaker of the Indonesian Parliament also touched upon the issue of peace and security, praising the contribution of the Belarusian President towards stabilising the situation in the region regarding events in Ukraine. "The Minsk agreements have attracted the attention of the whole international community," noted the Indonesian guest, expressing confidence that the agreements will be implemented and peace will return to the region.

The results of negotiations are clear, with the two countries viewing each other as a worthy partner. Indonesia perceives Belarus as a good economic stronghold in the Eurasian Economic Union, while offering access to Western Europe. Meanwhile, Belarus views Indonesia as a 'key' to Southeast Asia, being a 'backbone' of such integration unions as ASEAN, APEC and G20.

It is high time to change stereotypes and mentality

Ministry of Labour and Social Protection joins UN Population Fund in promoting family equality

By Olga Kosyakova

Vital issues of family policy have been recently discussed in Minsk at the *Healthy Family — Healthy Society* international conference. Elena Kasko, Assistant Representative at United Nations Population Fund in Belarus, is keen to encourage change under the slogan of 'the man to the kitchen, the woman to work'.

She declares, "The law gives the father great opportunities to join in raising children; he can take maternity leave in the same way as a woman, yet only 1-2 percent do so. We need to break stereotypes, changing mentality, to encourage fathers to take on family responsibilities. Even if they only take advantage of the opportunity for a few months it will reduce the number of divorces. We need



Vitebsk's Savchenko family win Best Multi-Child Family city contest

to liaise with firms to encourage them to support the project."

The Deputy Chair of the National Statistical Committee of Belarus, Yelena Kukharevich, says of Belarusian families, "Last year, 84,000 couples married and 25,000 were divorced. The average age for first marriage for women is 25 years: 26 for men. Rural grooms are older and, in cities, women are older. More

children are being born within marriage and about 20 percent of women aim to give birth between the ages of 35 and 40. In 2014, 118,500 children were born in Belarus: the highest indicator for the last 20 years."

The Deputy Minister for Labour and Social Protection, Alexander Rumak, believes that population growth is linked to state social policies to protect family

values and offer financial support. He underlines, "Belarusian families are being 'encouraged' by various allowances, benefits and social guarantees. We occupy first place among CIS countries and 25th place worldwide for having social conditions that are conducive to creating a family. Belarusians have good opportunities for marriage and birth of children."

Never too many good proposals

By Vasily Kharitonov

Our two states' trade-economic collaboration is yet to be stable in nature, having fluctuated between \$50m and \$120m over the past eight years. However, huge potential is possible if a systematic approach can be applied. Clearly, top-level talks are essential.

At the moment, Pakistan is focusing on the agrarian sector, involving a major share of its population in working the land, and with prospects for developing other branches. Pakistan is among 11 states which — alongside BRIC members — enjoy great potential for becoming major world economies this century. The mining industry should bring significant benefits, since the country boasts deposits of gas, oil, chrome ore, marble, sodium salt, uranium, limestone, phosphate rock, barites, sulphur, and precious and semi-precious stones. Deposits are modest in volume but fully investigated and the experience of Belarusian specialists may prove useful.

Minsk and Islamabad share many points of business interaction and recent talks were conducted at all levels.

Summing up the results of their talks, the Belarusian President stressed that our bilateral agreements now take the form of two dozen signed documents. "In Belarus, we view Pakistan as a leader in the Muslim world and it's important that such a country is represented at the centre of Europe," he said.

It has been agreed that a Pakistani embassy will open in Minsk, with a land plot allocated for building.

A major Belarusian delegation visited Pakistan jointly with the President, including ministers, and heads of major state and private companies; as a result of talks, they have agreed to establish joint facilities in both countries, to manufacture high-demand products.

Mr. Lukashenko noted Belarus' recent visit from China's Chairman, Xi Jinping, with the heads of state visiting the construction site of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park, near Minsk. It is to host production facilities for the world's most advanced companies. The President noted, "This project is part of an economic concept for China's Silk Road. We invite your companies to participate, setting up their facilities at this technological park. We'll create all necessary conditions, offering un-



Alexander Lukashenko and Nawaz Sharif sign Islamabad Declaration of Belarus-Pakistan Partnership

Alexander Lukashenko during his meeting with President of Pakistan Mamnoon Hussain:

"The opening of our embassy in Islamabad [the embassy of Belarus was opened in Pakistan last November] is the first significant step, testifying that we've arrived with serious and long-term intentions, with your permission. Our relations are efficiently developing and we have virtually no problems in the sphere of politics. We co-operate within international organisations and support each other. We should continue to follow this path, involving members of Parliament and heads of government agencies. As regards economics, serious work lies ahead.

precedented privileges."

According to Mr. Lukashenko, our country is interested in seeing Pakistan set up modern sewing and textile facilities. He asserted, "You have great experience in this field and we offer an industrial platform, being ready to establish joint modern production plants at the centre of Europe. Your products, manufactured at these facilities, alongside our own, would enjoy great demand across former Soviet states, which currently import from abroad. Your goods would be competitive on the European market as well.

Documents approved during extended format talks agree mutual le-

gal aid for civil and economic cases, inter-governmental agreements on military-technical co-operation and collaboration in the field of science and technology. There is also an inter-governmental memorandum on co-operation in the field of information and communications.

The foreign ministries of Belarus and Pakistan have signed a memorandum on mutual understanding for the establishment of a mechanism of bilateral consultations. In turn, Belarus' Justice Ministry has joined Pakistan's Ministry of Law, Justice and Human Rights in signing a memorandum on mutual co-operation. Another agreement foresees launching a Belarusian-

Pakistani joint business council.

Agreements on collaboration in the spheres of education and culture were signed: by Mogilev's Regional Executive Committee and the Government of the Punjab Province; by the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry and the Federation of Pakistani Chambers of Commerce and Industry; by Belarus' National State TV and Radio Company and Pakistan Television Corporation State TV and Radio Company; and by the Belarusian State University and the University of Quaid-i-Azam.

In addition, memorandums on mutual understanding were signed in the fields of industry, agriculture and food, science and technologies, and investments. Such documents were also signed between the national libraries of Belarus and Pakistan and between the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics and Pakistan's National University of Sciences and Technologies.

The Belarusian President's visit to Pakistan included official meetings, and the symbolic planting of a tree in Shakarparian Park, in Islamabad's historical centre: a popular spot for tourists and city residents. A national Monument of Pakistan is situated on

one of its two hills, with the second accommodating a leisure park, which always gathers crowds. The amazing site unites the spirit of historical traditions and focuses on the country's peaceful and calm development.

The President of Belarus wrote in the book of honorary guests: 'I'm impressed with Islamabad's Shakarparian Park, which eloquently embodies Pakistan's unity and its intention to live peacefully with the nations of the world. Let the tree — which I've planted today — be a symbol of the friendly relations between Belarus and Pakistan, their dynamic development and flourishing.'

Clearly, our two states have the political will and business motivation for dynamic and productive interaction across all spheres. The signing of the Islamabad Declaration of Belarus-Pakistan Partnership, by Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Sharif, was an important result of talks, while delegation members concluded around two dozen agreements and memorandums.

The Belarusian President and Pakistan's Prime Minister later told journalists the results of their talks and declarations, with mutual trade, investment exchange and cultural contacts to the fore. In the sphere of politics, inter-parliamentary co-operation and expanded bilateral and inter-regional contacts are to be given attention. Meanwhile, close interaction on the international arena — primarily in the UN — remains vital, for Minsk and Islamabad.

Mr. Lukashenko invited the Pakistani Prime Minister to Belarus and Mr. Sharif accepted his invitation with pleasure, intending to arrive in August, with a major governmental and business delegation. The President has promised to seriously prepare for the meeting.

A session of the Business Co-operation Council is to take place immediately prior to Mr. Sharif's visit to Belarus, to ensure that all memorandums and agreements signed recently transform into concrete contacts, as the President has proposed.

