

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

ISSN 1991-2978



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 04 (674) ● THURSDAY, JANUARY 26, 2017 ● WWW.SB.BY



Anastasia Korobchuk is one of those who restore Slutsk sashes

City with 900-year history known for its Slutsk sashes → 7

Having studied the secrets of weavers' mastery and the artistic peculiarities of sashes and materials used in the 18th century, a Slutsk company has restored unique Slutsk sash manufacturing technology

Friendship that is directed to the future

By Vasily Kharitonov

On behalf of himself and the Belarusian people, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, extended greetings to Chinese President Xi Jinping and the friendly people of China on the 25th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the People's Republic of China

“Over the past 25 years Belarus and China have made great headway in the development of bilateral co-

operation based on the principles of equality and respect for each other,” he noted. “We are proud that Belarus and China enjoy true allied status. The two countries have reached an unprecedentedly high level of trust, based on a comprehensive and strategic partnership and mutual collaboration.” Mr. Lukashenko expressed confidence that the dialogue between Belarus and China would continue developing, gradually including new areas of interaction.

“We see great prospects in strengthening investment co-operation, intensifying direct ties between

regions. Belarus will continue doing its best to contribute to the effective implementation of the One Belt, One Road initiative and the construction of the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park, seen as a pivot and a ‘pearl’ of the Silk Road Economic Belt project”, reads the letter of greeting.

The President is confident that the anniversary year will go down in history as a year of fruitful bilateral relations, intensive cultural exchange, new contacts, ideas and areas of collaboration.

On behalf of the Chinese people,

the President of China, Xi Jinping, also extended greetings to Alexander Lukashenko on the 25th anniversary of diplomatic relations. The greeting reads that the Belarusian and Chinese nations enjoy long-standing friendship. At present, relations have been steadily developing, with the level of bilateral co-operation consistently improving. “The two countries enjoy strong political trust and provide staunch support to each other on matters of mutual interest,” noted the Chinese President. “With the One Belt, One Road project in progress, the two countries maintain



pragmatic and fruitful interaction in various spheres. The two countries also maintain close contacts and co-operate closely on the international arena.”

Xi Jinping believes that the Chinese-Belarusian relations set a model of interstate liaison and play an important role in contributing to regional and international stability and peace.

Partners have many far-reaching plans

By Vladimir Khromov

China and Belarus are close friends and partners, noted the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Cui Qiming, speaking at a solemn event, marking the 25th anniversary since the establishment of Belarusian-Chinese diplomatic relations

“Belarus and China established their diplomatic relations on January 20th, 1992. Over the past 25 years, our countries have been providing each other with mutual assistance and support in protecting national independence, sovereignty and territorial integrity, in developing the economy and improving the quality of life of the Belarusian and Chinese people and in promoting international justice and peace in the world,” stressed the diplomat. “China and Belarus are close friends and sincere partners who are always ready to help each other.”

According to him, at present, the dynamics of the bilateral exchanges and co-operation is significantly higher than at any other previous moment in the history of the bilateral relationships.

Mr. Qiming believes that Chinese-Belarusian ties are a good example of inter-state relations in the modern world. He mentioned some of the most important milestones and achievements in the 25-year history of diplomatic relations. The high level of mutual political trust is one of them. “The two countries maintain close ties, and the co-operation mechanism is constantly improving. In their relations, Belarus and China follow the principles of equality and sovereignty,” underlined the Chinese diplomat.

The head of the Chinese diplomatic mission pointed out that ‘China is now Belarus’ third largest trading partner and the structure of bilateral trade is constantly improving’. Both states successfully implement projects in such areas as power engineering, electrification of railroads, road reconstruction, production of concrete, assembly of vehicles and trade in different goods.

Mr. Qiming paid special attention to the project to build the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. He added that co-operation between the two countries is growing stronger. Many Chinese provinces have established friendship or twinning ties with Belarusian regions and drawn up a roadmap for China-Belarus regional co-operation. The Ambassador believes that the development of the Silk Road Economic Belt opens up new opportunities for bilateral co-operation.

Cui Qiming also stressed the importance of cultural, educational and humanitarian projects between Belarus and China such as the two countries’ cultural centres in Minsk and Beijing.



Cui Qiming

Border is a broad issue

The President noted that, last year, the border protection issue was discussed twice at top level. “The practical operation of border protection agencies was checked. The President will pay close attention to the performance of all military agencies, including border protection units as a priority. You should get used to it. Attention is drawn to these issues for a reason,” notes Alexander Lukashenko.

By Alexander Pimenov

In his words, a complicated international situation, the escalation of the terrorist threat in the world, illegal migration and the distribution of drugs and weapons force us to do our utmost to enhance the protection of Belarusian borders. “We can’t relax and hope that there will be fewer threats to our border security in the near future,” asserted the President.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that many issues concerning the state border and the operation of border protection agencies are solved virtually every day. The state regularly allocates necessary funds for the material support of border guards. “Of course, no agency has said that there is enough money yet. We need to look for other solutions as far as infrastructure development and the protection of the state border is concerned,” he said.

New control and surveillance complexes have been installed at the border, with Belarus liaising with the European Union in this area. “Of course, this co-operation could be more comprehensive. We are responsible for the



PAVEL CHUIKO

protection of the European Union from illegal migration, the drug trade and human trafficking. It is also a valuable source of income for us,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

The President remarked that ordinary citizens living in border regions also traditionally make a big contribution to the protection of the border.

The Head of State also tackled optimisation efforts in border protection agencies. He said

that their personnel numbers are rather small today. “However, we must think about the redistribution of personnel. Fewer people are needed in institutes, central and other administrative bodies, more people should serve at the border,” he said.

Mr. Lukashenko wanted to be informed about the situation at the state border and about pending issues in this field. He asked about the efforts to facilitate

On patrol on the country’s western border

border crossing at border checkpoints, the measures to maintain order in the border zone and near-border territories. The President also focused on the professional advancement of the military and on the creation of optimal living and service conditions for personnel.

Mr. Lukashenko has approved resolution on the protection of the state border of Belarus by border guard services in 2017.

The whole region looks promising

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus hopes to secure its foothold in the markets of Nicaragua and the neighbouring states of Central America, as discussed during the working visit of the Belarusian delegation, headed by Belarus’ Deputy Foreign Minister, Yevgeny Shestakov, to Nicaragua

Mr. Shestakov has met with Laureano Ortega, Special Advisor to the President

of Nicaragua for Investments, Orlando Solorzano, Minister of Development, Industry and Commerce, Luis Molina Cuadra, Nicaraguan Deputy Foreign Minister for Eastern Europe and Central Asia, and Guillermo Gonzalez, National Director of the National Disaster Prevention Agency. The two sides discussed a wide range of issues for bilateral co-operation in trade-economic and other areas, as well as collaboration in preventing

natural emergencies. Special attention was paid to a mutual exchange of visits between official delegations and businessmen in 2017, and further expansion of the legal framework of bilateral relations.

Prospects for securing a foothold for the products of Belarusian leading producers in the markets of Nicaragua and the neighbouring countries in the Central American region were discussed during the visit to Autos Alemanes,

the company advancing Belarusian tractors, tyres and other high-technology products to other markets.

Furthermore, the Belarusian delegation also took part in the inaugural swearing-in ceremony of Nicaraguan President Daniel Ortega. Yevgeny Shestakov held a brief conversation with the Nicaraguan Head of State to discuss the current state of affairs and prospects for bilateral relations.

