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Two centres meet to discuss plans

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus and Russia seek new points of incidence in regional interaction

The President of Belarus recently met a Russian regional delegation, led by Yuri Berg, the Governor of the Orenburg Region. While Belarus is known as the geographical centre of Europe, Mr. Berg noted with pride that his region is at the heart of Eurasia, hosting a trans-

port corridor from Europe to Western China. As a transit territory, it has similar development goals to those of Belarus.

However, interaction in logistics is one of many possible spheres of co-operation. We enjoyed mutual goods turnover of more than \$1bn in 2013. The figure has since fallen twice, for well-known objective economic reasons, inspiring Minsk to take action. The President is con-

vinced that new points of coincidence need to be found across Belarusian-Russian co-operation as a whole: with a ready response provided by Orenburg.

Clearly, trade figures give proof to Belarusian goods being well-known in the region. Co-productions operate to assemble Gomselmash harvesters and MTZ (Minsk Tractor Works) tractors, and Orenburg imports various machinery and equipment

from Belarus. Mr. Berg underlines that his region's Ural Mining and Metallurgical Company owns the world's biggest fleet of BelAZ vehicles.

With no need for special introduction, it seems obvious to look at new industrial and sci-tech avenues, including personnel training. A great many delegations have visited our country from the Orenburg Region, so familiarity with our potential runs

high. The President has suggested that the spheres of agriculture, construction, science and technologies offer mutual potential benefit, with Belarus ready to supply not only machinery, equipment and high-technologies, but design and engineering services and building materials. Mr. Lukashenko assured his guests that Minsk will respond to any offers or requests promptly.

Plans were discussed in



Yuri Berg

detail, including at a working group session on co-operation between Belarus and the Orenburg Region. A plan of measures has now been signed to develop interaction through until 2017.

New generation, new ideas, unique solutions

By Veniamin Mikheev

State to support and give a green light only to those researches which bring major scientific value and real application

Presenting certificates to Belarus' newest doctors of science and professors, Mr. Lukashenko acknowledged the important role played by science in the life of society and the responsibilities of the country's scientific elite. "Gaining a degree as a doctor of science, or the title of professor, is quite an accomplishment here in Belarus, as I always encourage the State Commission for Academic Degrees and Titles to reject obviously weak and outdated works," he noted.

Mr. Lukashenko views scientific personnel training as a vital step in improving research teams' efficiency. He views the vigorous efforts of our scientific elite as the driving force behind the creative potential of any research institute or educational institution. He emphasised, "The healthcare industry is a good example, with many dissertations on medical subjects defended in Belarus of late: in the spheres of clinical medicine, military surgery, oncology, endocrinology, reproductive health, epidemiology, and medical biology."

Mr. Lukashenko believes it to be essential that we accelerate innovative development, 'training more highly-qualified specialists in a number of priority and in-demand industries'. He noted the spheres of biotechnology, microbiology, electronic instrument-making, the energy sector, chemistry and production of mineral fertilisers, as well as the development and enrichment of natural resources,



Belarusian scientists have developed 'non-hazardous' roentgen unit

and the production and processing of farm produce.

Taking part in the ceremony to present certificates to our new doctors of science and professors were various specialists in natural and technical sciences, physics and mathematics. Addressing those gathered, the President told them, "It's important that your developments are in demand: relating to new composite materials, and devices for the transfer, reception and processing of information, as well as relating to superconducting nano-electronics, and new optic elements."

The event was attended by a number of specialists in humanitarian sciences: lawyers, sociologists, economists, and art historians. Mr. Lukashenko underlined, "You are

committed to studying the objective laws governing modern society and its economic systems, preserving our historical and cultural legacy, and enriching the spiritual wealth of the nation. Specialists in humanitarian sciences are entrusted with a special mission, which they must fulfil."

The Head of State drew attention to 2015 having been declared the Year of Youth, noting, "State youth policy has already positively influenced the situation in science. Young researchers constitute 25 percent of the total number of scientists and such young talent is being constantly supported. Over 500 people were granted Presidential scholarships between 2010 and 2015."

The Head of State remarked on his pleasure at seeing young doctors

of science in the hall, commenting, "You must make a tangible contribution to science before you are 40, to set a good example to the younger generation."

After the ceremony Mr. Lukashenko chatted with scientists, discussing how best to improve the quality of education and tie it more closely to the production sphere. He is convinced that students need first hand experience of real application for new technologies, including in the sphere of military medicine and devices. One participant mentioned concerns over the recognition of foreign scientific diplomas in Belarus but the President was able to assure those gathered that the country has a system to ensure protection of Belarusian science from pseudoscientists.

Partnership topics relevant

By Galina Grishkovets

Deputy Foreign Minister of Belarus, Yelena Kupchina, discusses with high-level EU diplomats preparation for Eastern Partnership Summit in Riga

Issues of co-operation between Belarus and the EU came under focus, including within the framework of the Eastern Partnership. Prospects of co-operation between the EEU and the EU, and the development of the region, were debated by representatives of the Foreign Ministries of Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, the Netherlands, Poland, Slovakia, Sweden, and the Czech Republic.

Flying to Egypt through Moscow

Holidaying to Egypt may face obstacles

From May 15th, the Egyptian Ministry of Foreign Affairs plans to toughen its visa regime for tourists, requiring individual travellers from Europe and the USA to apply for visas prior to arrival at the airport. Belarusians will also need to comply with the new rule, applying in advance to the Egyptian Embassy in Moscow. Tourist groups will avoid this inconvenience, being able to arrive at Hurgada or Sharm el-Sheikh without difficulty when part of an organised tour, with hotel reservations.

Badr Abdel Atti, of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Egypt, explains that state security issues inspire the move, although the new regime may be revoked if it proves disadvantageous to tourism. Rules of entrance to Egypt were last toughened after the events of September 11th, 2001, but endured only three days.

Good prospects evidently seen from afar

By Olga Potvorova

Belarus and Turkmenistan keen to exploit co-operation potential

Meeting the Chairman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Mikhail Myasnikov, in Ashgabat, the President of Turkmenistan, Gurbanguly Berdimuhamedov, has noted our huge potential regarding trade-

economic collaboration, and that within the international arena. The leader of Turkmenistan emphasised his satisfaction with the development of our two countries' trade-economic relations, and praised the support of the intergovernmental commission. Belarusian equipment is in demand in such spheres as agriculture, construction, oil and gas.

Mr. Berdimuhamedov believes that a joint project to build the Gar-

lyk mining and processing factory will serve interests across the whole Central Asian region, saying, "It's just the beginning, and we expect more." He is also convinced that the chemical industry in Turkmenistan shows promise, and can only benefit from Belarus' help. Mr. Berdimuhamedov thanked the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, and the whole country for efforts to strengthen bilateral ties with Turkmenistan.

Mr. Myasnikov noted that all the agreements reached during the visit of the Turkmenistan President to Belarus, including those signed after talks with Mr. Lukashenko, are being implemented. He underlined the long-term nature of these projects and emphasised that co-operation is being expanded across various fields.

Mr. Myasnikov also mentioned high-tech interaction, as

evinced by Belarus' planned delivery of two unmanned aerial complexes to Turkmenistan. He views the personnel training centre as another promising project.

Mr. Berdimuhamedov praised Belarus-Turkmenistan co-operation in the humanitarian sector, especially in education, and remarked that young people from Turkmenistan are being educated at all Belarusian universities.

Tomorrow's technologies are being tested already today

Only promising sci-tech productions will receive support

By Vasily Kharitonov

Visiting Minsk's Peleng enterprise, Alexander Lukashenko remarked that enterprises relying on locally available raw materials are to be especially encouraged. "We'll focus on those enterprises and those of tomorrow, investing primarily in them," said the Head of State.

The President received a report on the current state of affairs and promising directions for the Belarusian defence industry, with emphasis on state-of-the-art weaponry and equipment. The Head of State asked about challenges and economic achievements at Peleng JSC and at other State Military and Industrial Committee enterprises.