Importantly, both states are keen to establish joint production facilities, in Belarus and Pakistan. The process has already launched, with Mr. Lukashenko presenting Mr. Sharif with a certificate on the first Belarusian tractor assembled in Pakistan. No doubt, the future will be full of activity.

Prime ministers work for the sake of future

By Vladimir Velikhov

Kazakhstan's Burabay hosts another session of CIS Heads of Government Council, and session of Eurasian Intergovernmental Council

The agenda included a wide range of issues, relating primarily to integration co-operation within the CIS. The participants of the meeting adopted a joint financial and economic action plan, and approved a CIS transport security strategy for international forwarding. Moreover, the Heads of

Government approved an action plan for 2015-2016 as part of the CIS interstate innovation co-operation programme (until 2020) and a draft concept on CIS inter-regional and border co-operation (until 2020), with an action plan for its implementation.

The session approved a draft concept to set up and develop an interstate system for training, professional retraining and enhancing the qualifications of personnel in the sphere of intellectual property. In addition, it discussed how best to develop a united system of control and assess-

ment of the CIS Defence Ministries' radiation, chemical and biological situation, through until 2020. The CIS Heads of Government Council also appointed Major General Oleg Zemskov (of Belarus) as Deputy Head of the CIS Antiterrorist Centre.

A year has passed since the EEU Treaty was signed. With the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan, our five states now share common integration objectives. This is the new reality, to which we must adapt, learning how to develop and make decisions. In other words, we must launch all the



At the CIS Heads of Government Council session

mechanisms created. According to the Prime Minister of Russia, Dmitry Medvedev, efforts should be focused upon eliminating barriers to the free movement of goods, services, capital and labour. "We've removed some restrictions, but still have problems to work on. This is normal, since any integration association faces such prob-

lems if it aims to be strong. We believe that ours is a strong integration union. Every year, the number of restrictions reduces," Mr. Medvedev underlined.

Belarus' Prime Minister, Andrei Kobyakov, attended a number of bilateral meetings with colleagues from other countries, as part of the session.

Programme devoted to engineering analysis

Belarusian-Russian Venture Fund aims to generate income

By Vladimir Yakovlev

Negotiations are underway with the Russian Venture Fund, and corresponding documentation is being developed, allowing the Belarusian Innovative Fund to partner the new fund. Belarus already grants Br40 billion a year to the financing of innovative developments but, as the Chairman of the State Committee on Science and Technology, Alexander Shumilin, is convinced, at least triple that amount could easily be spent, since many good projects are yet to receive financing.

The new fund will become a powerful addition to the financing of Belarus-Russia scientific and technical programmes being carried out via the Union State budget. There are currently 10 such projects, notes Mr. Shumilin, worth about \$53 million in equivalent this year. He explains, "We're liaising via the Union State, as a priority direction, and have another 20 programmes under consideration."

The First Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Sergey Chizhik, tells us that one programme is devoted to engineering analysis, applying software not only to mechanical engineering but to other high-tech manufacturing. Belarus and Russia are currently reliant on expensive imports in this field and lack access to some advanced developments. Natu-



Interesting developments at Belarusian Industrial Forum

rally, independence in this sphere is highly desirable, and may be achieved with well-directed investment.

Import-substitution of high-tech products is a goal for both our nations and our likelihood of achieving it is greater through unification of efforts. This would also open the way to entering the world market more competitively as exporters.

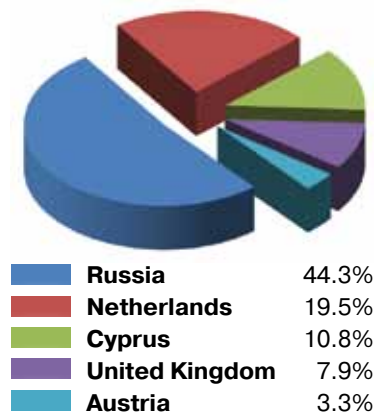
Other CIS countries are similarly involved, as Mr. Shumilin empha-

sises. Ukraine and Moldova began financing four such projects last year. Meanwhile, Slovakia took part in the Belarusian Industrial Forum in Minsk for the first time, introducing its two-seater superlight plane. Three years ago, Belarus became a 'space power', designing and manufacturing unmanned aerial vehicles. Co-operation with Slovakia would be useful for the aerospace branch, as Mr. Shumilin admits.

Belarus-Russia scientific and technical co-operation is a priority for the Union State, to the benefit of each nation individually and together. The State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, has often underlined this fact. Belarus is developing its next five-year innovative programme, oriented towards 5-6 technological spheres of manufacturing. Undoubtedly, new Union State programmes will be a logical addition.

Investors in private sector

Over the first quarter of this year, the private sector has seen \$3.4bn of foreign investment: 29.1 percent less than in the first quarter of 2014, according to the National Statistical Committee



Economic entities from Russia are responsible for 44.3 percent of all incoming investments, followed by the Netherlands (19.5 percent), Cyprus (10.8 percent), the United Kingdom (7.9 percent), and Austria (3.3 percent). Minsk has received 73.5 percent of this amount, with the Minsk Region gaining 8.5 percent of the gross inflow, followed by the Gomel Region (8.2 percent) and the Vitebsk Region (4 percent).

Unison and General Motors may reach an agreement

Unison JV and General Motors are in negotiations to make premium class cars in Belarus, notes Sergei Shalai, Press Secretary of the Belarusian Industry Ministry, after a presentation to assemble Opel Mokka passenger cars at General Motors Concern, in Minsk District

By Alexander Pimenov

Unison's Acting Director General, Dmitry Yegorov, tells us, "We're advancing relations with the General Motors Company, planning to expand our product range primarily with premium class cars." A presentation of cars to be assembled is expected to take place in September 2015.

Mr. Shalai adds that Unison began recently assembling Opel Mokka



At Minsk District assembly area

cars: the first model to be jointly distributed by General Motors and Unison following a framework agreement signed in June 2013. "In line with this agreement, the Belarusian company is responsible for making the cars while General Motors takes care of the pricing policy, target markets, warranty service and post-warranty service," notes Mr. Shalai.

To launch a new manufacturing facility, Unison bought, installed, and trialled assembly equipment

with assistance from General Motors specialists. Unison personnel have now been trained to use all the manufacturing and quality assurance practices which are standard at the American corporation's factories worldwide.

The car assembly enterprise is located in the village of Obchak, 10km from Minsk. For over 15 years, the company has been assembling a number of automobile brands, including Ford, KIA, and Samand.

Instruments to reach goals

By Vladimir Velikhov

International Monetary Fund supports Belarusian authorities in raising flexibility of exchange rate

The IMF Executive Board has issued a statement declaring that its directors welcome the Belarusian authorities' intention of making the exchange rate more flexible. They have called for further steps towards exchange rate flexibility, to protect gold-and-currency reserves and ensure adequate adjustment in a volatile external environment. The IMF has also recommended that the National Bank of Belarus fully implement a money-targeting framework focused on reducing inflation to single digits.

Previously, the National Bank announced its intention to move towards greater exchange rate flexibility. In particular, the National Bank is switching to a mechanism of continuous double foreign exchange auction. In 2015, the central regulator introduced a money-targeting framework for the country's monetary and credit policy. The IMF has called for wage increases to be restricted in 2015, following productivity growth in the medium term. They also note the authorities' interest in a new Fund-supported programme. Recognising the benefits it could bring to the country, the IMF underscores that any future arrangement would require a credible and strong commitment at the highest level to a comprehensive package of deep structural reform, and consistent macroeconomic policy. They are keen to continue close engagement with authorities on these issues.

Despite restrictive measures

By Igor Nefedov

Belarus is keen to find ways to increase sales of agricultural equipment to the European market

Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Guryanov, noted before the ceremony to award winners of the Republican *Best Exporter of the Year 2014* Contest, "We're in talks with European partners to expand sales of Belarusian agricultural machinery; Russia doesn't import volumes as it used to. We're also negotiating how best to maintain our position on the Ukrainian market, and have good prospects to advance on the Asian market."