Open and positive meeting

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, arrives in Sudan on an official visit

By Vasily Kharitonov

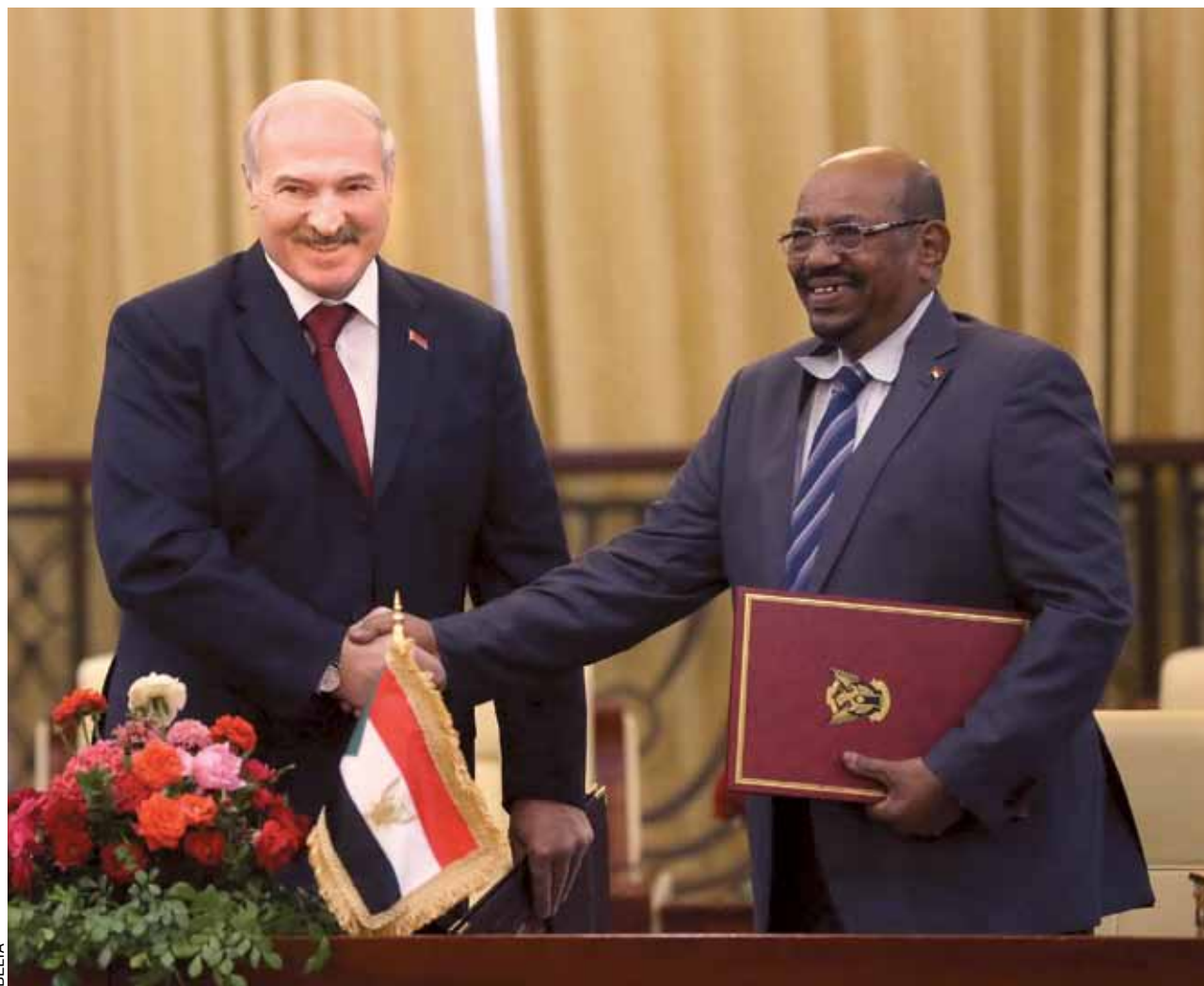
In the Sudanese capital, Alexander Lukashenko held talks with President Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir, with the two sides agreeing to develop co-operation between both states across a whole range of areas, including trade, industry, agriculture and interaction in the humanitarian sphere. A treaty has been signed confirming friendly relations and co-operation between Belarus and Sudan, in addition to a whole range of other international documents.

In Khartoum, the President of Belarus met the Vice-President of Sudan, Hassabo Abdel-Rahman and the Chairman of the National Assembly, Ibrahim Omer.

The Belarusian Head of State spoke in front of deputies of both chambers of the Sudanese Parliament where he outlined details of the advantages of co-operation with Belarus and the outcome of negotiations at top level, while sharing his opinions on acute issues of Belarusian-Sudanese relations.

The capital of Sudan also hosted the Belarusian-Sudanese business forum which resulted in a range of contracts being signed and provisional agreements being reached.

During the official negotiations with the President of Belarus, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir expressed his hopes



Alexander Lukashenko and Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir after signing documents

for the successful continuation of collaboration. The President of Sudan noted that, after his visit to Belarus in 2004, the two sides have launched joint activity across a range of areas. “Since then we’ve signed many agreements and much work has been conducted at the level of ministries and departments, as well as significant development of business dialogue.”

While talking to mass media after the negotiations, Omar Hassan Ahmad al-Bashir stressed that Belarus is a good partner of Sudan. He thanked the Belarusian side for its assistance with developing a variety of different projects and branches of the economy. “I’m thankful to Alexander Lukashenko for it. Despite the distance between

our countries joint operations will be developed without any restrictions. We will continue co-operation in technology and other areas. We will see concrete results within two years or three at the outside.” added the Sudanese President.

The agenda of the official visit of the President to Sudan also included a speech at the Sudanese Parliament. The Head of State told Sudanese MPs about the place of Belarus in the modern world, foreign policy priorities and the development prospects at a national level and in bilateral relations with Sudan.

The Sudanese side has shown great interest in this event, and the audience broke into applause several times. Alexander Lukashenko spoke about:

The value of peace

The President underlined that Belarusians are aware of the value of peace and this understanding lies in the basis of modern approaches of the country towards foreign policy. “We’re building it on the principles of multi-vector nature, peacefulness, co-operation and mutual respect,” noted Mr. Lukashenko.

Modern Belarus

“We believe that innovation, science, and technology are the key to the future. Belarus has made great progress in the development of nuclear energy, space exploration and biotechnology. The achievements of Belarusian software engineers are recognised worldwide. Belarus is ahead of many countries in

terms of the export of computer services per capita due to the graduates of our universities,” he said. “Belarus is also one of the leaders in the development of medicine and the availability of healthcare services. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that a lot is being done to make Belarus one of the most successful and strongest countries in Europe.”

The role of the state in the economy

“The development of international contacts is one of the most important state priorities for Belarus because of the openness of its economy. “We cannot stand still amid the tough competition for markets and resources in the modern world. Therefore,

the state is actively involved in economic affairs, and we have faced criticism for it in the past,” Mr. Lukashenko explained. “Today we are no longer criticised, many countries are using our experience. Time has shown that the decisions were right. All leading countries shouldn’t give up on rational state support for national companies in their own countries and abroad.”

Goals of the visit

“It’s no secret that we have come to our Sudanese friends to, first, advance economic co-operation,” asserted the President. “Belarus is an open export-oriented country. It is very important for us to enhance a relationship based on trust and friendship. Our partners know that we have never let anyone down. We will not let you down either.”

According to the Head of State, Sudan is an important partner of Belarus in the Arab world. The two sides confirmed their interest in advancing liaisons to a new level with the economic and technological potential of the two countries. Belarus and Sudan signed an interstate agreement on friendly relations and co-operation.

Prospects

According to the President, much can and should be done to expand bilateral collaboration. There are several promising areas for joint work. Belarus is eager to promote its technologies in Sudan and set up ventures to cover the entire spectrum of Belarusian equipment. “We can do everything based on science and advanced technologies. You are now experiencing the same things we were going through some time ago. We are here to support you through this time.”

‘Abolishment of visas doesn’t mean abolishment of border control’

By Alexey Fedosov

According to Alexander Lukashenko, the introduction of the five-day visa-free travel rules for citizens of 80 countries that enter Belarus via Minsk National Airport poses no risks for Belarus and its neighbouring states

“The document was in development for a year and a half. It was thoroughly reviewed by all the govern-

ment agencies, first of all, in terms of the potential risks it may pose for Belarus, our partners and neighbours,” noted the Head of State.

Alexander Lukashenko drew attention to the campaign that had unfolded in the mass media. “Sometimes I am surprised as I read these comments. These people either do not understand the essence of the document or stir up tension deliberately. The abolition of visas does not mean cancellation of

border control. It will remain in place,” asserted the Belarusian Head of State. “The traveller’s identity will always be checked. As in Russia: you show your passport and have it checked with a computer. If everything is fine, you can enter the country for five days. If there are any problems, the computer will show it right away.”