Mr. Lukashenko heard about the fulfilment of his instructions to implement projects to create Belarus-made space equipment and viewed equipment, tools and technologies used to assemble space equipment and large-sized optical equipment. The Head of State was shown prototype weaponry samples, made by Belarusian defence industry enterprises, and some pieces of Peleng optical-electronic equipment. The President received a report on future prospects for the space instrument engineering industry as a whole and for Peleng in particular, to which he replied that he is satisfied with the company's work and pleased by its lack of requests for money.



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State ready to support such promising science-intensive enterprises as Peleng JSC

Chatting with Peleng employees, Mr. Lukashenko mentioned his reasons for visiting the enterprise: primarily to allow him to make comparisons when visiting other enterprises. "You are certainly doing well," noted the President. "If an executive puts in some effort, there is rarely anything to complain about." He pointed out that the country treasures executives like Peleng Director General Vladimir Pokryshkin. "In honesty, I didn't believe he would be able to gain his bearings and create new facilities so quickly," admitted the President. "I was only

interested in one thing: the country feeling secure and having prospects in tomorrow's world technologies." As an example Mr. Lukashenko mentioned the construction of the nuclear power plant and the woodworking industry. "We have many breakthrough areas, including in the defence industry," said the Head of State. "A great many tasks have been assigned and you and I will be 'examined' by the Belarusian nation, being asked to report on the cutting-edge elements we've created. People need to see that our country has a future. You have accomplished

one task and have prospects, as well as your own money." Mr. Lukashenko went on to say that progress must continue: 'particularly in these complicated times, when it is important to keep going forward'. He added, "I came here to see what you can do with your own hands to make sure that Belarus can produce everything that is made worldwide, including in the space industry."

The President inspected new and promising samples of military industrial production, including communications equipment, computer-driven control systems, optic

devices for various purposes, those for radiation environment control and robotic technology. All enjoy major demand worldwide, with radiation control devices eagerly bought in the USA. Some items are unrivalled worldwide, being used by the IAEA, while Persian Gulf states are queuing to purchase Belarus-made optic devices.

Space technologies enjoy their own workshop at Peleng, which assembles satellites such as were once only constructed near Moscow, at the Energia Rocket and Space Corporation, and at

Baikonur. High-tech production is now taking place in Minsk, confirming the country's membership of the space club. Working with the Russians and Chinese, we are fulfilling joint projects in all seriousness, as the President of the People's Republic of China, Xi Jinping, is sure to see on his forthcoming trip to Belarus.

Meanwhile, Belarus is gradually developing its military industry, with various samples of weaponry and related machinery soon to go on show, at a parade to honour the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory.

Real state of agro-industry affairs must be discussed

Questions of strategic agro-development to be considered in April

By Veniamin Mikheev

At a meeting devoted to the agricultural industry's problems and prospects, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has demanded a report on the real state of affairs in agriculture. Several decrees were adopted last year, aiming to improve the situation. Mr. Lukashenko noted, "We agreed with the officials in charge of the agricultural branch that, if I signed 3-5 decrees, then the situation in agriculture would improve. Now, we need to see whether agriculture is working successfully. I'd like to hear about progress and what should be done to change the



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Sowing time opens field season

situation for the better."

President Lukashenko underlined the enormous financial resources being invested in agriculture and the state's desire to see a corresponding return in all spheres of the agrarian and industrial complex. The Head of State stressed, "As agreed, we'll consider strategic questions of agro-development, following the results of the first quarter, in April, in the Vitebsk, Mogilev and Brest regions, where there are new governors. Perhaps,

they will be more frank, admitting to the problems which exist, and for which they are not to blame."

Questions of late payment came under discussion, alongside issues relating to the running of agricultural enterprises, the observance of technological and administrative discipline, and the current sowing campaign. The President gave a number of commissions on the appropriate operation of sowing, taking into account weather conditions.

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Excise duties 'are floating' in petrol net cost

Falling oil prices are painfully affecting our oil processing facilities, despite the cost of raw materials having reduced. Of course, as oil prices drop on world exchanges, oil processing refineries are also obliged to reduce their profit margin. Belneftekhim Concern is convinced that Belarus will continue to generate income, even at a reduced rate, although prices may yet reach \$20 per barrel.

By Alexander Benko

Belneftekhim Chairman, Igor Lyashenko, explains, "Naturally, the cost of a barrel of oil influences our exports' profitability. Since January 1st, Belarusian refineries have been buying oil from Russia under new conditions of 'tax manoeuvre' — a new reality for our country. At



Technological process is under control at Mozyr Oil Refinery

present oil prices, our revenue is less than last year: we are losing around \$20 per tonne."

Despite the present situation, Belarusian refineries are in no hurry to ask for Government subsidy, being able to cover their expenses and continue modernisation. Mr. Lyashenko tells us that, when foreign investments are lacking, companies use their own funds, or apply for bank loans to invest in modernisation. Current works should be complete in 2016 and 2017.

In line with the approved oil balance, in 2015, Belarus is to supply 2.1m tonnes of oil products to the Russian market, while the volume of car fuel supplies will reflect the amount of Russian oil received by Belarus (a projected 23m tonnes). A review takes place every three months and, if Minsk fails to meet its oil supply obligations, Moscow has the right to limit its oil sales to Belarus. However, Russia recently announced that it will not hold us to the agreement,

being sympathetic to the situation at Belarusian oil refineries.

Naturally, drivers are eager to know the price of fuel at the pump and, to their relief, it appears that prices will fall. By late 2014, AI-92 fuel had been fixed to the Dollar exchange rate to ease calculations; since then, prices have only changed once. Mr. Lyashenko notes, "We are studying prices in neighbouring states, alongside world oil prices, to decide on how to price our fuel.

We currently charge less than our neighbours. Fixing prices to the Dollar rate was topical when each oil barrel was valued at \$75. Now, retail fuel prices will change drastically. If oil prices fall, fuel costs will be cut."

Regarding duties, these stand at a modest 25-30 percent. Around 60 percent of the pump price accounts for the cost of oil, with the rest covering salaries for refinery staff, drivers, and those working at refuelling stations, as well as other expenses.

Electronic trade receiving reform

By Svetlana Savelieva

Online purchases by Belarusians require regulation

The Minister of Trade, Valentin Chekanov, has noted that Belarusian online shopping from retailers based abroad needs regulation and that some areas of reform have already been outlined. Noting that domestic manufacturers are obliged to compete with foreign sellers online, he underlines that Belarusian light industry must produce goods not only affordable but of good quality. Demand exists and sales figures have been pleasing, with the Ministry of Trade intending to help encourage this direction.

Scientists called on for help

By Svetlana Savelieva

Prime Minister Andrei Kobayakov orients Belarusian flax mills towards new samples

During his tour of Lyakhovich flax factory, the PM was able to see the modern high-performance line in action, processing retted straw into pressed bricks. Mr. Kobayakov is eager to promote pressed straw not only as a domestic fuel but for export to Europe as a construction material. He made a call to scientists, underlining, "Pressed straw could be used to make construction bricks and I'm sure there are other options."

In all, 28 flax factories currently operate in Belarus, with ten using state-of-the-art technologies. The PM has also been looking at Belarusian agriculture: particularly, the progress of the spring sowing campaign.

Prices on the market should definitely be competitive

By Alexander Benkovsky

Presidium of Council of Ministers considers fulfilment of complex programme of light industry development, to 2020

The meeting with the Head of State focused on the need to regulate 'grey' imports by entrepreneurs, which are causing inequality of conditions for light industry. According to the President, entrepreneurs must ensure transparency, so that they operate under the same conditions as others on the market. He emphasises that it would be most advantageous to see small traders purchasing more domestic goods for local sale.