Regarding exports, he comments that Belarus continues to battle some of the same problems it faced in late 2014. "Markets are affected, including by restrictive economic barriers, as have emerged between Russia and the European Union. Here, we face additional control and additional requirements for products," explains the Deputy Minister.

Mr. Guryanov stressed that sales volumes abroad have remained steady, with a slight increase registered in some positions. "If CIS markets fall away, we can orient towards other directions in the same volumes or, even, slightly more," he asserts.

Money heads to hinterland

Gomel's 12th Economic Forum gathers over 500 representatives from 21 countries and features over 100 investment projects: the greatest numbers to date

By Violetta Dralyuk

The forum's diverse attendance has brought about more opportunities for investment liaison than ever before. In fact, the event began modestly, attracting just a few countries: neighbouring states and twin-districts. The first projects were less impressive but its founders believed that it would grow in significance with time. Now, all doubts are past: since 2008, 56 investment agreements have been signed at the forum, worth \$1.36 billion.

New production facilities and enterprises, modern sites and infrastructure have come to pass, thanks to contracts signed in Gomel. Among these are hotel complexes, the trading-entertainment centre in Zhlobin, and the first hypermarket in Gomel. Importantly, this successful beginning inspired other investment projects.

Until recently, foreign businesses only seemed interested in the regional centre and its major cities of Mozyr, Zhlobin and Svetlogorsk, as is to be expected. Working in rural areas is known to be more difficult. However, the forum has recently shown that investment projects are gaining a wider foothold.

This year, districts have come into focus in signing new agreements and proto-



cols of intentions. A Russian investor plans to build a mini-hydroelectric station on the Iput River, near Dobrush, producing enough energy for the entire district centre

(avoiding current reliance on a boiler plant). The Kalinkovichi District is another focal point for foreign investors: a Belarusian company plans to build an agro-complex (in-

jecting over \$110m) within one military town, while an investor is looking to build an aqua-park in Kalinkovichi.

A Ukrainian entrepre-

neur has plans to set up production of natural stone goods in the Rogachev District. Having been operating in Belarus for some years, he feels confident that the new

project will build upon his Svetlogorsk business success. Yuri Omelchuk, the Acting Director of PlasmaTec JSC, explains that plans are expanding. He notes that, on first joining the market, he was afraid of taxation leading to bankruptcy. However, over time, that fear was replaced by surprise: support from local authorities and inspection agencies has smoothed the path to success. He calls upon his colleagues to work fairly to ensure that they enjoy the 'green light' in Belarus and avoid penalties for 'misbehaviour'.

The Chairman of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Dvornik, praises the regional accent of the forum, noting that it has a positive influence on the district economy and wider public well-being. He notes that the town of Vetka lacks any single industry to provide employment. When just one enterprise makes an investment, it can completely change the nature of a settlement, bringing not only jobs but local tax revenue and infrastructure and indirect financial injections into other small businesses. The more such small changes can be made in rural areas, the stronger our country will become and standards of living will rise. Every investment project has the potential to be valuable.



View of Grodno Hotel in the regional centre

Under partner scrutiny

By Vladimir Velikhov

Chinese investors showing interest in purchasing biggest hotel in Grodno

Grodno authorities are determined to find a new owner for the 16-floor Grodno Hotel: the biggest in the regional centre. Currently operating inefficiently, according to the Chairman of the Grodno City Executive Committee, Mechislav Goi, the hotel requires not only investment but expertise.

He notes that China already has a history of co-operation with Grodno facto-

ries. "They have money and technologies, while we have a workforce and sites. It's a good basis to produce goods on our territory, for sale abroad," he underlines.

Chinese partners from the Gansu Province recently visited Grodno, touring enterprises producing PVC pipes and biologically active supplements. Several facilities at existing enterprises are currently idle, and would benefit from external investment. Traditional Chinese medicine may be developed in the Grodno Region, with the Chairman of the Grodno Regional Ex-

ecutive Committee, Vladimir Kravtsov, having discussed this idea with the Gansu Province Vice Governor. The Mayor supports the idea, which is being developed in various countries. Ozerny sanatorium may be a viable site for the plan.

A delegation from Grodno is to take part in an international exhibition in Lanzhou, Gansu Province, this summer, occupying 700-800 square metres of exhibition space free of charge, presenting Grodno's most competitive products.

There are also plans to study Chinese urban development practices.

Able to work and to relax

By Valentina Kozlovich

Chairman of Berezha District Executive Committee, Yuri Narkevich, chats about one of the most dynamically developing districts in Belarus

In Soviet times, the district was known far beyond Belarus. Now, it exports goods to 28 countries worldwide and is known for more than just cheeses and sausages.

In the past year, we've sent goods worth more than \$240 million to foreign markets. Only Brest has sold more. In terms of industrial production, the district is third in the region after Brest and Baranovichi. Every third kilo of cheese and fourth kilo of butter produced in the Brest Region is from Berezha.

On business trips to the Berezha District, I've never seen an abandoned farm, as often happens elsewhere.

We support houses in villages and outdated farms,



Beautiful cityscape of Berezha

funding not only from enterprises but from the budget. In 2014, we harvested a record grain yield for our district: 43 centners per hectare. Meanwhile, we plan to construct new complexes for livestock, building on our existing 17 modern dairy farms, which have computerised milking halls. Our milk yields are rising annually, with 5,679 litres collected from our cows last year.

There's much of interest in Zditovo agro town.

Zditovo, like many other villages in the Berezha District, is an example of co-operation between institutions

of education and culture, and local authorities and villagers. It is a modern village, offering a decent quality of life. Village schooling rivals that of cities these days. For the past four years, our district has led among rural districts in the region for its number of school graduates admitted to university. We've created the necessary conditions not only for education but for recreation and the following of a healthy lifestyle. We have an ice rink, a swimming pool, stadiums, and a rowing club. Schools offer children all manner of encouragement.

Complaint book for soil under review

Belarus is certainly not Africa but, paradoxically, shares the same problem of soil drought and degradation

By Veronika Artemieva

Many factors contribute to the problem, including the 'warm breath' of global warming. Over the past two decades, over ten droughts have been recorded in Belarus: unusual for our latitude. The Head of the Biological and Landscape Bio-Diversity Department at the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental protection, Andrey Kuzmich, admits that around 20 types of soil degradation are currently registered in Belarus. These include wrongful use of agricultural lands, which become salted and waterlogged as a result, suffering from over-salination.

The situation looks even more drastic when we take note that Belarus boasts 0.56 hectares of plough land per person, placing it among the top 20 in this sphere. Specialists characterise our lands as having non-homogeneous soil and low levels of ecological sustainability, making them susceptible to change. The building of road networks (stretching 85,000km across the country) creates even more problems for croplands.

Melioration (realised on a global scale not so long ago) has resulted in drained lands which now need attention. "Drained lands function well if melioration systems ensure their proper state," believes



Land deserves to be taken care of

Mr. Kuzmich. "This is the sphere of responsibility of the Agriculture and Food Ministry and the regional executive committees, which inspect these systems every five years, reconstructing them as necessary. If an approach is conscientious, systems function well; if it's bad, then soil becomes damaged. According to preliminary data, in recent times, the territory of such lands has grown by 12 percent. Water and wind erosion is another problem: over 500,000 hectares of land 'die' from these factors annually, influencing crop harvests. Yields may fall in volume between 5 and 60 percent!"

The Belarusian Government is soon to draw up a

draft national plan of action, aiming to realise the UN Convention on Land Degradation and Drought, launching from 2016-2020. Of course, similar documents have been signed in the past but Mr. Kuzmich explains that new regulations are to be implemented not by agencies (as previously) but proactively at state level.

Previously, ecologists found it difficult to monitor the situation effectively, Mr. Kuzmich admits. He explains that the new documents envisage continuous monitoring. Sadly, the most recent water and wind erosion data was gathered in 2000, as part of a major study; since then, no more has been collected. He tells us, "To assess the cur-

rent state of affairs, we need to involve human and financial resources, which isn't simple. The strategy aims to identify priority territories and to establish a system for monitoring and registration."