“Indignant complaints from some neighbouring countries are just an attempt to demonstrate the dissat-

isfaction of certain parties. We have not violated anything from the standpoint of our domestic legislation. We act within our sovereign rights. We have not broken any agreements with other countries,” stressed the Belarusian leader.

“We follow all our agreements to the letter. If our move has caused concern to Russia, I say: I wish your border guards served as well as the Belarusian ones do. You need to work hard to



At Minsk National Airport

reach the level of control ensured on the Belarusian border,” added Mr. Lukashenko. “They should accept this calmly and focus on their own issues. I understand

why they are doing it. Even though it took a year and a half to develop the document and get it approved by all our neighbours, including Russia.”

Plastic cards becoming increasingly popular

Development of non-cash payments is a significant strategic task and considerable progress has already been made

By Valeria Gavrusheva

Belarusians possess around 12.7m bank payment cards and the popularity of this form of payment is increasing: in early 2010, slightly more than half of all transactions were related to cash withdrawals and at present, this figure is around 20 percent. In six and a half years, the number of cash transactions has decreased from 86.9 to 63.2 percent. An expert from the BEROE Economic Research Centre, Anastasia Luzgina, explains, "One of the most important conditions for promotion of non-cash payments is the creation of infrastructure. Like anywhere in the world, people are not always willing to accept new payment methods. Therefore, it is important to create an environment to ensure comfortable cashless payments."

At present, there are 240,000 cash registers in the Republic, with about 137,000 terminals and this figure will continue to grow. This year, the terms of terminal equipment connections are expiring for legal entities: from April 1st — in cities of regional subordination and Minsk, from July 1st — in cities



Belarusians possess around 12.7m bank payment cards and the popularity of this form of payment is increasing: in early 2010, slightly more than half of all transactions were related to cash withdrawals and at present, this figure is around 20 percent

of district subordination, and from October 1st — throughout the country. Individual entrepreneurs have more time left: February 1st, 2018 is the deadline for cities of regional subordination and Minsk, on May 1st, 2018 — in cities of district subordination, and on August 1st — across the country. Businessmen will be fined for failure to comply with the legal requirements: legal entities for the sum from 10 to 200 basic units (Br230-4,600), individual entrepreneurs — up to 100 base units (Br2,300).

One more important aspect is that following the National Bank requirements, starting from 2017, connection of equipment which doesn't support contactless payment will cease. However, this only refers to new terminals; there's no need to replace operational equipment. Contactless plastic cards have already been produced for several years; these ensure payments by simply placing a card close to the terminal — which takes a couple of seconds. There are around 1.67m such cards in the country but only 25,000 payment terminals support this form.

Ms. Luzgina notes, "The National Bank pursues a consistent policy regarding the development of non-cash payments. Equipping trade and service spheres with terminals is the right direction. If a person knows that they can pay with a card anywhere, they have less incentive to withdraw cash. In recent years, we've made progress in this field but much work still lies ahead: for example, to ensure the reception of cards in vending machines with food and drinks — being able to pay with non-cash even for minor purchases."

Big plans

By Nikolay Averkov

New resident company registered with Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park

The new resident company is SAS Industrial Ltd, established by the Zhejiang Yongkang Hongfu Manufacturing and Trading Co. Ltd (PRC). The Chinese company intends to implement an investment project to start manufacturing heat radiators made of cast aluminium, as well as heat radiators made of steel and aluminium.

The investment project will be implemented in two stages. Construction is expected to begin in 2017, with projected investments of \$6m. The second stage will be carried out in 2018-2020 and will attract \$10m in investments. Once the enterprise has reached the designed output capacity, it will be able to make 8 million heat radiators per annum. Initially the company will create 70-80 jobs but will eventually reach a total of 180 jobs.

Good start to continue

By Katerina Charovskaya

Major investment project with Lithuanian capital realised in Lida District: high-tech complex for turkey breeding and processing put into operation

Chairman of the Board of the Lithuanian ARVI Group, an investor and millionaire — Vidmantas Kucinskas — spoke of his experience of co-operation with our country, "Everything is similar to the European Union regarding taxation and the maturity of legislation. The idea and the money for the project's realisation are ours — Lithuanian. However, the plant is now being transferred to Belarusian specialists who have proved that their professionalism rivals their western colleagues."

Realisation of the 30m Euro investment contract was launched in 2012 when the Grodno Regional Executive Committee and foreign Arvibelagro signed an agreement on construction of a complex for the industrial production of turkey meat. The result of this co-operation is evident: a modern high-tech production is now operational. It's now able to produce 5,000 tonnes of meat annually. In the future, three-shift production is to be launched, with the number of employees rising to 200.

During the recent opening ceremony, the Aide to the President — Chief Inspector for the Grodno Region, Sergey Rovneiko, noted that the event confirmed Belarus' openness to co-operation. "I would like the enterprise we are launching to become a point of attraction for other investors: those who are now exploring the possibility of investing in our country."

Black gold is discovered in field

Belarus opens new high-quality oil deposit

By Artem Zubrov

It has taken three years of work, dozens of expeditions in the open field (a half-hour ride by jeep to the nearest village) and modern 3D-seismic devices to discover the Ugolskoe mine in the Gomel Region. 1.7m tonnes of oil have been found at a depth of over 5,000 metres. One extension well is now on the surface mining up to 40 tonnes of the black gold per day. Local oil is in fact, not black but light brown. According to experts, this is an indicator of quality. They even joke that it could be put straight into a tractor tank. This means that less money will be spent on its processing and the mining of it is simpler.

"The production process is cheaper because of the high reservoir pressure underground enabling the well to operate as self-flowing, therefore, no additional mechanised mining methods are needed," explained Olga Smeyan, from the Belarusian Oil Research and Design Institute, BelNIPIneft.

Oil companies say that there are certainly other deposits close to Ugolskoe and exploration continues in the area. While these are yet to be discovered, 60 mines are already operational in Belarus, producing 1.6m tonnes of oil annually. Belarusian specialists work not only at home: Belorusneft is now developing six mines in the Russian Yamal-Nenets Autonomous District. Local depos-



Oil production operator Oleg Markovich

its will be enough for several years of production; according to specialists, there are around 40m tonnes of oil underground. Additionally, since

2007, a joint Belarusian-Venezuelan enterprise has operated, developing seven oil and six gas fields in Latin America.

Plenty is no plague

Belarus has replenished its coffers and is now expanding its sales markets

By Vasily Malashenkov

According to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations (FAO), Belarus is one of the most trouble-free countries in the world in terms of provision of food safety. To achieve this high accolade, Belarusian agrarian workers had to work hard. And though the country was not subject to product sanctions, the climate remained the severe enemy of villagers. As scientists say, Belarus is a zone of unstable agriculture. Each year is different, and the harvest cannot be planned. Pessimists have always asserted that the agriculture of Belarus is a burden on the state budget, and investing money into the agrarian and industrial complex is tantamount to digging money into the soil.

Accommodation lures people into villages

After the collapse of the USSR and a long period of turbulence in the Belarusian economy, it was necessary to improve and develop agriculture. Since the mid-90's, the authorities have supported villages in various ways, with grants and preferential loans for agricultural enterprises. This policy was repeatedly criticised even though grant-aid is common in European agriculture. In Germany, 600 Euros are allocated for every hectare of farmland, while in Belarus this figure in 2014 was about 100 Euros. Regardless of the money, personnel are the essential element in the development of farming. "Presidential houses" was the name given to the cottages which appeared in agro-towns in the early 21st century. Houses with utility lines and landscaped gardens allowed people to see rural life differently and to stay to work on the land. "In 1996-2000, we solved the problem of food safety and fed the population. In 2001-2005, we increased manufacturing and entered foreign markets," recollected the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko.

During the last decade, the country invested in innovations in the agro-industrial complex. Automated farms and storehouses appeared and thanks to the state programme of revival and development of villages it was possible to construct almost one and a half thousand agro-towns.