Prime Minister Andrei Kobayakov notes that our light industry has great potential, having been modernised and enjoying ongoing technical re-equipment. Over the last four years, Bellegprom concern has attracted \$356 million of investments into its basic capital. Only 42 percent of its equipment is now in need of updating. However, problems remain, with light industry exports having risen just under 8 percent since 2010: a rather modest figure.

More than a half of Bellegprom's production is currently exported (to 55 countries) which indicates demand abroad, but ground is being lost to foreign competitors: particularly, China. Even tradition-

ally strong markets are feeling the pressure.

Last year was difficult for the private sector, including for light industry, with warehouse stock being held in volumes far larger than is desirable, and total accounts receivable having significantly risen. Nikolay Yefimchik, who heads Bellegprom, tells us that seven enterprises hold the lion's share of warehouse stock, despite being clear leaders in the branch (among them Belwest, Marko and Milavitsa).

The Prime Minister blames the situation partly on scarcity of assortment, due to production failing to reflect consumer demand, and high prices. Domestically sewn jackets, trousers, blouses and coats are,



Quality of the good is in its price

strangely, being priced no cheaper than imported goods. Clearly, enterprises need to move with trends, and offer a greater range of goods, at a competitive price. Quality is not in question but more is needed to secure sales. How can Belarus hope to compete abroad if it does not

even lead on its own market?

Mr. Kobayakov underlines that retail networks are expanding but more could be done, including offering entrepreneurs franchises, and greater participation in stock sales and fairs, as well as online trading.

Mogotex capable of anything

Fabrics stir interest at *Heimtextil* International Trade Fair, in Frankfurt-am-Main

By Svetlana Devyatko

Victor Matievich, Mogotex's Director General, tells us, "This is the result of colossal work by designers and artists, proving that Belarusian fabrics aren't just competitive but can shape world textile trends."

Mogotex JSC is the largest manufacturer of textiles in Belarus and the CIS, producing over 60 million square metres of synthetic, cotton, mixed and crude fabrics annually. It also sews ready-made goods, which enjoy steady demand at home and abroad.

One of its factories, in Bykhov, sews table linen and curtains for IKEA, while a branch in Polotsk makes service uniforms for the Defence and Emergency Ministries of Belarus and Russia, as well as special clothes for petroleum and extracting companies.

Last year, the enterprise manufactured Br944bn of goods, with more than 85 percent exported — to more than 20 countries, including Russia, Kazakhstan, Austria, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Serbia and Mongolia.

The company is now preparing to enter the Latin American market, primarily Chile, having taken part in negotiations last year, in-



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cluding for the opening of a dealership. The Japanese market appears promising, being keen to acquire Mogilev fabrics for table linen, and for rail worker and fire brigade uniforms; Japanese trade houses are sending a delegation to Mogilev (as agreed at the *Heimtextil* Trade Fair). Meanwhile, orders for special clothes for builders are being negotiated though Mogotex-Baltic JV, alongside orders for forestry and oil processing worker uniforms.

Mr. Matievich notes that the geography of supplies is constantly expand-

ing, explaining, "Mogotex has managed to respond promptly to market changes, producing popular technical textiles. Across the former USSR and beyond, we have 12 joint enterprises and 12 dealers promoting our goods. Our commodity distribution network is responsible for 60 percent of sales while fabrics for special, protective and official uniforms account for 70 percent of total production volumes."

Mr. Matievich admits that the market is challenging and demanding, requiring Mogotex specialists to

keep abreast of new trends by attending specialised expositions. The *Heimtextil* Expo is one of the most prominent for decorative fabrics while special and protective fabrics are the focus of such expositions as Germany's A+A, *Milipol* in France, *The Future Soldier* in the Czech Republic, *Safety and Labour Protection* in Russia, and *KADEX* in Kazakhstan.

Since 2012, the enterprise has mastered 25 innovative production technologies, including fabrics fire, wind and water resistant, breathable, heat-reflecting,

anti-mosquito, antibacterial and heavy-duty.

Mogotex is especially proud of its collaboration with Russian developers of clothes for cosmonauts, its Zvezda scientific production enterprise having created suit fabric for the crew of the ISS-34 space expedition, in December 2012. Mogotex's light 'breathable' polyether was used for their production, developed in co-operation with specialists from Belarus, Russia and the EU.

Major technical re-equipment, costing \$38m, which launched back in 2008, finished last Octo-

ber; aiming to make the company 'flexible' towards market requirements, it updated production of weaving, decoration and sewing, using equipment from Italy, Switzerland, Germany, Japan, France and Russia.

Regarding new prospects within the Eurasian Economic Union, the Director General of the textile enterprise stresses that legislation has already been created to ensure unhampered supplies of produce to Eurasian Economic Union markets. He notes, "The rest depends on our ability to efficiently sell goods, which we can do."

Mogotex opens new sewing production in Polotsk

Business mission of Spanish delegation

By Veniamin Mikheev

Belarus currently lacks a diplomatic presence in Spain, despite enjoying positive turnover. Meanwhile, no fully-fledged Spanish diplomatic representation operates in Minsk. The recent 1st Belarusian-Spanish Business Forum may yet inspire our states to open such missions, since the event has certainly demonstrated that the number of business tourists is growing.

The Ambassador of Belarus to France and Spain (concurrently), Pavel Latushko, is convinced that our country needs to work more actively to promote exports to the Spanish market. He notes, "Belarus is a country of new opportunities for Spanish businesses. We do not know each other well yet and our

contacts could be more active. In 2014, our turnover reached \$450m and sadly, the balance was negative. With this in mind, we clearly need to work more actively to raise export volumes. It's vital that Minsk and Madrid establish a legal base for co-operation. In particular, we are close to signing an agreement to collaborate in the field of economy and industry."

The 1st Belarusian-Spanish Business Forum attracted representatives of over 20 companies: from such cities as Madrid, Barcelona, Valencia, Alicante and Marbella. The foreign partners visited our enterprises and held negotiations at Belarusian ministries, discussing opportunities with concerns and local self-government bodies, learning about export and investment potential. Some contacts have been founded with Belarusian businessmen.



During the Belarusian-Spanish Business Forum

Vladimir Ulakhovich, the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, underlines, "The Forum wonderfully illustrates a new attitude towards Belarus as a country at the junction of two major economic systems. We offer Europeans access

to the Eurasian market, and vice versa. Amidst the events observed in our economic life, this Forum is truly important. Major European industrial countries are advancing towards Belarus, which is a positive signal." The Spanish delegation was represented by such economic

sectors as IT, construction and tool production. Sixty Belarusian companies took part, with both sides gaining benefit. The Chief Economic and Commercial Counsellor of the Embassy of Spain to Russia, Luis Cacho Quesada, notes that Spanish enterprises are ready to study potential in the Belarusian market. "We are mostly interested in developing co-operation within the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union," he says, adding that the Minsk Forum has contributed to the development of collaboration between Belarus and Spain — primarily, in the business sphere.

The Foreign Ministry expects some major investment projects to be forthcoming following the Spanish guests' visit, perhaps building several waste processing facilities near Belarusian cities, and a hydroelectric station in the Republic.

Sorrows of the marshes

When rows of reeds close over your head, so that the pathway narrows, the marshes and the inhabitants no longer benefit: no other plant can exist there. The reeds choke all other life. After the ferry crossing over Lake Sporovskoye, you can stand on an observation platform from which an amazing view of reed 'woods' is offered.



By Veronika Artemieva

The marshes are home to thousands of insects, animals, plants and birds; many live only in this habitat and 50 are already under threat of extinction in Belarus. About 100 species listed in our national Red Book live in Sporovsky and Zvanets reserves, including the great raft spider. Living only in lowland marshes, it is rarer than the aquatic warbler. Some species are known only to dedicated experts, such as Davall's sedge, found in Zvanets. Globally, it is almost extinct. Meanwhile, Sporovskoye is home to a quarter of the world's swampy nettle.