The document also envisages other measures: not merely to save Belarusian croplands but to avoid further harm. Innovative agro-technologies, the development of organic farming and reduced use of pesticides should all alleviate the burden on soil. According to Mr. Kuzmich, territories and croplands which cannot be saved could be turned into new forests and marshes over time, as has been achieved in Belarus in the past.

Direct flights now a reality

By Alexander Pimenov

It takes just 9.5 hours to reach Minsk from Beijing and 13 on the return leg, having 90 minutes layover in Budapest

Stronger trade and economic ties between Belarus and China have inspired the launch of the new flights, which are likely to serve those travelling on business, not just from Belarus but from neighbouring countries — such as Latvia and Lithuania, explains the Director General of the Minsk office for Air China, Wang Jen Feng.

The airline is now flying to our country four times weekly and hopes to make the Minsk-Beijing return route direct within the next two years, to avoid landing in Budapest. The first flight had just 38 seats booked from China to Belarus but experts are confident of future demand. The number of people flying between Belarus and Asia has increased by 26 percent annually of late (on average).

Belavia is now running a five-hour flight between Minsk and Almaty, as the Ambassador of Kazakhstan to Belarus, H.E. Yergali Bulegenov, notes. He empha-



Passengers of Beijing flight at Minsk airport

sises that Almaty is the 'heart' of South Kazakhstan, being a hub for culture, business, tourism, and finances. He has no doubt that the route will be of interest to the business community.

The Deputy Director General of Belavia, Igor Cherginets, tells us that, based

on passenger traffic, the flight to Almaty was suggested a few years ago. However, the carrier has only recently acquired more aircraft able to fly the distance without stopping. The route is operating twice weekly but the frequency of flights may rise to one daily if demand allows.

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

Menu matters

If you have iron-deficiency anaemia, what diet should be used?

N.Nefedov, Grodno



Raising protein intake by 10-20 percent above recommended standards is a good idea, with at least 60 percent coming from meat and fish. Protein helps you absorb and process iron, as well as forming globin and generating erythrocytes. You should reduce your saturated fat intake, from beef, pork, mutton suet and other cooking fats, by 5-10 percent (compared to recommended levels) while keeping carbohydrates within recommended levels. There's no need to raise your intake of any particular minerals (besides iron) or B vitamins but ensure you are receiving the generally recommended amounts, perhaps by taking a multivitamin tablet.

Do ensure that you are taking a good level of ascorbic acid (vitamin C) since it improves the body's absorption of iron. It's important to make it easy for your body to absorb and process iron. For instance, it's most easily extracted from red meat. Poultry, liver and fish are slightly less 'effective' sources, followed by fruits and

with the addition of 100g of fish. Absorption of iron becomes more efficient with ingestion of citrus fruits (ascorbic, citric, malic and tartaric) or fruits/berries without pulp, dogrose broth, or compotes with added ascorbic (about 25-50mg) or citric acid.

Try substituting honey for sugar and take a little dry white wine to improve digestion (not red). Also cut out strong tea. Red wine and tea are rich in tannins, which reduce iron absorption. Similarly, limit products rich in oxalic acid or tannins: spinach, sorrel, rhubarb, purslane, quince, cornel, persimmon, black chokeberries, bilberries, chocolate and cocoa. Limit also those products rich in dietary fibre: whole-wheat bread or with added bran, and beans. Soya proteins are thought to inhibit the absorption of iron and, contrary to popular belief, fresh salads, pomegranates and buckwheat do not raise iron absorption. You may also like to drink highly mineralised waters (iron salts in a solution of carbonic acid).



Apples contain much iron

berry juices, without pulp. Milk and dairy products contain small doses of iron, and can affect the digestion, unless they come in the form of live-cultures: yoghurt or kefir (with added vitamin C). Fruit and berry juices are more easily digestible than milk. Eggs are a rich source of iron, but may also affect digestion adversely. Do include dairy products and eggs in your diet, but only in moderation. Eat at least 200g of meat and/or fish daily (this may include liver, tongue, kidneys and sausage products). Worthy additions are berries and berry juices, green leafy vegetables and dogrose broth. Boiled and fried liver, and liver pate (not raw or half-baked) and blutwurst sausages are good sources of easily digestible protein.

To stimulate the appetite and reduce gastric bile, try serving meat or fish with mushroom sauces, spices or spicy vegetables (such as onions, garlic or horse-radish). Meanwhile, in eating meat and fish, uptake of iron from cereals, bread and potatoes should rise. For example, uptake of iron from vegetables almost doubles when 50g of meat is consumed, and triples

A lack of iron can lead to anaemia, necessitating a diet rich in nutrients for blood formation. Latent anaemia can be corrected with the help of diet alone (consuming foods rich in iron). However, it's impossible to guarantee effective treatment of iron deficiency anaemia by strict dietary observance alone. Haematologists underline that patients need to take medication to handle their condition. Unfortunately, many doctors still uphold the eating of apples, stewed carrots, beetroot, pears and pomegranates or goat's milk as a solution. In fact, such a diet can aggravate the condition (women seem more prone to follow this advice). Goat's milk in particular can be dangerous to those suffering iron deficiency anaemia, as it contains little iron and folic acid. Long-term consumption aggravates anaemia.

Without denying the advantages of eating fruit, an excess, especially of those rich in pectin, can aggravate your condition. Red meat should prevail during treatment of iron deficiency anaemia.

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

Amazing bouquet of red roses

MT reporters visit unique Belarusian settlement of rosy Ruzhany

By Viktor Korbut

Called 'Razhana' ('rose') in Belarusian, and later 'ruzha', Ruzhany combines Polish and Russian languages. Its coat of arms shows St. Casimir (esteemed by Catholics for centuries) surrounded by a wreath from roses. The church of St. Casimir is near the city centre, surrounded by a cemetery and public garden, featuring monuments to Soviet soldiers and the inhabitants of neighbouring villages who were burnt by Nazis between 1941 and 1945.

Nearby is the Church of the Holy Trinity: believed to be 400 years old. The 18th century baroque Uniat church, opposite, passed to the Russian Orthodox Church in the 19th century, receiving then a classical, pseudo-Russian façade. The two frame the market square of the town and have survived all conflict.

Residents of Ruzhany number hardly more than 3,000, and tend to know each other by sight. As I walked along the high walls of the former Basilian monastery, a local asked why I'd been photographing for an hour, showing that few tourists come, despite the town's wonderful history. It's a rare gem, boasting the same skyline as it had in the early 20th century: seen in old postcards.

Most cities of Belarus suffered during the First World War and the Great Patriotic War, yet Ruzhany largely escaped damage. The only casualty was Sapega Palace: set on fire in the summer of 1944, by retreating Nazis. The remaining stones remember human tragedy, including the destruction of the local Jewish community, taken during the years of Nazi occupation. Their synagogue still stands: a reminder of those who once lived here, near the market. The roof is rotting but the walls are almost undamaged, making it suitable for restoration. The facade might then be adorned with a memorial plaque in honour of Yitzhak Shamir: the well-known Prime Minister of Israel who was born in Ruzhany in 1915 and, possibly, visited this synagogue.

The town's museum is located



Local museum in Ruzhany located in restored former Sapega Palace

in the restored buildings of the 16th century Sapega Palace, once owned by a family among the richest in Belarus, Lithuania and Poland. It received its first renovations in the 18th century, and was confiscated in the early 19th century, in punishment for the aristocrats having supported the anti-Russian revolt. Ruzhany museum director Ruslan Kniga would love to see tourists being able to take a carriage through Ruzhany, to the palace, feeling like the nobles of old.

The palace's many treasures were transported to St. Petersburg and many remain still at the Hermitage. Mr. Kniga plans to travel to the city on the River Neva, in search of his town's valuables, and with the hope of returning more than empty-handed.

Many of Ruzhany's roads have been travelled by famous Russians, although there are few memorial signs. Emperor Nikolay II wrote in his journal, on June 22nd, 1915: 'Monday. At 11.45 my carriage and



Facade of museum in Ruzhany

First World War in progress...