BELTA



PAVEL CHUIKO



VLADIMIR SHLAPAK



Nikolay RADOMAN:

A member of the Council of the Republic and head of the most successful Belarusian agricultural company Agrokombinat Snov, Nikolay Radoman says, "Belarus has no problems with food stocks. The question is how to sell goods, and to have added value at the expense of exports. We are working on the geographical expansion of deliveries. It is difficult to compete with Germany and Switzerland where agrarian workers receive huge grants of 600 Euros for each hectare, but we do not complain, we carry on regardless."

The main consequence of these village reforms however, was that the country has not only replenished its coffers but also secured a foothold in the world market of 63 countries.

There is a dairy lake!

Today the share of agriculture in the GDP is approximately 7-8 percent. For comparison, in the European Union it is just 3 percent.

In 2015, the country was in 3rd place in the world for butter exports. It is one of the results of long-term work. Now only the European Union and New Zealand are ahead of us — both serious players in the dairy market.

Domestic enterprises produce 743kg of milk per capita, three times more than the norm. Surpluses are delivered to foreign markets — about 70 percent of the milk made in the country. Each year Belarus earns hundreds of millions of Dollars on the export of dairy products, and other foodstuffs.

Similarly, the meat market of Belarus is considered the most advanced in the CIS by volume. 26 large meat-processing plants and 450 enterprises in various forms of ownership are engaged in meat processing.

"The problem of food safety in the quantitative plan was solved during re-

alisation of the programme of the revival and development of villages. Now Belarus fully complies with the requirements for foodstuffs. More than thirty products made in the country are exported. It is a planned surplus," says Chairman of Presidium of National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Vladimir Gusakov.

There is no meal without bread

In 2014, there was record productivity of grain crops in



BELTA

Belarus of 9.1 million tonnes. But people say that Belarus is a country of unstable agriculture: there can be drought or torrential rains, hailstones, and the harvest may be ruined. Food safety regulations also insist that fields and plants are processed according to advanced technologies

OFFICIALLY

From the Concept of Belarus' National Food Safety:

'Complexities in the foodstuffs market are aggravated. Food manufacturing is slowly increasing in features of food safety. This requires a co-ordinated policy and joint practical actions of the world community. But this is unlikely to happen at a global level in the immediate future. Each country, including Belarus, has to solve the problem of foodstuffs on the basis of its own manufacture with maximum guarantees of safety.'

against weeds and diseases, in order that the seed fund was not only elite from the point of view of productivity, but also cold-resistant and resistant to drops in temperature. Several scientific research institutes are working on this.

The use of new varieties yielded fruit. The country has become an exporter of grain crops on a small scale. In the 2015-2016 'trading' year, according to FAO, deliveries abroad amounted to about half a million tonnes.

Sanctions have not become a barrier

The European Union and the USA introduced sanctions in relation to a variety of Belarusian companies and citizens in 2006. They did not concern deliveries of foodstuffs directly, but affected the interests of large business, complicated inflow of investments and the development of new technologies.

Sanctions became one of the indirect reasons which gave a boost to the development of manufacturing of agricultural machinery. Today the country produces machinery of high quality in such quantity which makes it possible not only to provide for our own crops, but also to deliver machinery for export.

Winter swimming

How a family from Minsk gets rid of various diseases in winter ice-hole

By Olga Kosyakova

Winter swimming is in full swing. The Director of the Republican Centre for Polar Research — Igor Pilshchikov — and his wife Lyudmila are many-year winter swimmers.

Not long ago, their younger daughter Ellina joined, while senior daughter Stanislava continues tempering herself against colds on the shore — admiring the success of her relatives. Our reporter has met Minsk's 'walruses' to understand how tempering can help change the life and improve health.

This was Lyudmila who inspired Igor to dip into an ice-hole. She annually swam on the Epiphany, in Logoisk's holy spring. Meanwhile, it took some time for Igor to join. "However, on a certain moment, I was 'infected' with my wife's mood. That was eight years ago. I was initially shocked but then began plunging annually on the holiday. My friend also joined and, one day, we decided to go to the Tsna every Saturday. Later, we changed it for Komsomolskoe Lake. We are tempering regularly for two years. Winter water is harder than summer: it chills and squeezes. It's important to get over oneself," he says.

In the past, Igor perceived winter as a long pause but this is now the time filled with the sense. When cold days come, the man puts his bicycle aside (which he uses to get to work in the warm season) and takes Nordic walking sticks. He daily passes thirteen kilometres, explaining, "After my working hours, I take the sticks and go to the lake. On coming out of water, the

head gets covered with ice. It's truly cold but adrenaline is released into the blood. Fever starts. As a result, anyone can swim up to 25 metres in icy water without any preparation."

Speaking about Nordic walking sticks, Igor notes, "I was observing people with sticks for a long time and then decided to try. After first two weeks of walking, I felt regret that I had failed to join earlier. Such walking evokes the feeling of fullness of life. You are sharing the energy which is then returning to you. A person needs physical exercise; otherwise, they'll languish. Therefore, I also attend a swimming pool."

In addition, Igor participates in winter swimming competitions. He's created the Penta team which regularly leads at national tournaments. "It's entitled Penta since mostly pentathletes are among its members. I also went into modern pentathlon in the past and my daughters have taken this sport baton," he adds.

Actually, there are no 'former' sportsmen. Mr. Pilshchikov is always happy with winter since the season creates a rich life layer. "Winter swimming is a sport uniting people of all ages. We are competing a high level and, in a certain extent, it prolongs the sporting youth and longevity. We have a good team, with everyone supporting each other. We won seven medals at the Jelgava competition," Igor says.

The man demonstrates a video featuring 12 year old Ellina plunging into an ice-hole. It's truly exciting to

observe but the girl overcomes the resistance of water which is freezing her body and fights against her organism's reaction. "She's a fighter," her father proudly admits.

Ellina turned to winter swimming

following the example of a boy. Igor's daughter came to a winter swimming competition to see a 12 year old swimmer among the participants. Ilya surprised and encouraged her as this was his first swimming in ice-cold water. Ellina then said, "Daddy, I want to do the same — taking part in competitions." The girl kept to her words and, after several training sessions, she was among the winners of a winter swimming competition.

"Rather than swallowing pills, it is

better to plunge into cold water. Sometimes, you might view this as a punishment but — on plunging — the moods skyrocket!" Igor adds. Actually, the man realised the importance of healthy lifestyle after being on the edge of the death. He had serious health problems. "It took much time to recover. I was operated on and then needed to follow a special strict diet. After the complete recovery I began swimming. I already have tempering and, by now, have forgotten of previous disease. Moreover, I'm less subject to colds now."

Lions have no complaints

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Minsk Zoo registers new additions to the king of beasts: a pair of five-month-old white lions — Nick and Nika — who now live in a spacious new enclosure, opposite the reptile house

The 'cubs — presented by Armenia — behave like playful kittens and appear resistant to our cold weather, despite loving heat. Their new home is heated and even the shelves on an artificial rock are warmed. "As they are not related, we hope to breed from them in the future," said the Acting Head of the Zoo's Technical Department, Tatiana Ilyasova-Kononova. "The possibility of getting lions of this rare colour was a surprise to us. How could we refuse? So far, a well-fed and happy pride of lions — a male and two females — already live at our zoo."

These large cats are fed with lean beef (each receives 5kg daily), eggs, milk and cottage cheese. In the natural environment, predators will eat more at once but, in a zoo, animals move little and, accordingly, need a controlled diet. As for future plans, Minsk Zoo plans to receive South American vicunas from Russia. These hoofed animals resemble llamas but have long necks. They will be presented as part of the programme of rare animal breeding in captivity.



Igor Pilshchikov with his wife Lyudmila and daughter Ellina



Igor Pilshchikov in the ice-hole

World threat from super-bacteria

An elderly woman recently died from sepsis at a US clinic. While travelling to India, she injured her leg and, on feeling unwell, consulted the doctor who concluded that she was infected with a rare bacterium which cannot be cured with any available antibiotics. American doctors worked hard but failed to find a cure: none of the 26 antibacterial drugs permitted in the country worked. The WHO has already declared the Klebsiella bacterium 'an urgent threat to human health'.