If we fail to intervene, as has been the case over the last seven years, rare inhabitants will become even more endangered. "Until 1997, Zvanets reserve was dominated by open sedge bogs, overgrown with reeds for 15 years," notes the scientific coordinator of the EU/UNDP *Clima-East* project, Mikhail Maximenkov. He tells us, "Huge deposits of biomass have accumulated there, choking habitats, so that they are unsuitable for life. If we fail to solve this prob-



Peatland research in the Volozhin District's Bortenikha

lem, 35 species from the Red Book may be lost."

Pessimistic forecasts are that Zvanets may lose most of its aquatic warbler population: from 3,000 to just 400 birds. The number living in Sporovsky could fall from 500 to 150 by 2030.

Besides being overgrown

with tall grasses and bushes, marshes can be affected by rising water levels, which not only destroy nesting sites but rare plants. When immersed for more than 3-5 days, they simply die. Another problem is the burning of vegetation. "Local people burn dry reeds in April and May, which

means that we lose valuable plants alongside useless vegetation. It can take 2-4 years for the ecosystem to recover," Mr. Maximenkov explains.

The solution may be the use of machinery for cutting reeds and bushes. Already being used in Sporovsky, they are proving effective.

Nearly \$650,000 has been set aside by the international project for the purchase of more such equipment. Cut reeds will then be sold as thatching material and for insulation. Drogichin is already piloting the move and Valentin Zavadsky, from Biobriket enterprise, is opti-

mistic about the prospects. He explains that about 300 hectares of reeds (20 bales) will be harvested daily and that new ways will be sought to make the venture profitable, even after the project ends.

Neighbouring Poland is setting a good example in tackling its own marsh habitat problems. Dariusz Katkowski, the Manager of a Polish project to protect the aquatic warbler, tells us, "Without farmers, there are no birds. One programme allowed farmers to receive money for mowing marshlands but we are looking ahead, to see how best to proceed once the project ends. We want to study Belarusian experience on 'controlled burning' of marsh vegetation."

Lithuania is keen to learn from Belarusian experience in restoring its marshes: also home to the aquatic warbler. Žymantas Morkvėnas, of Lithuania's Žuvinto Biosphere Reserve, notes that work has been done to create a sympathetic environment. Now, only resettlement is necessary. Preliminary approval has been granted from Belarusian ecologists.

Three basic principles of deputy Politiko

By German Moskalenko

Olga Politiko, of the Standing Commission for Industry, Fuel-Energy Complex, Transport and Communications at the House of Representatives of the National Assembly of Belarus, talks about the role of women in Parliament and society

How far have you been able to fulfil your goals as a deputy?

In honesty, I didn't expect the style and rhythm of my life to change so quickly. I'd been elected as a deputy to the City Council, but this is a whole other level. We pass laws affecting millions of people; it's a great responsibility. I know more about some spheres than others; having worked for almost 20 years at a factory, I'm familiar with industry and economics. Where my knowledge is lacking, I never hesitate in consulting more competent colleagues. I also set aside time to read petitions from my constituents in Baranovichi, taking on board their questions and anxieties. I consider everything carefully, to find solutions

quickly, without bureaucratic delays or empty promises.

Certain bias must exist concerning women engaged in public policy...

I don't feel this. A third of the Belarusian Parliament is female, which meets standards for European democracy. Certainly, stereotypes prevail concerning women in state posts, who head collectives or undertake public work but, in my opinion, efficiency has nothing to do with gender. It's possible that men grasp general global strategic problems more easily, while women pay more attention to detail but the symbiosis of such approaches can only improve our legislative activity.

Our society has traditionally expected men to make a career, while women have been expected to devote their life to their family. However, times are changing, with women now working as directors, deputies, cosmonauts and generals. Yesterday, it would have seemed impossible. Personally, I'm very grateful to my husband for his enduring support,



Olga Politiko (left) in radio studio

understanding and help with family obligations. Such support is priceless; without it, my work would be impossible.

Are you satisfied by state efforts to support families?

The state's attitude towards family, motherhood and childhood is at a high level, meeting European, and

world standards. We now consider it natural but some highly developed countries cannot afford to give women three years of paid maternity leave. Our kindergartens are also subsidised, with parents paying only for their children's food. Maintenance, education, training and preparation for school are offered free of charge: a

privilege few countries can afford.

Large and needy families are given preferential terms when building homes and, from this year, additional support is being given to families with two children. The 'Big Family' programme launched this January, allowing those adopting or giving birth to their third child to claim a sum equivalent to \$10,000, for use in providing for their offspring.

Do you consider yourself to be successful?

Let others judge my successes. My working career has mostly been closely connected with Atlant CJSC's Baranovichi Machine-Tool Plant. This taught me to set goals and work determinedly to achieve them. The main thing is to never give up. I apply this rule to everyday life and, if I see that I can help someone, I do so.

Regarding the role of women in Parliament, the German theory of three 'K's' must surely be outdated: Kinder (children), Küche (kitchen) and Kirche (church). The triad of Professionalism, Decency and Patriotism is more relevant today.

Satellite Odyssey should be obviously continued

New national space programme developed in Belarus to send second Belarusian satellite into orbit

By German Moskalenko

Like the first satellite launched into space in 2012, the second will become part of the Russian-Belarusian space alignment and general system of remote Earth sensing. Created with help from the National Academy of Sciences (funded by Union State programmes) the *Standardisation-SG* project aims to develop uniform requirements and rules for processes and for the standard technical documentation of space machinery. The programme was fully completed last December, with 69 standards developed: 29 by Belarus and 40 by Russia.

"The major problem has been solved," asserts the Deputy Director of Geoinformation Systems, Boris Chernukha. "General regulations have been agreed to considerably facilitate the work of scientists and experts." The project has used Russian and European space standards (ECSS) and those of NASA as its foundation. Uniform standards are vital in guiding all elements of space technologies and Russia and Belarus already use them. The Belarusian national satellite communication system is part of the *ExoMars* joint programme, being realised by the European Space Agency (ESA) and the Russian Federal Space Agency



Press conference dedicated to problems in space technology sphere

(Roscosmos), to develop software for the remote sensing of Earth, (via the S.P. Korolev Rocket and Space Corporation Energia). Naturally, an integrated system of standards is required.

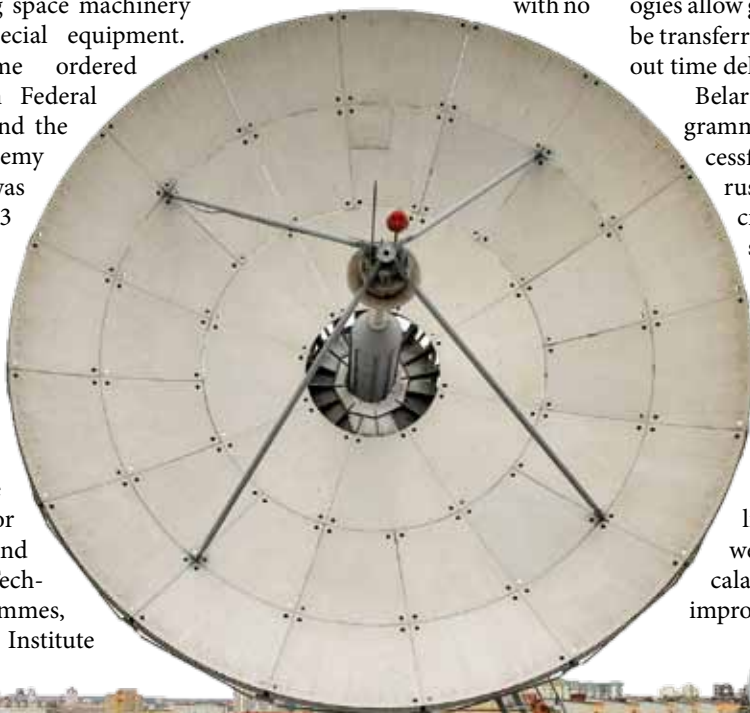
Another Union programme, entitled *Monitoring SG*, is connected with creating space machinery and related special equipment. The programme ordered by the Russian Federal Space Agency and the National Academy of Sciences was adopted in 2013 and is calculated for five years, costing about 2.5 billion Russian Roubles.