In 1965, director Victor Turov shot the film *I Come from Childhood* in the town, based on Gennady Shpalikov's well-known *Walking the Streets of Moscow*. Nina Urgant, Boris Rudnev, Valery Zubarev and Vladimir Vysotsky played the lead roles.

retinue passed through Slonim, Ruzhany and Pruzhany, into Bialowiez. Having passed the forest roads, about 30 versts, I appeared on Pruzhany highway and returned by the same track, to headquarters, by 11 o'clock.' The 'headquarters' were located in Baranovichi since Russia was, at that time, at war with Germany.



VIKTOR KORBUT

Ruzhany is an urban settlement in the Pruzhany District of the Brest Region, located on undulating ground by the River Ruzhanka, 140km from Brest, at the crossing of highways P85 and P44. It was first mentioned in writing in 1490. In 1552, it belonged to Tyshevichi, then to Brukhalsky; in 1598, it passed to the Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Lev Sapega, who made the town his main residence.

These days, on the edge of the Ruzhany Pushcha, three districts converge: the Pruzhany District, the Ivatsevichi and the Bereza. On this spot is located the 210th aviation range, operating under military law. Within the forest, on the bank of Lake Papernya, there used to be a paper-making factory. Now, it's the site of Ruzhansky Sanatorium, which is popular with tourists from Russia. Local residents often use the health resort's pool in the evenings, and there's a cultural centre too, where theatrical performances entertain (just as they did at Sapega Palace more than two hundred years ago). For those planning a trip, Brest Fortress and the Belovezhskaya Pushcha forest reserve are both located not too far distant.

Flowers of the world are blossoming

By Natalia Tyshkevich

From flower festival in London to lilac exhibition in Minsk

Each country has its own blossoming symbol of spring. The UK has the Chelsea Flower Show: the most prestigious and popular in the world. Every year, Queen Elizabeth II is the first to attend. As the British say, spring hasn't arrived until Chelsea opens. Meanwhile, the Dutch are proud of their parade of flower sculptures, in the city of Zundert: the largest such worldwide.

For Belarus, spring is associated with lilacs blooming, filling the air with their incomparable aroma. Lilac Week recently began at the Central Botanical Garden (of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus) marking the 70th anniversary of Vic-



Blossom week at Minsk's Botanical Garden

tory. Of course, lilacs are one of the symbols of the Great Victory, since Soviet soldier-liberators were welcomed with lilac blossoms in May 1945.

Over 200 varieties of lilac grow in

the Botanical Garden's lilac nursery: 16 of Belarusian selection. Many are recognised as national treasures, revered by collectors all over the world. The collection boasts varieties named in honour of the war: 'Great Victory',

'Captain Gastello', 'Partizanka' and 'To Brest Defenders'. During Lilac Week, visitors have the chance to see a great diversity of species and can also chat to gardening experts, receiving advice on their own plant cultivation. Natalia Makedonskaya, a candidate of agricultural sciences, is the curator of the lilac collection and is always happy to share her expertise.

The traditional *Cornflower Crown* Championship of Professional Floristry took place in May, this year marking the International Day of Families and International Children's Day. Its main theme was happiness, with three nominations for entries: 'Window of Happiness', 'Wreath of Happiness' and 'Bouquet of Happiness'. The event is always inspiring, providing plenty of ideas for your own home arrangements.

Profitable vacation

By Inna Gorbatenko

Gomel encouraging entrepreneurial spirit from childhood, with business-themed summer camps supplementing traditional football and swimming

Some Gomel enterprises are ready to support the initiative, delivering waste supplies of wood, fabric, paper and leather, for children aged 14 to 18 to make souvenirs for the *Sozhski Karagod-2015* International Choreographic Festival. The youngsters will then sell their goods and make money (free from income tax).

More than 8,700 pupils attend over 230 health camps over the summer around the Gomel Region area, with each having its own theme.

EU calls for forty thousand asylum seekers from Italy and Greece to be relocated

EU member states should take in some 40,000 asylum seekers, mainly from Syria and Eritrea, who land in Italy and Greece over the next two years, the European Commission said

Under the plan, Germany (8763), France (6752) and Spain (4288) would receive the most of them. The rest would be shared out amongst twenty EU countries. But this scheme would require approval from leaders and MEPs if it is ever to become a reality. The UK, Denmark and Ireland already have opt-outs; a number of central and eastern European states have voiced their opposition.

“The relocation mechanism proposed in this decision constitutes a fair burden sharing between Italy and Greece on one hand and on the other



Italian coast guards save migrants and refugees from Syria

hand member states who are also invited to contribute,” said Dimitris Avramopoulos, EU Commissioner for Migration. Those two countries have often borne the brunt of the massive influx of refugees and asylum seekers in recent years, but NGOs say they still have a role to play.

Italy and Greece ‘shouldn’t be relieved from their responsibilities

in reception and assistance and in granting protection,’ said Aspasia Papadopoulou of the European Council on Refugees and Exiles. “These 40,000 are just one part of the rest that will be arriving in Italy and Greece. We have the summer months ahead of us — there will be thousands of people arriving.” Ministers already plan a new EU naval force to fight smuggling

gangs. It will, if necessary, use military force, inside Libyan territorial waters.

But the UN Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, who was visiting Brussels, warned it could disrupt local economies. “When you consider destroying these boats, you may end up, eventually, in depriving off even the very limited means of those people,” he said.

Tracking pilots’ brains to reduce human errors



Tragedy of Germanwings flight lives on

Earlier this year, a Germanwings jet carrying 150 people crashed into a remote area of the French Alps, killing everyone on board. Authorities say co-pilot Andreas Lubitz, who had suffered from suicidal tendencies and depression, intentionally crashed the Barcelona-Dusseldorf flight but they are still puzzling over why he did it.

Scientists from France, the USA and Japan are now working together to better understand how a pilot’s brain functions. The Germanwings accident was a unique case, so scientists have extended their research to understand pilots’ physiological and neurological reactions to stress, with the aim of being able to identify the signals that precede potential error in order to prevent it.

No matter how well trained and experienced a pilot is, human error is always possible. In this lab in the French city of Toulouse, a team is developing instruments that might help the pilot handle the workload.

“We are trying to better understand what can cause human error by using the same tools as neuroscientists, like electro-encephalography, measuring the heart rate, perspiration, the pupil diameter, eye tracking, which means tracking the pilot’s gaze at any given moment,” explains Mickael Causse, Assistant Professor at the Aeronautical and Space Institute in Toulouse. So we’re carrying out all of these tests in order to better understand how a human being functions in poor conditions, under stress, or when tired, in order to prevent accidents when that’s possible.”

Smartphone applications could save lives during earthquake say inventors

The earthquake measuring 7.8 on the Richter scale that struck Nepal on April 25th killed more than 8,000 people, left tens of thousands injured and hundreds of thousands homeless

When a natural disaster occurs, minutes — and even seconds — can save lives. That’s what the inventors of a new smartphone app are focussing on: those precious seconds in which data can be collected and users can be alerted in the event of an earthquake. Called ‘QuakeShare’, it uses GPS technology and a directional gyro system.

“As soon as the smartphone detects a tremor, the information is transmitted to our server in the cloud. The server collects data from other smartphones and then our algorithm analyses all the data collected and tells us whether there is a risk of an earthquake or

not. All that takes place in just a few seconds,” says Pierre-Marie Sarant, founder of CynSIS, the company behind the QuakeShare app.

The goal is to create a real-time early warning system, which will help gather information on affected zones to strengthen crisis response and help mobilise relief teams. Once an earthquake is confirmed, a general alert is sent out.

“On the smartphone screen here, you see the chronometer shows a confirmed tremour that occurred two seconds ago. So people know that time is running out and that they must take shelter,” explains Pierre-Marie Sarant.

“The idea is to geo-localise the users, so that in the event of a power cut or if the mobile network goes down, we know where the users were when the earthquake struck.”