By Inna Kabysheva

According to the US Centre for Disease Prevention, no mcr-1 gene was detected in the microorganisms. This gene makes super-bacteria resistant to colistin: the 'last hope' antibiotics which produce serious side effects. Moreover, the autopsy revealed that the bacteria strain was not resistant to fosfo-

mycin: the latter is not permitted in the USA but is used in some European countries.

"In Belarus, fosfomycin is used very rarely: this is not a first-line antibiotic," explains the Head of the Department of Clinical Pharmacology at the Belarusian State Medical University, Doctor of Medical Sciences and Professor — Alexander Khapalyuk. "However, some bacteria may

be insensitive to it as well: in my practice, I've seen resistance to 16 different antibiotics in an oncological patient, suffering from Pseudomonas aeruginosa. It is a serious problem. Many believe it occurs as antibiotics are prescribed too freely. Is it better to prescribe a drug without a solid diagnosis or to allow an infection time to develop? The topic is hotly debated, in my view, the use



of antibiotics in agriculture must be limited first."

Scientists have repeatedly announced that the probability of antibiotic-resistant bacteria rise is higher in India and China where these drugs are widely used. Moreover, colistin is widespread in China, although the WHO has recommended limits to its use as much as possible.

Wonderful city with glorious nine-hundred-year history

Five reasons to visit Slutsk

By Kristina Khilko

The city — which celebrated its 900th anniversary last year — was named after the Sluch River. These days, it is narrower and less as deep: no longer the major trade route it was. Decades ago, merchant boats — loaded with fabrics and furs — cruised from afar.



PAVEL CHUIKO

Monument to Sofia Slutskaya

City from *Tale of Bygone Years*

In the *Tale of Bygone Years*, Slutsk is mentioned as being in the Turov Principality. Archaeologists have proven that, at those times, it was a wooden village surrounded by a palisade and a deep ditch. In the 17th and 18th centuries, it lived a European life — inspired by the well-known Radziwill magnates. Apart from factories and manufacturing workshops, they erected buildings which continue to form the city skyline.

Slutsk gymnasium, founded by Janusz Radziwill in 1617, has a stark silhouette, lacking embellishment. It's amazing in its simplicity. It is still attended by schoolchildren, being the oldest school in the country.

Walking through Slutsk, don't fail to stop by the House of Nobility Assembly. Just imagine: for almost two centuries, until 1917, it gathered local nobility to sign important agreements, as well as to dance

at balls, and so on. It now houses the Local History Museum, which is a 'must' for tourists to learn more about the city's secrets.

Weave a Slutsk sash

In 1757, a loom (a novelty at the time) was smuggled from Istanbul for Duke Radziwill, and the production of silk sashes launched in Slutsk. Only men were allowed to handle this technological miracle, it being said that the silk threads would fade if touched by female hands.

Domestic weavers began introducing local patterns to fashionable oriental ornaments and the result was impressive: Slutsk sashes gained global recognition. Luxurious sashes, containing up to 100g of gold and silver threads became a symbol of wealth.



BELTA

At the History Museum of Slutsk Sashes



BELTA

One sash uses approximately 1,200 gold, silver and silk threads

There were even four-sided sashes, tied to show gold and red on festive occasions

Slutsk sashes were marked 'SLUCK' or 'SLUCIAE' but were still forged, often in France and Austria.

Belarusian Joan of Arc

Duchess Anastasia Slutskaya's life resembles a legend. She was born in the Mstislavl District and, at the age of 18, was married to local Duke Semen. Their marital happi-

ness failed to last long as, in 1505, Tartars attacked the Principality. Apart from wars and destruction, medieval epidemics were common. The Duke bravely defended his lands but failed to gain victory over disease.

When the city was on the verge of capture by the enemy, people hid in the castle and prepared for the worst. It seemed that only a miracle could save them. Anastasia was that miracle. She put on the armour of her deceased husband, took his

sword and led the townspeople to fight. The enemy left with nothing. In 2003, Belarusfilm presented the historical drama *Anastasia Slutskaya* — known as our Belarusian Joan of Arc, focusing on the Duchess' life and destiny. A monument to her was erected in the city centre — which is now a favourite place for wedding photographs.

Praying to St. Sofia

Sofia Slutskaya is an Orthodox saint and a patroness of Orthodoxy. Her holy relics rest in Minsk's Holy Spirit Cathedral.

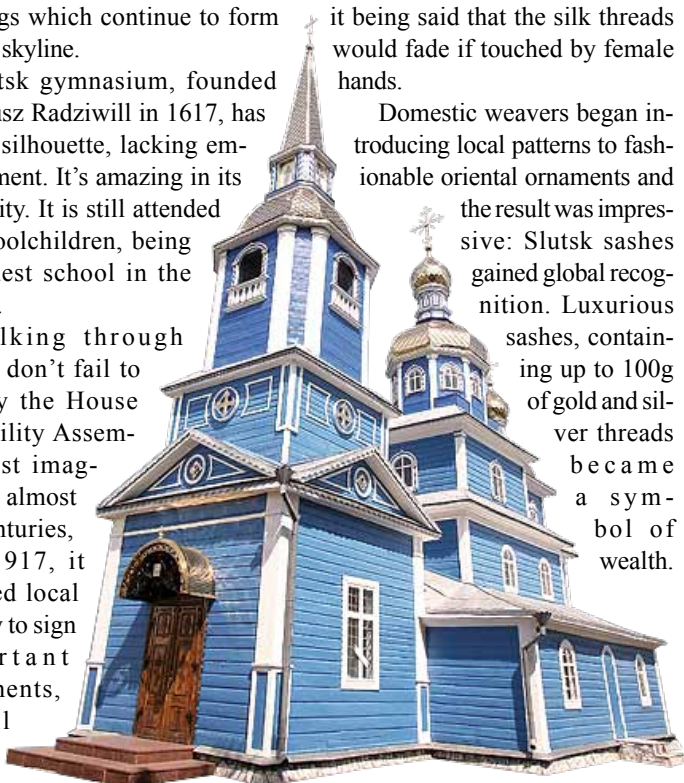
In 1596, the church Unia with Rome was established in the Rzecz Pospolita, to accept the Catholic doctrine. Sofia persuaded her husband to procure a charter from the king of Poland, which prohibited her nationals from changing Faith. Slutsk was the only city within the Grand Duchy of Lithuania where Orthodoxy ruled.

Sofia built Pokrovsky Church, personally embroidering heavy gold-thread priestly vestments. She lived only until the age of 26, dying in childbirth, and was buried at the church convent.

After Sofia's death, miracles began to happen near her tomb. It is believed that the city was saved from cholera in 1847 owing to a procession of her relics. The saint is worshipped by Belarusians as the patroness of women preparing to become mothers.

Listen to the nightingale's song

Ornithology is among the most fashionable hobbies in Europe. Professionals and amateurs travel thousands of kilometres to observe birds and their migration. The most vociferous nightingales live near Slutsk. Those who fail to believe should come in May, when every lilac bush is alive with birdsong. This small bird is a symbol of the city, which even has its own Nightingale Museum, where birdsong recordings can be listened to at any time.



St. Nicholas Church — a wooden architectural monument



SERGEI PLYKOVICH

A bird's eye view of modern Slutsk

Trump's inauguration: no impeachment yet, but already a boycott

Protests erupt in US and Europe for Donald Trump inauguration

Donald Trump takes up the presidential mantle in inauguration speech

"I Donald John Trump do solemnly swear that I will faithfully execute the office of President of the United States, and will to the best of my ability, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution of the United States. So help me God."

With the traditional 35-word sentence uttered America has its 45th president, and the reign of Donald Trump has properly begun. Central Washington is packed out with crowds for the occasion, who applauded Trump's keynote statements. He said there was no room for prejudice in American patriotism, and that citizens were now joined in a national effort to rebuild the country. From now on, he promised, it would be 'America first'.