Executive Director Sergey Korenyako, the Head of the Department for Joint Space and Information Technologies Programmes, at the United Institute

of Informatics Problems (UIIP), notes that a key task is the creation of import-substituting technologies. Although the programme has been operational for less than two years, results are already evident. For example, hyperspectral equipment for satellites has been created with no

analogue in either Belarus or Russia. Basic components are being created at enterprises in both our countries, with meteor protection satellites created at the A.V. Lykov Heat and Mass Transfer Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Its information technologies allow great volumes of data to be transferred from satellites, without time delay.

Belarus' national space programme, including its successful launch of a Belarusian satellite and the creation of an effective system of remote sensing, facilitated its full membership of the United Nations Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space (COPUOS) in 2012. Within Union programmes, satellites are used to forecast weather, predict natural calamities, warn of fire and improve navigation.



Antennas of the Flight Control Centre

Belarusian accent of Yakut speech

By Galina Grishkovets

Scientists develop synthesizer of Yakut speech for North-Eastern Federal University of Russia

The synthesizer is the innovation of the Laboratory of Speech Synthesis of the United Institute of Informatics Problems, at the NAS. The Director General of the Institute, Alexander Tuzikov, tells us that it has two voices: 'Tolbon' (male) and 'Sata' (female). Converting written text into speech, it will be applied within education.

Yakut authorities addressed the Institute with the request, knowing of Belarusian expertise in this area. Mr. Tuzikov explains that, although synthesizers of Russian and English are already well-known and used extensively (including at the Institute — which also has a synthesizer for Belarusian), synthesis of Yakut speech is utterly new. He underlines that it took about a year to develop the software for the latest programming.

Electronic prescriptions soon be launched



Belarus' Health Minister, Vasily Zharko, informs us, "This year, we'll complete our process of informatisation, aiming to ensure that all polyclinics use e-prescriptions by late 2015 — reducing the burden on doctors and unifying overall work." He adds that 'electronic medical treatment records are to be introduced next year'.

New technologies are allowing Belarusian doctors to send prescriptions directly to pharmacies, reducing queues at polyclinics and saving time, to the benefit of all. Meanwhile, electronic lifetime medical records should improve the overall quality of medical services, reducing paperwork (perhaps even abolishing it) and efficiency. Including clinical observations, case records, data on treatment, vaccinations, accepted drugs, allergies, symptoms, state of health and results of diagnostic tests, the e-records will allow any practitioner to gain an immediate picture of a patient, and can be easily shared, while retaining confidentiality.

Patients would receive some access to their e-records, such as test results (even for printing at home).

Earth truly regurgitating weapons

By Sergey Shershenevich

Since early spring, unexploded ordnances from the Second World War have been regularly unearthed in the Grodno Region; seriously affected by corrosion, these present a genuine risk to public safety

Artillery shells have been found during agricultural work in the village of Korobchitsy, in the

Grodno District, as well as in a Smorgon District forest village, in the Zelva District's Boruki village, and near Mir, in the Korelichy District.

Some residents of Bely Bereh village, in the Iyve District, and of Matyulyany village, in the Smorgon District, have found similar deadly items in their gardens. One Dainova villager, in the Lida District, dug a hole in his barn and came across a huge pile of cartridges: 244 pieces in all.

The discovery of six artillery shells and a mortar mine has halted reclamation works in Zelva settlement, while a Grodno resident walking in the nearby forest has come across a mine. Finally, a pupil from Grodno caused near panic on bringing jet-propelled and anti-tank shells into school, having found them in the forest.

All such ammunition has been seized and now safely destroyed.

Germanwings plane crash explanation stuns Europe

Grieving loved ones were taken close to the site in the southern French Alps where 150 people were killed in the tragic crash of a Germanwings Airbus

French officials revealed chilling evidence from the plane's flight recorder that the disaster appeared to have been caused deliberately. They said the co-pilot flew into the ground on purpose, locking the senior pilot out of the cockpit.

The French poured resources into the crash zone, hundreds of gendarmes, firemen, medical staff and forensic experts — each one winched into steep ravines by helicopter. Nothing could land in the extreme terrain.

Among the many killed was a group of German exchange students and their teachers, returning from a week in Barcelona.

A torn up doctor's note has been found showing Germanwings co-pilot Andreas Lubitz had been excused by a doctor from working the day he is thought to have crashed a plane into the French Alps, killing 150 people.

Germanwings said Lubitz had not given them a sick note that would have grounded him on the day of the crash. German law requires workers to immediately tell their employers if they are unable to work.

Germanwings parent company Lufthansa has offered to pay up to 50,000 Euros in immediate financial assistance to families of each passenger who was on board the crashed



French investigators work amongst the debris of the Airbus A320 at the site of the crash

plane. Meanwhile, forensic scientists say they have identified 78 different DNA strands but have denied recovering body parts of the co-pilot Andreas Lubitz.

Investigators are keen to discover if Lubitz had been on any medication

when. They are also trying to build up a picture of the 27-year-old whom it has been suggested had in the past suffered from depression although his employers Lufthansa have said they were unaware of any illness affecting Lubitz.

In Lubitz's home town candles were lit for all the crash victims. An official memorial service is to be held on April 17th in Cologne Cathedral which will be attended by the German Chancellor and dignitaries from Spain and France.

'Nazi hideout' discovered deep in Argentine jungle

Deep in Argentina's northern jungle, archaeologists have come across the unexpected..!

In among the lush vegetation — the ruins of a house-like structure, isolated and abandoned, but only five minutes from the Paraguayan border — it may have at one time been a Nazi safe haven.

Researchers from the University of Buenos Aires have found items dating back to Germany in the 1940s.

Project leader Daniel Schavelzon explains, "It's a site which can be defended, a protected site, an inaccessible site, where you can live peacefully in hiding. We believe we have found a refuge for the Nazi hierarchy."

The items found on the site all point to a bygone era: ammunition, porcelain and coins all made in



Researcher working in a building in ruins at the Teyu Cuare

Germany. A sign suggesting Hitler's private secretary Martin Bormann used to live here has been dismissed as he died in Berlin, but researchers do believe the house was a prepared

hideout which was never needed.

Most of the Nazis, who were harboured by Argentina, were allowed to live openly in various Argentine cities after the war.



Yemen air strikes spark blip in oil price

The oil price firmed after spiking by as much as six Dollars a barrel following the reports of airstrikes in Yemen

By the day's end that rise had been halved, but the sudden jump revealed the sensitivity of the market despite its gross current oversupply.

Yemen produces little oil itself, but it controls the waters through which much of Europe's trade and oil passes on its way to the Suez Canal, so unrest there might threaten a vital shipping lane. Four million barrels of oil pass through here every day.

However, Yemen is a sideshow to the main oil-sensitive events in the Middle East, so the jump in prices says more about the plays by major investors in the oil markets than any risk to global oil supplies.

Smart textile for sports wear

With the exception perhaps of football, there are very few major sports that are not taking advantage of the growing use of technology

Smaller and smarter sensors can measure and monitor power, speed and distance for example to help athletes perfect their performance. But

similar sensors in clothes have often proved to be cumbersome and susceptible to sweat and moisture.

Now intelligent sports-wear makers from Cambridge in England have come up with a garment that becomes an active sensor itself. According to its developers, the new smart textile, called XelfleX, can be used to make

comfortable, washable, robust clothing — plus it gives it the wearer a great deal of information.

Its makers say that algorithms turn the results from the sensors into useful feedback for the wearer — which could turn it into a vital tool for anyone looking to improve their posture or polish up their swing.

Unemployment in France ticks up again

Unemployment in France rose again in February by 12,800 to a total of 3.494 million, and stands just a couple of thousand short of its December record

The numbers of long-term unemployed rose, but there were fewer claimants in the under-25 age group.