EU and Switzerland agree to clamp down on tax evasion

A deal has been signed between the European Union (EU) and Switzerland in an effort to clamp down on tax evasion

The European Commission (EC) confirmed the agreement which, from 2018, will see the EU and Switzerland exchange information on the bank accounts held by their citizens. This means, in theory, EU residents will be blocked from hiding undeclared earnings in Swiss banks.

EU Commissioner Pierre Moscovici called the deal for an automated exchange of information ‘another leap towards fairer taxation in Europe’.

In 2014, EU countries also agreed to ‘strengthen transparency’ among member states.

The EC is in the process of negotiating similar deals with Monaco, Liechtenstein and Andorra, in an effort to end banking secrecy.

Castro’s Cold War crocs

Ten crocodiles with a rich heritage dating back to the Cold War return to Cuba

Their parents were Castro and Hilly presented by Fidel Castro to the Soviet cosmonaut Vladimir Shatalov, who took them to Moscow and then donated them to a Swedish zoo.

The offspring have now returned to Cuba and are set to be released back into the wild to bolster the diminishing population in the Zapata zoo.

“Firstly Fidel Castro will be amazed that a gift that he presented to a Soviet friend has proved so fruitful and worthwhile, I think he’ll be very happy.”

The Cuban crocodile is in grave danger, formally numerous across the Caribbean, it is now only found in two swamps in Cuba, where it is threatened by interbreeding with American crocodiles, loss of habitat and poaching.

Yahoo faces privacy violation class action in America

Internet giant Yahoo is facing a nationwide class action lawsuit in the USA by consumers angered that the company allegedly opened e-mails sent to them from rivals’ e-mails services

This alleged information was used to target advertising and boost revenues. A California judge cleared the way for groups of Yahoo mail service subscribers and non-subscribers to sue for privacy violations, the latter group under local state laws.

They could number over a million nationwide. A class action can make it easier to obtain larger damages and more sweeping remedies at a lower cost.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Seeing Britain at Minsk museum

Works by 18th-19th century British masters on show at National Art Museum

By Veniamin Mikheev

The Touch of Britain exhibition presents pictorial works, as well as decorative-and-applied arts, from the UK's Government Art Collection, the National Art Museum of Belarus and the National History Museum of Belarus.

Looking at the past five centuries, it's easy to see how feudal wars impeded the artistic traditions of Britain. The Puritan movement, with its iconoclastic ideas, was an obstacle to the development of the national painting school, with religious painting hardly represented in Protestant England. The 17th century was marked by the gradual development of portraiture, mainly in miniature, while the following century saw British artists working intensively and fruitfully, as if making up for lost time. The 18th century was a time of brilliant blossoming for British culture. Alongside France, the UK set trends in European artistic taste, with the English culture of everyday life, interior decoration, and landscape art having the greatest impact on the continent.

The founder of the national painting school and the greatest figure of British art in the first half of the 18th century, to the middle of the century, was William Hogarth. His bold realism influenced a variety of stylistic phenomena, focusing on 'addressing nature' and 'trusting feelings'. He created works reflecting moments in everyday life and was the first British artist to use the theme of theatre: a subject dear to the English from Shakespearean times. He was a friend of the prominent actor of his day, David Garrick.

The exhibition includes an engraved reproduction of one of Hogarth's paintings devoted to the final scene of the play *The Beggar's Opera*, by British dramatist John Gay. The premiere was held in London in January 1728. From the collection of the National History Museum of Belarus, there is also a print by the famous English artist and poet William Blake.

In the 18th century, Eng-

lish art concentrated on portraiture, while the rest of Europe popularised historical and mythological themes. In Britain, portraiture reflected historical notions of the importance of man and the rich traditions and heritage of foreign masters. The portrait genre dominates at the Royal Academy of Arts, opened in London in 1768, whose first president was Joshua Reynolds: one of the foremost representatives of English portraiture from the 18th century.

Most paintings by English portrait painters in the second half of the 18th century were characterised by the Age of



Enlightenment's appreciation of man's personal qualities. They showed brilliant painting techniques, free brushwork and saturated colours. At the current exhibition, there are several engravings by English masters, from the archive of the National Art Museum of Belarus.

In the 19th century, portraiture was replaced by landscape painting, which reached unprecedented popularity. In the 18th century, 'topographical' landscapes (showing local landmarks) grew in popularity in Britain. On show at the current exhibition are works by Luke Sullivan, from the National Art Museum of Belarus, as well as canvases by George Frederick Buchanan, from the UK's Government Art Collection, which reflect the continuing development of this tradition in the 19th century.

English landscape paint-

ing from the second half of the 18th and early 19th century is characterised by stronger emotional development. John Glover was famous for developing traditions of 'classical' English landscape painting, in the manner of Claude Lorrain. The exhibition is showcasing his *Ullswater with Goldrill Bridge*, from the Government Art Collection, which shows a view of the English Lake District. Classical landscape traditions are also reflected in Charles Towne's *Falls of Tummell, Perthshire*, from the British collection.

19th century England became home to a new generation of European landscape painting, characterised by reproducing the beauty of nature: as pursued by various European art schools in the first quarter of the century. English artists developed this concept several decades before the continental European



Beautiful British art on show at National Art Museum exhibition

painters, perceiving the natural landscape as symbolic of 'good old England'. English artists in this genre who are best known are Joseph William Turner and John Constable. Landscape painting was a great achievement of English art at this time and made the most important contribution to the development of European contemporary painting.

British genre painting is not associated with mainline British artistic development. Like portraiture, genre art originated in Hogarth's works, dating back to the first half of the 18th century, exploring humorous or sentimental scenes from everyday life. In the 1770-1780s, English literature and, later, painting were marked by English village scenes. George Morland was one of the first English artists to depict rural settings and was a master of the domestic scene, being an outstanding painter

of landscapes and animals. He loved to paint picturesque cottages and their inhabitants, as in *Return of a Farmer from the Hunt*, which is on display at the current exhibition, from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus.

The domination of painting over all other forms of art was distinct to British art in the 18th-19th century. The formation of the English graphic school, as well as the figurative school, was associated with Hogarth's name and inspired a revival of interest in engraved works, which influenced the development of printing and graphic art. The 18th century brought popularity to the national painting school and to 'reproduction prints', with English engravers working closely with fine artists to turn original paintings into printing plates, finding new nuances. The Minsk exhibition has some wonderful examples of

reproduction graphic works: *The Temptation of St. Anthony by Demons*, by the well-known engraver, painter and publisher Arthur Pond, and *The Adoration of the Shepherds*, by Gillbank Haveill, both from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus.

The 18th and 19th century also brought popularity to British decorative-and-applied arts, in particular porcelain and ceramics. Sales were forthcoming across Europe, with the Staffordshire potteries — the oldest ceramic centre in England — of particular note. The current exhibition presents several examples of English ceramics, dating from the 19th century, mainly made in Staffordshire.

In the 19th century, British ceramic companies began using transfer printing to decorate their wares, with Russian themes to the fore. A series of plates featuring well-known St. Petersburg landmarks was produced at the G. L. Ashworth & Brothers pottery, with two plates from this series on show at the Minsk exhibition: *St. Isaac's Cathedral*, and *The Bolshoi Theatre in St. Petersburg*, from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus.

One of the largest British ceramic manufacturers of the second half of the 19th century was Brown-Vesthed, Moore & Co., which supplied the British royal family and the Russian Imperial Court. Motifs of faience and porcelain tableware included a popular floral design.

Most of paintings on display in Minsk are on loan from the UK Government Art Collection, founded in 1898 and now comprising over 13,000 works by English masters, dating from the 16th century to the present day. Exhibits are spread across various government institutions, primarily in the UK but also abroad. The UK Government Art Collection works to promote exhibitions around the world.

Despite the 'chamber' exhibition format, the presented works give an idea of the uniqueness and originality of the English art school of the 18th and 19th century.