Best pussyhat forward as America's Women prepare to defy Trump

Washington police reported many arrests as thousands of agitators determined to mark Donald Trump's inauguration with protests. Masked and black-clad anarchists clashed with police lines less than a mile from where Trump stood to take the oath of office. Corporate



symbols were targeted as Starbucks and Bank of America were vandalised. Groups also linked arms to prevent trump supporters gaining the parade area, at times bringing the two camps dangerously close. Police kept them separated to prevent more violence. Washington

was not the only venue for protests as anti-Trump crowds took to the streets in cities across America.

Donald Trump protests held across Europe

Rejection of Donald Trump has not only been expressed in Ameri-

ca. In Europe and around the world his arrival in the White House was often greeted with anger. In the EU capital Brussels women led the protests, anxious at the signals his victory has sent out.

"The rights that have been acquired through years and years of

struggle throughout the fights of our grandparents, our grandmothers, are now under attack. The space also of participation, for example I work with a civil society organisation, even the will to participate is shrinking. Look at what's happening in Europe. People cannot even peacefully demonstrate in the streets. I'm so glad that today we can have this demonstration. Maybe tomorrow it will not be the case," said one woman. In Berlin Greenpeace were prominent underlying the threat they believe Trump represents for the environment.

Thousands of people across Europe have taken part in a global day of protests against new US President Donald Trump. In London, around 5,000 demonstrators gathered outside the American Embassy to promote women's and human rights.

Protesters say women's rights are under threat from the new US administration. There was a similar scene in Paris, with organisers claiming some 10,000 protesters had hit the streets of the French capital. In total, more than 600 rallies were expected to take place as part of a global day of action against President Trump, on his first full day in office.



Record for hottest year broken once more in 2016

2016 was the hottest year on record — that is according to data compiled by NASA and the World Meteorological Organisation

It is the third year in a row that temperatures have hit a record high creeping closer to a ceiling set by the 2015 Paris climate change deal. Average global surface temperatures in 2016 were 0.83 degree Celsius above a long-term average of 14 degrees Celsius from 1961-1990, according to the UN-affiliated World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), based in Geneva.

Scientists say the El Niño weather phenomenon played a role, but the main factor was human emissions of CO2. The NASA findings were announced by environmentalist and former US Vice President Al Gore at the World Economic Forum in Davos. Greenpeace Executive Director Jennifer Morgan was in Davos and called for urgent action,

"We haven't seen this level of temperature rise for 115,000 years. The urgency of action is so present. So our reaction at Greenpeace is,



it's time for business to put it at the centre. For government to take action and to listen to people who want a different kind of a future."

The news comes just days before Donald Trump becomes president who is a noted global warming sceptic. But his pick to lead the US Environmental Protection Agency, Scott Pruitt seemed to disagree when questioned by Senator Bernie Sanders at his Congressional confirmation hearing, "You said that Mr. Trump was wrong in suggesting, in stating over and over again, that climate change was a — quote unquote — a hoax. Is that in fact the case?" asked Sanders. "That is correct Senator," replied Scott Pruitt.

Italy avalanche: more people pulled alive from buried ruins of hotel

11 people have now reportedly been pulled alive from the rubble of an Italian hotel which was destroyed by an avalanche

Rescue teams confirmed that four more survivors were saved overnight after several people, including four children were found. At least six people are confirmed dead and 23 still missing. Most of those rescued are said to be doing fine. Rossano Di Luzio, the Director of the Pescara Hospital where survivors have been taken, said, "The medical condition of the survivors is good. Only one patient is currently in the operating theatre having surgery on the right arm."

Around 40 people were in the Hotel Rigopiano when a tsunami of snow smashed into it. The avalanche came hours after a series of tremors struck the Abruzzo Region, hit by several deadly earthquakes last year.

A number of voices have been heard under the rubble but it is proving hard to locate them.



Scores of mountain police, firefighters and other emergency workers have been deployed to the hotel, but progress is proving slow due to

the deep snow in the area and fears of further movements.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

New amazing discoveries in halls of famous exhibition

For over three months the National Art Museum has been displaying works from the collection of private collector Alexander Volodchinsky and interest in it is not yet waning

By Veniamin Mikheev

Every so often the owner of the collection himself, who currently lives in Moscow, arrives in Minsk. Alexander Volodchinsky conducts his own tour through the museum exhibition and acts as both guide and an interesting narrator. During one of his recent stays in Minsk, he invited friends and acquaintances to the museum and organised a tour through the halls. He was telling stories of how some of the works were acquired and about his special devotion to them.

The exhibition showcases more than a hundred works of 19th-20th century Russian painting. The audience can see the works of such masters as Vasily Perov, Ivan Aivazovsky, Ilya Repin, Isaac Levitan, Victor Vasnetsov, Konstantin and Vladimir Makovskie, Alexandre Benois, Mstislav Dobuzhinsky, and Nathan Altman. Works also include variants of famous works, including Arkhip Kuindzhi's *Birch Grove*, Victor Vasnetsov's *Knight at the Crossroads*, Pavel Kuznetsov's *Mirage in the Steppe* and Boris Kustodiev's *By the Window*.

A special place in Mr. Volodchinsky's collection is occupied by the works of masters who are in some way connected with Belarus (this being the native home of Mr. Volodchinsky) Apollinary Goravsky and Grigory Bobrovsky, Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya and Stanislav Zhukovsky. Alexander Volodchinsky donated a work by famous Belarusian landscape painter Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya to the National Art Museum on the opening day of the exhibition.

Some art collectors re-

main indifferent to their treasures, or hide them away and admire them only in their own home. However, others prefer to exhibit, sharing their joy in their acquisitions with visitors to exhibitions and museums. This is the first such exhibition for Mr. Volodchinsky and it's certainly engaging. The canvases on show cross a variety of genres yet sit harmoniously side-by-side. Perhaps the secret is that they are chosen with great love and taste.

All the works on show are examples of Russian 19th-20th century painting, created by such masters as Alexander Kiselev, Alexey Bogolyubov, Victor Vassnetsov, Isaac Levitan, Ivan Aivazovsky, Vasily Perov, the brothers Konstantin and Vladimir Makovskie, Ilya Repin, Alexander Osmerkin, Alexander Daineka,

Alexander Tyshler, and Nathan Altman.

A separate hall houses works by the Makovskie brothers, comprising mostly pieces by Vladimir Makovsky, who created scenes from 1900s urban life. Using irony, he draws characters meticulously, while appearing paternal towards them. His household drawings are whole stories, inviting us to guess the location, the status of characters (with whom the author sympathises) and the morality of what is taking place. In his *Despot of the Family*, Makovsky mocks some of his colleagues, depicting an artist at a huge canvas, making all his family members — from old to newborn — pose for him. His *At the Exhibition* and *An Interview*

use similar wry humour.

The exhibition also displays portraits created by Ilya Repin, Konstantin Somov and Konstantin Makovsky, as well as sketched portraits of Eugène Ionesco, created by Yuri Annenkov, and a caricature of director Vsevolod Meyerhold, created by Nikolay Kulibin. Nearby hangs one of Alexander Volodchinsky's recent acquisitions: Nathan Altman's *Solomon Mikhoels Sleeping*.

Alexander Volodchinsky has been collecting paintings for more than 25 years. Born in Belarus, he views it as his homeland. His interest in art was piqued in adolescence, thanks to his music teacher telling him about musicians and artists from a particular period. At first, Mr. Vo-

lodchinsky bought albums of their works, later purchasing canvases.

Any collection reflects the intellect of its owner, his preferences and taste. Mr. Volodchinsky's tastes have clearly changed through the years. There was a time when he was keen on avant-garde painters and Impressionists, then moved to admire realism in pictorial art. However, emotional elements remain vital. "If a person buys a picture and sees only a painting, it's a failure. The canvas should move you in some way," notes the collector.

Mr. Volodchinsky now owns over 300 works and continues to expand his collection, without restricting himself to any style or period.

Art historian and expert

Vladimir Petrov is particularly drawn by Mr. Volodchinsky's examples of late 19th century household genre works, and those by Itinerant painters and 'Russian Impressionists'. Alongside Russian classical paintings, the collection boasts work by European masters Moise Kisling, Suzanne Valadon and Camille Corot.