The number of available unfilled jobs declined while job centres reported the average length of time spent out of work by claimants had increased.

If those partially unemployed or not available for full-time work are included along with claimants overseas, over five and a half million French people are drawing unemployment benefits of some kind.

EU slaps tariffs on Chinese, Taiwanese steel imports

The EU begins imposing import duties on Chinese and Taiwanese cold-rolled flat stainless steel

Since a complaint filed by European producers in May 2014, the EU has been considering the case. Now Chinese steelmakers will have to pay a 25.2 percent import duty, while Taiwan will pay 12 percent.

The pair are accused of dumping, or selling at unfairly low prices as they grabbed 17 percent of the European market share for steel. They more than tripled their exports to the EU in the 2010-2014 period more because of domestic overcapacity than European demand.

The investigation, which is also looking into allegations of illegal subsidies, concludes in September. Analysts say that while the duties will not end Chinese steel imports, they will have a significant effect.

Ebola vaccines 'appear to be safe' in tests

Two experimental Ebola vaccines 'appear to be safe' part way through a clinical trial being conducted in Liberia, the US National Institutes of Health (NIH) said

The two vaccines, each given in a single injection, are being tested for safety and efficacy on more than 600 people in Liberia in a mid-stage clinical trial.

The Ebola epidemic that began in West Africa one year ago has killed more than 10,200 people, but a decline in new cases in the most affected countries, Liberia, Guinea and Sierra Leone, has led to hopes that it may be ending.

Based on the encouraging safety results, the study may now advance to the next phase of efficacy testing, in which additional volunteers are injected and assessed to see whether their immune system responds by producing anti-Ebola antibodies.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Five amazing exhibitions in one but diversified exposition

Sacral artworks on show in Minsk, devoted to 80th anniversary of Metropolitan Filaret, Honourable Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus

By Victor Mikhailov

The National Art Museum is hosting not one but five exhibitions! The first features 37 beautiful icons from the 17th-18th century, from Russian Yaroslavl (the native land of the Metropolitan Filaret's family). On loan from the local art museum, they have arrived in Minsk thanks to assistance from the Governor of the Yaroslavl Region, Sergey Yastrebov, and the financial support of the city council. Yaroslavl iconography began in the 12th century and reached its height in the 17th and 18th centuries, by which time Yaroslavl was a major economic and cultural centre. The merchant city's wealth allowed parochial and monastic churches to be decorated richly in paintings and carved, multi-tiered iconography. Much of its architecture remains today.

Local tastes shaped the direction of the icon-painting school since merchants often paid for artworks, for donation to their church, and the best artists from across the Russian empire were attracted for such work: from Veliky Ustyug, Novgorod, Moscow and Kostroma. Such masters as Fiodor Zubov, Guriy Nikitin and Semen Spiridonov created icons for the city. Meanwhile, the local artistic environment also thrived; secular icon painting, portraying a more 'realistic' and original view of the world, became popular. The 37 icons on show are notable for their bright, festive atmosphere, with lively figures and greatly ornamented costumes, often using gold and silver. Probably, the refined icon painters of Stroganov influenced the style.

The second exhibition, entitled *Christianity and Christians in Creative Activity of Russian and Belarusian Artists of the Middle 19th-Early 20th Century*, comprises icons and other paintings, as well as sculpture, from the National Art Museum. Its collection of Russian art is one of its most significant, with the religious theme taking a worthy place. On show are 29 works.

Portraiture was a key element of



Exhibition of sacral artworks, dedicated to 80th anniversary of Metropolitan Filaret, Honourable Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus

contemporary Christian art, representing those who played a special role. For the first time, the portrait of Metropolitan Iosif Semashko is on display. An active figure in the reunification of the Uniats with the Orthodox Church, he was painted in 1849 by Belarusian artist Ivan Khrutsky. Other portraits include those of Goravsky and Kramskoy, Losev, Polenov, Sukhodolsky and Nesterov. The wooden sculptures of saints, restored by domestic masters, are also sure to delight visitors.

Russian art is one of the most significant among the collections of the National Art Museum, with the religious theme well represented. From the time of the foundation of the Academy of Arts in St. Petersburg, in 1757, students began creating works on Biblical themes. Classical artistic language, notable for pathos and theatricality, gestures and bright colours, is evident in such works as: *The Penitent Magdalene*, by Apollinary Goravsky, of the Mogilev Region; *The Prayer of Moses After Crossing*



the Black Sea by Israel, created by Ivan Kramskoy in his student years (a later member of the itinerant movement); *The Prodigal Son*, by academic Nikolay Losev; and *The Sacrifice of Abraham*, by an unknown artist.

Unlike traditional, academic masters, these artists, with their 'everyday' connections, captured an element of realism that withstood the passing of time. Vasily Polenov's *Life of Christ* series presents a strikingly realistic portrayal of the Palestinian landscape (he visited more than once), and some simple, composite solutions: *Sitting*

Christ, Christ on the Sea of Galilee (Lake of Gennesaret), and *Bringing of Children*.

Some works show the common life of Christians: *The Procession of the Cross over Water*, and *Hallowing in a Village* by Ivan Trutnev; Nikolay Nevrev's *Confession*; and *Icon Meeting* by Piotr Sukhodolsky. Nesterov's creativity has an eternal feel, encapsulated in modern form.

The third exhibition is *On Sacred Athos*, by Greek artist Alexander Kayas, with 23 canvases on loan from private state collections across Europe

and America. Alexander Kayas is a member of the Association of Artists of Northern Greece and of the Chamber of Fine Arts of Greece. His canvases are enjoying their first exhibition in Belarus, exploring monkhood, asceticism and deep spirituality. He shows the life of the monastic community of Athos, including paintings of the Metropolitan Filaret: more than one of his portraits is included in the exhibition. His style draws on the traditions of late 19th century Russian realistic painting. Meanwhile, Kayas' monumental frescoes are truly impressive, as is evident from his image of Saint Demetrius.

The fourth exhibition includes arts and crafts works and church vestments, featuring items from the Belarusian Orthodox Church Museum: icons, panagias, croziers and liturgical vestments used by the Metropolitan Filaret. The sewing workshop of the House of Mercy in Minsk's 'Golden Vestry' has loaned a triptych from the *Spiritual Heritage of Belaya Rus* series, created by Lubov Kirillova and Vladimir Sinelnikov, alongside images of Minsk's All Saints Church, of Holy Trinity Church, and of Job the Long-Suffering, created by Lyubov Kirillova.

The Metropolitan Filaret's message, published on the official Belarusian Orthodox Church website, reads: 'Icons are more than illustrations, embodying truths of divinity, and showing the light of the Celestial Kingdom to the whole world. Certainly, the most organic environment for an icon is a church but they serve an educational purpose in museums, silently preaching the Gospel.'

The fifth exhibition, *Orthodox Belarus*, has been prepared by the Ministry of Communications and Informatization and Belpochta enterprise, displaying a selection of religiously themed stamps.

The Ministry of Information of Belarus' special album of Orthodox icons, named *Orthodox World*, is devoted to the 1025th anniversary of Christianity being founded in Rus. It was published in 2013, under the patronage of the Metropolitan Filaret.

Long-awaited holiday enchants audiences

Actors and directors from Ufa, Klaipeda, St. Petersburg, Kiev, Tallinn, Bialystok and Minsk perform at *M@rt.contact* Youth Theatre Forum, presenting such genres as monologue, improvisation, lyrical tales, mystical comedy and modern interpretations of classics: *Cries*, *Devilry and Love*, *Drive*, *Versailles*, *Shakespeare*, *A Colonel-Bird*, and *Gamers*.