Return to homeland

Two works by national pictorial school's classical painters — Ferdynand Ruszczyc and Stanislav Zhukovsky — return to land of their authors

By Alexander Pimenov

Belgazprombank bought both landscapes from a private collector, in its efforts to support the *Art-Belarus* project: aiming to return works by internationally-known artists born in Belarus to their homeland. The project has brought pictures home by such Parisian school painters as Marc Chagall and Chaim Soutine, after a century of absence. The collection has also been enriched by Simeon Polotsky's *Rod of Power* (published in 1667), 19th century romantic painter Walenty Wankowicz's *Portrait of Tomasz Zan* (the first of his works to come to Belarus), and Leon Bakst's *Firebird*, among other acquisitions.

Until recently, Belarus had only one picture by Ferdynand Ruszczyc, held by the

National Art Museum. Now, we have another: his *Cowshed and Shelter for Straw* (1899) set in the village of Bogdanovo, in the Volozhin District. His house still stands there, where his best paintings were drawn and he was buried.

In contrast, the National Art Museum has around 40 works by Stanislav Zhukovsky, but no Belarusian landscape was among them, although the artist (born in the Volkovysk District) visited open-air workshops in the Grodno Region every year. Now, Belarus is proud to exhibit his *Thaw: Svisloch Pushcha* (1935) — devoted to the beauty of the Svisloch Pushcha, in the north of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Meanwhile, the museums of Poland — where the artist spent his last twenty years — have few of his works.



Stanislav Zhukovsky's *Thaw: Svisloch Pushcha*

MT's reference:

Stanislav Zhukovsky graduated from the Moscow College of Art, Sculpture and Architecture, trained by Levitan. In 1899, the Tretyakov Gallery bought his *Moon Night*. Until the early 20th century, Zhukovsky was among the most famous impressionists in Russia, and established a private school in Moscow, where he lectured until 1917. In 1923, he returned to Belarus and then moved to Poland. Sadly, during WWII, he died in a concentration camp, in 1944, having been arrested by the fascists.

Ferdynand Ruszczyc studied painting under the guidance of Shishkin and Kuindzhi, at St. Petersburg's Emperor Academy of Arts. He lectured at Krakow's College of Pictorial Art and Music and was a Professor at the Krakow Arts Academy. From 1918-1919, he headed the Art Department at Vilno's Stephen Bathory University and became its first Dean. He was awarded the Order of French Legion D'Honneur's.



Ferdynand Ruszczyc's *Cowshed and Shelter for Straw*

Savouring every minute

Long before the opening of their exhibition at the Republican Centre for Ecology and Local History, pupils from Floria Art Studio in Minsk decided to invite friends from Belarusian Children's Hospice

By Marina Zubovich

Joy is multiplied when we share it with others, especially with children to whom Fate has been unfair. Lyudmila Bairova, who heads the Floria Studio, tells us that the exhibition is part of the *Ecology of Soul* project. Each of the 12 guests were accompanied by parents or volunteers, and greeted by studio pupils on the street with bouquets of spring flowers.

To avoid excluding those with less mobility, works were on show via a big screen on the ground floor. Meanwhile, experienced master Kudret Kirmach, from Turkey, helped every guest to create their own work of art, in the style of ebru ancient Oriental painting (drawing on water). Seven kinds of crafts were



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

available for sampling, with guests helped by graduates of Floria Studio.

Katya Galinovskaya, aged 6, who requires a wheelchair to help her with mobility, tried her hand at drawing in sand. She showed her work, via a luminous

screen, saying that her floral image was for her mother. She has already learned bead weaving and embroidery, taught by her mother. Born with cancer, she will never gain full use of her lower limbs but Katya's mother Irina is intent on filling her



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

daughter's days with happiness, communication and creativity. She starts regular school this year and dreams of joining Floria Studio. In fact, all the guests are eager to return.

Irina Baidakova, who heads social work for the

Belarusian Children's Hospice, notes that a joint plan of action is already underway to allow future work between Lyudmila Bairova's studio and the hospice, with weekly visits scheduled. Only transport remains to be arranged.

Original views on art highly respected

By Galina Grishkovets

Tokyo residents learn about creativity of Belarus-born Larissa Noury-Shakinko, of France

Larissa Noury-Shakinko has recently taken part in an artistic evening, attended by guests from the Belarusian-Japanese Friendship Society and representatives of the Belarusian diaspora in Japan. Researching the use of colour in everyday city life, Larissa has compiled three books on the history, culture and symbolism of colour, believing that architecture creates a cosmic perspective and has a huge role to play in society. Her original views are highly respected internationally.

Larissa's latest exhibition, held during the International Colouristics Forum, presented not only her books but her fashion designs, each piece embellished with her paintings, and a series of canvases and works on Japanese paper.

Open-air music eternally popular

By Yekaterina Knyazeva

Vitebsk Regional Philharmonic closes season with symphony orchestra concert

The Philharmonic Symphony Orchestra, conducted by its artistic leader, Vladimir Belyavsky, has closed its regular season, opening the way to summer events. Its outdoor courtyard Summer Mood event launched last year to great success, and attracted even more admirers this year.

In the early 20th century, outdoor concerts were far more common, drawing regular crowds. It's certainly hard to ignore the atmosphere of a 'street concert'. The novelty's popularity has proven itself amply, with tickets selling out almost immediately.

The close of the summer season will see a concert of popular symphony and variety-symphony music, featuring jazz and symphony rock. Works by Antonín Dvořák, Arturo Márquez, Johann Strauss, Andrew Lloyd Webber, Carlos Gardel, George Gershwin, Woodrow Charles 'Woody' Herman, Paul McCartney and Eugene Magalif are on the programme.

Hot days for boat rowers in full swing

Belarusian canoe and kayak team successful at second round of World Cup, in German Duisburg, capturing eight medals, including six gold



Roman Petrushenko, Pavel Medvedev, Vitaly Belko and Alexander Lepeshko win World Cup second stage in Duisburg

By Igor Leshin

Our sportsmen did especially well on the closing day of the final races, winning five gold medals. In the C2 200m final, Gleb Solodukha and Denis Makhlay claimed gold. Meanwhile, in the K4 1000m, Roman

Petrushenko, Pavel Medvedev, Vitaly Belko and Alexander Lepeshko beat the Russians by 0.744 seconds to take the gold medal. The C4 of Vadim Alexeevich, Gleb Solodukha, Ruslan Sazanovets and Denis Makhlay also took gold, in the 200m final, ahead of Ukraine by 0.281 seconds.

The women's C4 of Marina Litvinchuk, Olga Khudenko, Nadezhda Lepeshko and Margarita Makhneva won gold in the 200m, ahead of the Germans by just 0.156 seconds. In the 500m, they pulled ahead of the Polish squad by just 0.523 seconds. The Belarusian C2 of Marina Lit-

vinchuk and Margarita Makhneva also claimed ultimate victory, in the 500m.

Bronze medals in the World Cup's second round went to canoeists Oleg Yurenka (5,000m) and Olga Khudenko (500m) while Alexandra Grishina finished fourth in the 1,000m.



Belarusian MAZ vehicle under off-road conditions, near Polotsk

Jeeps on the track

By Igor Grishin

Joint stage of Russian and Belarusian championships — Baja Belarus rally-raid — takes place near Polotsk, for the second time

This year, the race united the third round of the Russian Rally Championship and the first stage of the Belarus championship: Baja Belarus 2015. The rally — devoted to the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory — gathered sportsmen from Belarus, Russia, Latvia, Lithuania and Finland.

Among the participants were some of the world's strongest jeep and truck crews, many having taken part in the Dakar Rally. In the T4 Truck category, MAZ, GAZ and KAMAZ entered crews, the latter being among the world's strongest teams using a natural gas powered vehicle.

'Baja' is of Spanish origin, being the name of the shortest rallies (in time and distance). Unlike the famous Dakar, where vehicles travel thousands of kilometres each week, Baja takes place in just three days, racing a loop of 500km. In Belarus, the Dretun former military field was used as the venue. This year, 22 off-road jeeps and five trucks took part. Participants are not acquainted with the track but speed is less important than teamwork and cars' technical abilities.