Among the most prominent pieces in the exhibition are Victor Vasnetsov's *Knight at the Crossroads* and Vasily Perov's *Plaint of*

Yaroslavna, Ivan Aivazovsky's landscapes, and Alexander Kiselev's *Harvest*. Nikolay Dubovskoy's *Port Arthur Legal Suit* is unexpected for those familiar with his land-

scapes, since it depicts a court case dealing with the surrender of Port Arthur during the Russian-Japanese war.

The collection gradually moves to the 20th century, with pictures by Konstantin Korovin and Boris Kustodiev, Konstantin Yuon's *Province. Bazaar* and a wonderful miniature by Ivan Pokhitonov, entitled *Beyond-the-Yard Pond. Zhabovshchizna*.

Walking around the exhibition, I heard visitors remark that it was like being in the Tretyakov Gallery. Such is the quality of the canvases on show, including Mstislav Dobuzhinsky's landscapes and Yuri Annenkov's portraits, Nathan Altman's *Solomon Mikhoels Sleeping* (a recent acquisition by the collector), and works by Robert Falk, and Alexander Osmerkin (*Peonies*, from 1951).

Mr. Volodchinsky says that his preferences are ever changing. "There were both victories and disappointments but this didn't stop me; on the contrary, it only encouraged me further."

Visitors are impressed with the harmony of the exhibits. Those who managed to get a catalogue signed by the collection's owner enjoy a souvenir that allows them to discover even more of the story behind the exhibition.



Works definitely arouse interest



Alexander Volodchinsky



In an exhibition hall

Actor Dolph Lundgren: ‘It would be great to drive that tank around Hollywood’

Famous actor participates in reconstruction of Great Patriotic War battle in popular historic complex near Minsk

By Nikolay Alexeev

Tanks are too small for me

The celebrity came to Minsk to take part in shooting an ad for an IT company, but had a packed agenda during his visit. Dolph visited the Great War Patriotic War History Museum and the historic complex based on the reconstructed fortifications 20km from Minsk. He rode on a heavy KB-1 tank dressed in vintage winter uniform. A military battle against the Nazis was reconstructed.

“I learnt a great deal about the machinery and fortifications, as well as about the people who heroically defended this land during the war,” the actor said later. “I belong to the post-war generation. This war largely influenced our lives, shaping the world in which we live now. Tragical events took place right here and it was very interesting to come to Belarus and feel the history.”

Mr. Lundgren has played several undefeat-



ed Russian characters in films. On coming to Belarus, the handsome Swede dressed in a jacket, a tank helmet and even tried earflaps with a star on, looking like a true Belarusian. His homeland is Sweden and the World of Tanks game will soon introduce Swedish tanks. Among all the armoured vehicles represented in the game, the actor loves the legendary T-34 most of all. However, he admitted that during his service in the Swedish army, he wasn't able to become a tank driver, “I'm too tall. Tanks are too small for me.”

Brutal but peaceful

Other combat vehicles however, suit the actor perfectly. One of them is the new Belarusian armoured Caiman. “We had a great ride! The suspension is not bad and the car is a true beast! I would like to have one. That would make a great ride in Beverly Hills!” he said.

Despite his brutal appearance in the cinema, Dolph is a peaceful man, “It's better to try to resolve any conflict by peaceful means through dialogue, to forgive or listen to arguments of the other side. This is much easier than confrontation,” he said.



A commemorative photo

Dolph said that, in Belarus, he had met only friendly people. He was



Reconstruction of battles could rival Hollywood

History of cinema

By Tatiana Kondratieva

Grodno city and regional executive committees agree to proposal from local historians and journalists, to commemorate cinematographic history of city with exhibition dedicated to famous and forgotten films connected with Grodno

The city's ancient streets have always been popular with filmmakers, such that a visa-free zone was introduced for foreign tourists. It's likely that a whole street will be dedicated to cinematography in Grodno, with plaques mounted to remind us of actors past.

Perhaps the most famous film shot in Grodno remains *Belye Rosy* (White Dew). Other famous films include the Soviet version of *Three Men in a Boat* (*To Say Nothing of the Dog*), *I Come from Childhood* starring Vladimir Vysotsky, *My Name is Harlequin*, and German-Belarusian *Babiy Yar*. The most filmed street is Uritsky Street. According to famous Grodno historian Victor Sayapin, it has hosted the filming of the most episodes of shows: such as *No Margin for Error*, *The Dnieper Line*, *Start Liquidation*, and *Smersh*.

Many Grodno residents remember Brigitsky Monastery housing a militia headquarters and the militia building housing school #6. Films depicting the days of Fascist occupation saw off-duty actors still wearing their costumes promenading with young girls in jeans and T-shirts. Grodno residents may recognise themselves in dozens of films, where they appear as passers-by, or extras.

A whole generation grew up on Lev Golub's *Mikolka-parovoz*, which commemorates the old railway station (now updated). Some episodes from the film were shot on Orzeszkowa Street.

The same producer shot various other films in Grodno: *The Street of the Younger Son*, *Anyuta's Road* and *A Girl Looks for her Father*.

Grodno historians are now preparing *GrodnoKinoGrad* for publication: a travel guide detailing where films have been shot across the city. Many never appeared on the big screen but remain in the memory of those Grodno residents who took part in crowd scenes. Some were photographed during shooting, by famous Grodno photographers.

Difficult to take eyes from these dolls

By Vladimir Velikhov

Minsk's Wankowicz House-Museum hosts exhibition of Anastasia Adamovich's unique dolls

This is not Anastasia's first show: her dolls were exhibited as part of the 2016 Museum Night and, in 2009, she presented them

at a personal exhibition. Anastasia is a very proactive artist. Over the past five years, she has participated in three or four annual exhibitions, her thirst for creativity and enormous potential are amazing. She imagines her characters while observing our contemporaries, studying portrait artistry of painters from previous centuries and

reading her favourite books. As a result, her dolls combine both general and individual features.

Anastasia Adamovich appreciates fabulous and mythical characters: old witches, house spirits, angels, princesses with fine wings and incredibly beautiful dresses with toys in their hands. It's virtually impossible to take one's eyes

from these characters such is their magic. Doll making enables the artist to show herself from diverse angles: as a painter, sculptor, hairdresser, designer, and make-up artist.

Accessories, dresses, shoes and hair styles are the result of Anastasia's imagination and her virtuoso creativity. Her dolls can



be compared to the best musical pieces, where each note is carefully placed.

Joint bid for hockey forum

Belarus and Latvia will be competing jointly for the right to host the 2021 IIHF World Championship

By Kirill Karin

Do you remember May 2014? The IIHF World Championship lent a true holiday feel to Minsk. From morning to night the fan zones were buzzing, with tourists full of admiration for the beauty of Belarus, while the atmosphere during the matches was such that at the end of the tournament our World Championship was unsurprisingly considered the best in its history and broke all records for attendance. Something similar was experienced by Latvia in 2006 when they hosted the world hockey forum. In 2021, the fans of both states will once again be able to enjoy the long-awaited tournament: the two states will shortly be jointly bidding for the right to host the world tournament. Recently, the chairmen of the ice hockey federations of the two countries have signed an agreement on a joint application to host the World Championship.

The First Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration and Vice President of the National



Chairman of Minsk City Executive Committee, Andrey Shorets and Chairman of Riga Duma, Nils Ušakovs, present the logo of the tournament

IIHF World Championship and we have confidence in our ability to deliver such a prestigious large-scale hockey event. In the joint bid the Head of State also sees a good opportunity for cross-border co-operation in both economic and political areas."

Our joint bid will compete with Finland's. It's well known that the Finnish lobby in the International Ice Hockey Federation is impressive, so the competition will be tough...

Member of the International

Ice Hockey Federation's Council, Sergey Goncharov, commented, "The fact that Belarus and Latvia have joined their efforts will only increase their chances. We've contacted the heads of most important ice hockey states and, starting from the IIHF Chairman, René Fasel, they have supported us and approved this idea."