By Olga Kislyakova

The forum celebrates its 10th jubilee this year, having gained a reputation for influencing our modern theatrical art. Among those present was the First Deputy Culture Minister, Irina Driga, who notes, "The youth forum encourages experimentation. Young people are not afraid to create and trial something new and out of the ordinary. We might initially feel surprise or bewilderment but this is later replaced by admiration and can become an example to follow. This forum has helped theatres to develop and improve, including Mogilev's regional drama and regional puppet theatres, which have been annually nominated for the most prestigious National Theatre Award."

The Mogilev event attracts famous critics, directors and actors. Mogilev Regional Drama Theatre's Director, Andrey Novikov, notes that, this year, the forum is truly rich, featuring 10 countries and 19 performances — from new and 'old' theatres.

Alsu Galina, the Head and Artistic Leader of The TEATR from Ufa, opened the event with women's monologues, entitled *Cries*. Ms. Galina was making her first trip to Mogilev, and to Belarus, telling us, "On being invited to the forum, we chose to come without hesitation. Our theatre is young, formed less than a year ago, from alumni of the Ufa State Academy's Department of Stage Directing. Participation in festivals gives us valuable experience, allowing us to demonstrate our capabilities and become acquainted with those of others. We've taken part in various forums, and *Cries* is my diploma work: it won 'Best Small Stage Performance' at Orel's International Festival of Chamber and Mono Performances. Of course, it's interesting to see how Belarusian audiences receive us. I know that such masters as Nikolay Kolyada have worked on your stage and I'm familiar with your chief director, Saulius Varnas."

Ms. Galina passed her internship with Nikolay Kolyada, known as Ural's Lope de Vega or the king of black humour. "Thanks to him, our small theatre was established," she admits. "There are five major state-run theatres in Ufa but we wanted to create something more avant-garde. Nikolay then proposed launching our own theatre." Although Ufa Academy lacks its own premises, using a rented stage. Its performance of *Cries* has been praised by critics (although some monologues are



BELTA



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Scene from performances at the 10th International *M@rt.contact-2015* Youth Theatre Forum, held in Mogilev

deemed a little too lengthy).

Daily feedback was given, but no major awards or Grand Prix. Rather, young theatre fans and experts were asked to vote for the best youth theatre, best actor and best actress. Critic Tatiana Orlova, who has attended every Mogilev forum, asserts that she has no need to feel neglected or offended. She notes that she attends at least ten theatrical festivals across various cities and countries annually, but has tender feelings towards the Mogilev event. "It's so alive, true and dynamic, with a warm and cosy atmosphere," she emphasises. "It's like an artistic laboratory, testing the professional competency of artistes and directors. Meanwhile, it's a holiday for audiences. On coming here, I see that Mogilev residents truly love the theatre and that this art form

continues to develop. Looking at previous forums, we — the professional jury — have always tended to be in unison in our opinions."

Valery Anisenko, the Artistic Head of Vitebsk's Yakub Kolas National Academic Drama Theatre, notes that Mogilev's *M@rt.contact* Youth Theatrical Forum shapes modern Belarusian theatre development. Each year, it presents performances able to impress and stir audiences: professional critics and ordinary citizens with a love for theatre. Moreover, globally known personalities often take part. "On returning home, I usually spend time contemplating the shows I've seen, inspired to think of how new ideas might be implemented and how best to stay focused. With this in mind, the Mogilev forum is always in my

subconscious," Mr. Anisenko adds.

In recent years, *M@rt.contact* has become a landmark event for Belarusian art: a cultural feast deserving of preservation. Even if it were to be lost, those brought up on its rich theatricality would remember it and be shaped by its influence. That much is evident from the applause, praise and support of its many fans.

Mr. Anisenko underlines, "Culture develops over time, and is not born from thin air: it stands on the shoulders of what came before. The Youth Theatrical Forum continues to build on its experience and the talents of those who support it. Our modern times rely increasingly on 'online' entertainment, so it's vital that we promote tangible culture and new directions for our Mogilev venue."

Belarusian ballet to be seen across 26 French cities

By Olga Varopaeva

National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre tour expected to become highlight of Days of Belarusian Culture in France, launching in Lyon

Productions of Tchaikovsky's *Swan Lake* and *Sleeping Beauty* are scheduled from March through until May, to be performed across 26 French cities. Among them are Paris, Bordeaux, Brest, Limoges, Lyon, Lille, Marseille, Nice, Strasbourg and Toulouse. More than 100,000 tickets are being sold, with invitations extended to representatives of French ministries, UNESCO, the Council of Europe, local authorities and employees of French public organisations (those promoting Belarusian-French relations and international co-operation with Belarus).

The Days of Belarusian Culture in France will also feature events to mark the 250th anniversary since the birth of prominent composer Michal Kleofas Oginski, with concerts at UNESCO's Headquarters and at other cultural venues around Paris. Exhibitions describing the life and creative work of the composer are additionally planned.

In May, Belarus will present a national booth at the Cannes Film Festival, focusing on the celebration of the 70th anniversary of Great Patriotic War Victory. The Days of Belarusian Cinema will take place in Paris and Strasbourg, screening *Brest Fortress*, *The Apostles' Footprints*, and *Tufelki* (Shoes). Meanwhile, 15 Belarusian artists and sculptors will display works at the Exhibition of Contemporary Art in Paris.

Spinning pedals to history

By Yulia Popko

Cycling through Slavgorod District to see cultural and historical heritage and significant monuments

The new bicycle route takes in the border stone, a ducal sign from Kievan Rus times and a unique burial site of over 250 graves, as well as the Blue Spring shrine — thought to have miraculously healing powers. The city of Slavgorod is no less interesting.

Mogilev State University's Department of Archaeology and Special Historical Disciplines' cycle route visits various dig sites, each bearing protective signs and historical information. The pilot project for archaeological tourism will end with an invitation to a field seminar, and is likely to attract not only professional interest but those with a love of history.

Final whistle captures football team in attack

Coach Alexander Khatskevich's debut match brings away win over Macedonia — 2:1

By Igor Grishin

The new coach of the national football team chose to play his most experienced men, as well as novice Ivan Maevsky, who performed worthily. The match began under rain and seemed to promise little success for the guest team from the earliest minutes, when the hosts attacked strongly.

In the 9th minute, Macedonia's Alexander Traikovski sent a ball into Yuri Zhevnov's net from a distance of 18m and, shortly after, captain Alexander Martynovich received a penalty card. The Macedonians continued attacking hard for another 15 minutes but failed to score again, while the Belarusians steadily grew accustomed to the field. From the 30th minute, they seemed to seize the initiative, largely thanks to Alexander Hleb and Timofey Kalachev, who allowed an equaliser in the 44th minute: Hleb outplayed several rivals with a high speed pass to Timofey. Using a passing shot, the latter scored from the middle distance into Tom Packovski's goal, leaving the score at 1:1.

After halftime, the Belarusians demonstrated even more confident play, with Kornilenko, Kalachev, Kislyak and their partners making shots at goal. These either missed



National squad benefits from Alexander Hleb's return

or were caught by the Macedonian goalkeeper but the Belarusians' persistence brought their second goal in the 82nd minute. Anton Putilo (brought in as a substitute) shot from close by the net, and was rebuffed by

Packovski, but the ball was immediately taken up by Sergey Kornilenko, closing the match with a score of 2:1.

After the match, Mr. Khatskevich noted that his trainees had set their hearts on victory in Skopje:

an attitude that brought success and showed true fighting character (especially after the missed goal at the beginning of the match). The coach believes that the team and its fans deserve this long-expected victory.



Alexander Khatskevich

Preparations in full swing

By Yegor Glebov

Belarus' national ice hockey team begins final round of training for World Championship, scheduled for May 1st-17th, in Prague and Ostrava

Head coach Dave Lewis underlines, "The team worked hard in the first sessions of our bootcamp, under Vladimir Bure, who is responsible for their physical fitness training. He's using a new style, and we have over a month before the World Championship begins: plenty of time to prepare for the season's most important event."