In the overall standings, the Moscow team of Vladimir Frolov and Kirill Shubin won, followed by Muscovites Andrey and Vladimir Novikovs. The Minsk team of Sergey Vyazovich, Pavel Garanin and Andrey Zhigulin (for MAZ-SPORTauto) came third. Russians Yevgeny Firsov and Vadim Filatov — driving a Toyota Hilux — were acknowledged as the best team.

Good result before European Championship

By Kirill Pirogov

Belarusian female basketballers take second place at tournament in memory of Khalipisky, hosted by Minsk Sports Palace

Belarus and Russia competed for gold, with the Russian national team winning — 66:78. Anatoly Buyalsky's squad took second place in the tournament in memory of Semyon Khalipisky. Meanwhile, Ukraine took bronze, after defeating the Romanians — 84:62.

From June 6th until June 9th, Belarus will play final friendly matches in Prague, against the national team of the Czech Republic. They'll then go to the continental championship, facing the national teams of Italy, Poland, Turkey and Greece in Group B, in the Romanian city of Oradea. The three best teams from



each group will go through to the next stage, divided into two sixes.

The four best teams from each sextet will then play in the final. The Championship of Europe is one of the selection stages for the 2016 Olympic Games, in Rio de Janeiro.



Ivan Maevsky

On football fields of Europe

By Yegor Glebov

Belarusian Andrey Gorbunov among top three goalkeepers in Greek championship, following regular season results, while Zawisza Bydgoszcz club's Ivan Maevsky leads race for title of best halfback in Polish championship

Andrey Gorbunov has played 23 games for his club, Atromitos, saving 18 goals. Also in the top three are Spain's Roberto Jiménez (playing for Greek champion Olympiacos FC) and Greece's Markos Vellidis (playing for PAS Giannina FC). Andrey's club has taken fifth place in the championship, giving it a place in the Champions League play-offs next season.

The native of Mogilev is surprised by the news, saying, "It's absolutely unexpected. After all, this is my first season playing in Greece. It's a great honour for me to be named among the top three goalkeepers in the championship. I'm delighted." Andrey signed a contract with Greek Atromitos in the summer of 2014, after dissolving his contract with BATE, as mutually agreed.

Belarusian player Ivan Maevsky, who plays with Zawisza Bydgoszcz club, looks set to be named best halfback in the Polish championship, according to Weszlo.com. He is also mentioned as being among those likely to be named best mercenary of the year, from current estimations.

Second at World Challenge Tournament

By Igor Grishin

Alina Talay takes silver in 100m hurdles at IAAF World Challenge stage, in Czech Ostrava

Ms. Talay's 12.78 second result was surpassed only by Sharika Nelvis of the USA (12.55 seconds) who beat the tournament's record, over one of the most prestigious distances. Britain's Tiffany Porter claimed bronze.

Alina set a personal record in her 100m hurdles, competing in Dutch Hengelo. The 4th stage of the Diamond League in Rome is her next tournament.

The Czech Republic (54th Ostrava Golden Spike) event saw a number of famous athletes participate, including Jamaica's Usain Bolt. His 200m time was the best time of the season, showing him back on form. Another 'star' representative of Jamaica, Asafa Powell, confidently won his favourite distance: the 100m.

Festival of the week



Representatives of 12 countries perform at 15th International Golden Bee Children's Creative Contest in Klimovichi

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

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

Until 8th June. *Contemporaries of Coryphaeuses*

Until 28th June. *I'm Simply in Remote Trip...*

Until 13th July. *Touch of Britain. 18th-19th Centuries British Art*

Until 31st July. *Art at Finger Tips*

Until 6th September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*

Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*

Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 9th June. *Exotic World*

Until 28th August. *Boletus: Beauty is their Family*

Peculiarity photo exhibition

Until 30th August. *The World of Big Parrots and Singing Birds*

MINSK CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street

Until 29th June. *From Me: exhibition by sculptor Vladimir Zhanov*

WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

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

NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

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

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

05.06. The Swan Lake; Portraits. Composers E. Kolmanovsky and A. Ostrovsky

08-09.06. Who Am I?

09.06. Musical Evenings at Bolshoi

Theatre: Admirers

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

08.06. Blue Cameo

09.06. The Bat

10.06. My Fair Lady

11.06. Shalom Aleichem!

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

05.06. The Black Lady of Nesvizh

07.06. Paulinka

08-09.06. The Seagull

10-11.06. Local Cabaret

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

05.06. Pane Kokhanku

06.06. Caught by the Net

07.06. He and She

09.06. Tricks of Khanuma

10.06. An Ideal Husband

11.06. Pesnyar

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

05 and 06.06. The Mechanical Man

07, 09 and 10.06. #13

11.06. Robbery at Midnight

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

08.06. Three Giselles

09.06. A Two Dogs' Tale; The Contract

10.06. Adel; The Sea Wolf

11.06. Mr. Joke; All Mice Like Circus

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

June of decades and centuries past comes to life

June 5th. In 1925, a Full Cavalier of the Order of Glory — Nikolay Belyaev — was born in the village of Kruglitsa, of the Bykhov District.

June 6th. In 1950, a Belarusian writer, playwright and an Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus — Alexey Dudarev — was born.

June 7th. In 1911, Fiodor Surganov was born — a state figure of the BSSR and an organiser and head of the Komsomol underground and Belarusian partisan movement. A Minsk street is named after him.

June 8th. In 1920, a military pilot, a Marshal of Aviation and a three time USSR Hero — Ivan Kozhedub — was born.

June 9th. In 1905, Nil Yemelyanov — an organiser and head of the partisan movement in the Minsk Region during the Great Patriotic War — was born in the village of Malashenki, of the Vitebsk Region's Gorodok District.

June 10th. In 1961, sculptor Igor Golubev was born in Vitebsk. He focuses on monumental and easel sculpture, creating monuments to Drozdovich and Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya.

June 11th. In 1925, Roman Vatin was born — a gymnastics coach and an Honoured Coach of Belarus and the USSR. In 1975, the BSSR gymnasts won the USSR Spartakiad of Nations and, since 1999, an All Around Cup and a Gymnastics Championship (to honour Mr. Vatin's memory) are held.



June 5th. In 1890, the Minsk City Theatre opened — now known as the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre.

June 6th. In 1833, construction of the Brest Fortress started.

June 6th. In 1921, the Belarusian Red Cross and Crescent Society was established.

June 6th. In 1962, the Belarusian Society of Nature Protec-

tion was established.

June 7th. In 1898, the first Belarusian electric tram was launched (in Vitebsk).

June 7th. In 1946, the Belarusian Theatrical Society was established — now known as the Belarusian Union of Theatrical Workers.

June 7th. In 1958, con-

struction of a refinery (now known as Naftan JSC) started. In addition, the city of Novopolotsk was established.

June 7th. In 1972, a monument to Yanka Kupala opened in Minsk's park (named after the poet) — to commemorate his 90th jubilee.

June 7th. In 1995, a new emblem and its provision were approved.

June 8th. In 1772, the Mogilev Province was established, centred in Mogilev. It acted until 1919.

June 8th. In 1934, Minsk hosted the 1st session of the BSSR writers and Belarus' Union of Writers was established.

June 8th. In 1978, one of Minsk's largest department stores — Belarus — opened in Partizanskaya Avenue.

June 8th. In 1998, the Akademicheskaya Kniga (Academic Book) company was set up — supervising a bookstore of the same name (in Minsk's 72 Nezavisimosti Avenue).

June 9th. In 1960, the Central State Archive of Belarusian Literature and Art was founded. Since May 2003, it's known as the Belarusian State Archive-Museum of Literature and Art.

June 9th. In 1996, a monument to Belarusian artist Byalynitsky-Birulya solemnly unveiled in Mogilev (sculptured by V. Letun).

June 10th. In 1956, the Zaslavl water reservoir (Minsk Sea) officially opened. Yunost spa and camps for amateur fishermen are situated on its bank, alongside sanatoriums, private cottages and children's camps.