The host country of the 2021 IIHF World Championship will be announced on May 19th.

Olympic Committee of Belarus, Maxim Ryzhenkov, is confident that we'll succeed. "It's very important that during this stage we don't become rivals with the Latvians. The proposals of the Riga delegation, which was received by the President of Belarus, were heard. The project will show how neighbours can work together in the organisation of such a big sporting event. Belarus will be hosting the European Games in 2019, so we will be ready for the

Doping — above the law!

By Igor Svitov

Belarus adjusts its legislation taking into account the revised World Anti-Doping Code. The statement was made at an extended session of the House of Representatives' Standing Commission on Health, Physical Education, Family and Youth Policy which discussed the amendments to the country's Law 'On Physical Education and Sport'.

The new World Anti-Doping Code envisages a ban on co-operation of athletes and other persons directly involved in sport with the personnel of an athlete who has been found guilty of a doping violation or any other doping-related actions. According to Belarus' Deputy Sports and Tourism Minister, Alexander Dubkovsky, Belarus will stay strictly committed to this and other norms of the code. "No person involved in the training of athletes should co-operate with an



athlete who was disqualified or has a proven anti-doping rule violation," noted the Deputy Minister.

Moreover, the document regulates the issues related to anti-doping control.

"Testing procedures have been clearly demarcated," explains Igor Nevar, a member of the Standing Committee on Health, Physical Education, Family and Youth Policy. "Everything has been put in line with the world practices." The MP also added that every stage of dope testing in Belarus is compliant with international practices. The bill will soon be ready for its first reading.

Three victories in three matches

Belarus' national women's under-18 volleyball team have reached the finals of the European Championship

In the qualification matches, the young players were ranked first in their quarter, achieving three victories against the national teams of Slovakia (3:2), Italy (3:1) and Israel (3:0). Alongside our own team, tickets to the final stage of the tournament have been won by Serbia, Turkey, Poland,

Russia, Germany, Greece, Bulgaria, Italy, Romania and Slovenia. The final stage will be held in Holland from April 1st-9th. Meanwhile, the national men's volleyball team of Belarus (U-19) failed to qualify for the finals of the European Championship: after two victories against Georgia (3:0) and Denmark (3:2) and losing to Bulgaria (0:3), Belarusians were ranked second in their qualifying group.

Making it to play-offs and painful defeat from Swedes...

Summarising the World Men's Handball Championship in France for Belarus' national squad

By Alexey Grishin

Belarus' national handball team has qualified for the World Championship play-offs from third place in its group. After a poor beginning in the preliminary stage, few believed in such a result, but soon it was a reality. In the decisive match of the group stage, Belarusians beat Hungary 27:25.

After Saudi Arabia defeated Chile in the last round 26:25, Yuri Shevtsov's trainees had an easier task in their game against Hungary. Even a draw would have

been enough to earn a ticket to the play-offs. However, the Belarusians didn't lose their energy and played their best match at the tournament, qualifying for the 1/8 finals from third position.

Every player without exception deserves praise: goalie Vyacheslav Soldatenko, who demonstrated great reliability at the net, Artem Korolek, who 'tortured' the rivals within the goal area, Boris Pukhovskiy, who led the team in critical moments, and Ivan Brovko, cold-bloodedly scoring six out of seven 7-metre shots. The players were a



REUTERS

real team, believing in victory over one of the group's favourites.

The national team managed to show its best play and made it to the play-offs where, in the first stage it faced Swe-

Rise over the Hungarians...

den (struggling for entry into the top 8 teams in the world). However, the fairy-tale didn't last and Yuri Shevtsov's trainees lost to Sweden.

In the beginning the two sides were equal; then the



REUTERS

... and a cold shower from the Swedes

Scandinavians sharply accelerated and quickly pulled away. Belarusians weren't ready for such a turn of events and couldn't match the pace, losing in all parts of the game. By the break, the Scandinavians had an overwhelming advantage and led by 24:11. Nothing was to change in the second half, with the Swedes completely controlling the action and achieving a lopsided victory (22:41) while the national team of Belarus ended its performance at the World Championship.

In France, Belarus performed for the first time without its longstanding leader, Sergey Rutenko, who has ended his career. Nevertheless, the young handballers didn't embarrass themselves amongst the strongest international teams and played a good game. Compared to the previous World Championship, Yuri Shevtsov's trainees have progressed, qualifying for the 1/8 finals. In 2015, in Qatar, they failed to even make it to the play-offs, finishing in 18th position.



32nd International ballroom dancing championships, *Vitebsk Snowflake-2017*, brings together entrants from 22 countries

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM
20 Lenin Street
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 29th January. *Belarusian Trade in History* Until 29th January. *Day of the Past — Day of the Present*
Until 19th February. *Time of Mute Stars. From Black-and-White to Red*
Until 28th February. *Time of Miracles: Winter Holidays and Entertainments*
Until 1st June 2017. *From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble*

BELARUSIAN STATE GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM
8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 26th February. *Weapon of Victory*

LEONID SHCHEMELEV CITY ART GALLERY
10 Revolyutsionnaya Street
Until 29th January. *Robo Art*
Until 19th February. *Japanese Spring*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY'S ART GALLERY
15 Svobody Square
Until 5th February. *From Lisbon to Vladivostok via Minsk*

EXHIBITION HALL OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM
9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 13th March. *Noisy Feathered Rainbow*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY
12 Karl Marx Street
Until 12th March. *Birds in Winter*

ARENA CITY
84 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 1st February. *IllyuzIum* interactive entertaining exhibition of illusions and 3D pictures

OUTLET
44 Zhukov Avenue
Until 31st January. *Hidden Reality*
Until 31st January. *Quintessence: To See the Unseen* show-exhibition

YAKUB KOLAS STATE LITERARY MUSEUM
5 Akademicheskaya Street
Until 30th September 2017. *In Waves of Endless Movement: Along Kolas' Automobile Paths*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY
5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 18th February. *19th-21st Century Dollars of the World*
Until 23rd February. *Iliotropion* (Sunflower)

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE
1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
26.01. The Masked Ball 27 and 29.01. The Swan Lake 28.01. Macbeth 31.01. Queen of Spades 01.02. Sleeping Beauty 02.02. Eugene Onegin

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE
44 Myasnikov Street
26.01. A Thousand and One Nights 27.01. Tricks of Khanuma 28.02. Golden Chicken; Sofia Golshanskaya
29.01. Little Red-Riding-Hood; Generation NEXT; Mister X
30.01. Alexey Isaev: concert dedicated to M. Magomaeв's memory 31.01. Blue Cameo 01.02. Women's Revolt 02.02. Giselle

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE
7 Engels Street
28, 29 and 31.01. School of Taxpayers 01.02. Art 02.02. Kolyady Night

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE
5 Volodarsy Street
26.01. Oedipus; An Intimidate Apostle 27.01. Tricks of Khanuma 28.01. Testosterone 29.01. Magic Rings of Almanzor; Viva Commedia! 31.01. Lion in Winter 01.02. Lady for a Day 02.02. Testosterone

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS
13 Pobediteley Avenue
26.01. Who Laughs Last 27.01. Forgetting Herostratos 28 and 29.01. Pygmalion 30.01. Master and Margarita 31.01 and 01.02. An Unnamed Star 02.02. Abduction of Yelena

MODERN ARTS THEATRE
5 Oktyabrskaya Street
29.01. Mad Money

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA
44 Kropotkin Street
26.01. This Is All She 27.01. Three Giselles 28.01. Contract 29.01. Adam's Jokes 01.02. We Are 25: merry party dedicated to the theatre's 25th jubilee

BELARUSIAN REPUBLICAN YOUNG SPECTATOR'S THEATRE
26 Engels Street
26.01. Wings of My Childhood 28.01. Blue Bird 29.01. My Little Enchantress 31.01. Savage Hunt of King Stakh 01.02. A Bit of Tenderness 02.02. Taras on Parnassus

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE
20 Engels Street
26.01. Christmas Story 27 and 28.01. The Kid and Karlsson-on-the-Roof 29.01. Wolf and Seven Goatlings