Mr. Lewis explains that more players may join the team, but are currently recovering from injury. "Roman Graborenko may join us from abroad, as may another three or four players (from Belarusian Championship final teams). Goalkeeper Kevin Lalande may join us but is currently training for the KHL finals (as part of the CSKA). Sadly, Geoff Platt will miss this World Championship due to family circumstances."

Apart from training sessions, the team's preparation for the world event will include a series of friendly matches within the Eurasian Ice Hockey Challenge: in Molodechno and Lida, Belarus will play against Latvia. Later, the squad will play 'away' matches against Denmark and Slovakia, before closing the Eurochallenge programme with 'home' matches against Norway: in Minsk and Soligorsk.

The first World Championship match will be played by Belarus on May 2nd, against Slovenia.



Maxim Sidorenko

Alongside famous ice judges

Belarusian referee Maxim Sidorenko to head referees at 79th Ice Hockey World Championship, from May 1st-17th, hosted by Czech Prague and Ostrava

The referees comprise 16 representatives of nine countries: Belarus, Germany, Russia, Slovakia, the USA, Finland, the Czech Republic, Switzerland and Sweden. Among them are such famous figures as Vyacheslav Bulanov (Russia), Vladimir Shindler (the Czech Republic), Daniel Piechaczek (Germany), Jyri Rönn (Finland) and Marcus Vinnerborg (Sweden). Maxim Sidorenko is son to famous coach Andrey Sidorenko and debuted as head referee in Minsk during the 2014 Ice Hockey World Championship.

Sambo wrestlers show their mettle

Moscow's Druzhba Sports Complex hosts international competition in sport and combat sambo: Anatoly Kharlampiev Memorial

On the final day of the competitions Belarusian sambo athletes claimed five various medals. Sergey Filomenko won in the combat sambo tournament in the under 82kg category, defeating Russian Dilshod Khidiraliev. Meanwhile, Ivan Aniskevich earned bronze in sport sambo, as did the most experienced representative of the Belarusian national team, Yuri Rybak. Alexey Stepankov snatched silver, alongside Olga Namazova who lost to Russian Victoria Stankevich in the finals.

In the two previous days, Belarusian athletes claimed eleven awards. Alongside Sergey Filomenko, Yekaterina Prokopenko also captured gold in the under 60kg category. In her final struggle, Yekaterina proved stronger than Georgia's Shorena Sharadze.



Yekaterina Prokopenko

Cup heads to Soligorsk

By Kirill Karin

Soligorsk Shakhtyor becomes Belarus' hockey champion after beating Minsk Yunost in final struggle for Presidential Cup

Shakhtyor was initially losing to the Minsk hosts, at Chizhovka-Arena. However, in the fourth match of the final round, Maxim Parfeevets took his team into the lead in the fifth minute. Yunost made several attempts at the net, but each was skillfully deflected. The Minsk squad did a little better after halftime, with Alexander Usenko taking a brilliant penalty shot. Despite Shakhtyor having a minority of players, Igor Karabanov managed to score and, 20 seconds before the final whistle, Shakhtyor's Igor Karabanov claimed the third goal for the Soligorsk team, leaving the score at 3:1. Yunost goalkeeper Vitaly Belinsky had been swapped out at the last moment.



Presidential Cup won by Shakhtyor

In previous matches, Soligorsk's players had twice beaten the Minskers at home — 4:3 and 4:1. Later, they beat Minsk 5:1, making the fourth victory a decisive one for Shakhtyor and firm evidence of

their worthiness to hold their first ever championship title. The team's head coach, Andrey Gusov, is delighted by his players' defeat of Yunost in the Belarusian championship, saying, "We'd been moving towards this victory throughout the season. Beating Yunost across all four final matches is amazing. I cannot praise my guys enough for their work and patience. We've experienced 'lows' in our six years of existence and now need to develop the club's infrastructure. Yunost and Gomel boast great material-technical bases, which we can use as our model."

Mr. Gusov believes that, after winning the 2015 season, the team now needs to hold together. He recalls the sad demise of Minsk Keramin, which became champion in 2008 and then 'went to pieces'. He is particularly proud of Shakhtyor's fourth match win, which was achieved despite the players being in the minority.

Cabaret of the week



Minsk Youth Variety Theatre presents bright performance, entitled *Cabaret Vintage: City Lights*

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 12th April. *Journey through Palestine*

Until 3rd May. *Mater Dei. Iconografia di un Amore*

Until 31st May. *Da Vinci Inventions*

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 31st July. *Art at Finger Tips*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 24th April. *Amber —*

A Precious Stone of the Baltic Sea

Until 4th June. *Nikolya*

Chocolate Museum

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 23rd March. *Magic Insects*

Until 9th June. *Exotic World*

MINSK CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street

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

FIRST RSDRP CONGRESS HOUSE-MUSEUM

31A Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 12th April. *Vikings and Balts: The Northern Saga*

MIR CINEMA

4A Kozlov Street

Until 30th April. *Childhood as a Moment*

MTZ HOUSE OF CULTURE

24 Dolgobrodskaya Street

Until 30th April. *Gift for Mother: a photo exhibition*

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

03.04. The Swan Lake; Musical Evenings at Bolshoi. Bridal Shower

04.04. Khovanshchina

05.04. Magic Music; Romeo and Juliet

07.04. The Tsar's Bride

08.04. La Bayadere; Musical Evenings at Bolshoi. Romance Charm

09.04. Un Ballo in Maschera

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

03.04. Yunona and Avos

04.04. Assol; The Clandestine Marriage

05.04. Town Musicians of Bremen; Silva

06.04. Dubrovsky

07.04. Blue Cameo

08.04. An Ordinary Wonder

09.04. One Thousand and One Nights

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

03.04. Autumn Fall. Andersen

04 and 05.04. Kolyady Night

07.04. Abduction of Europe, or Ursula Radziwill Theatre

08.04. The Dinner Game

09.04. Pan Tadeusz

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

03.04. Bridegrooms

04.04. Lion in Winter

05.04. Love Circle

07.04. Caught by the Net

08.04. An Intimidated Apostle (Oracle)

09.04. He and She

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

03.04. Robbery at Midnight

04.04. Even a Wise Man Stumbles

05.04. My Dear

06 and 07.04. The Battlefield

08.04. #13

09.04. Artistic evening by theatre and cinema actor Artem Davidovich

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

April of decades and centuries past comes to life

April 3rd. In 1925, a full cavalier of the Order of Glory — Alexey Filipenko — was born in the village of Babichi (present Chechersk District).

April 4th. In 1864, Belarusian architect Victor Struev was born. He authored designs of Minsk's Alexander Nevsky Church, Church-Archaeological Museum and a bell cote of Borisov's Resurrection Cathedral.

April 5th. In 1940, a Belarusian and Russian actress and Belarus' Honoured Artiste — Lyudmila Usanova — was born.

April 7th. In 1978, Belarusian tennis player Vladimir Volchok was born.

April 9th. In 1982, a silver medallist of the 27th Olympics (Australia, 2000) — Yulia Raskina — was born.

April 9th. In 1853, a folklorist, ethnographer and writer — Sofia Kovalevskaya — was born who collected many articles of Belarusian folk crafts.

April 3rd. In 1913, a collection of Yanka Kupala's poems — *Road of Life* — was published in Petersburg, becoming the third in a row and a top of the Belarusian literature.

April 3rd. In 1987, Minsk's Spring Musical Festival was organised for the first time (held annually).

April 4th. In 1528, Sennitsa, near Minsk, was first mentioned in documents; it was bought by Duke Piotr Gorsky.

April 4th. In 1958, a district between Minsk's Dolgi-

ment was founded.

April 5th. In 1925, Minsk's Mikhailovskaya Street was renamed into Moprovskaya — to be later renamed into Kalinin. Since 1961, it's known as Kommunisticheskaya Street.

April 5th. In 1965, laying of a new tram line was launched to Minsk's Zeleny Lug district.



novsky Trakt and Orlovskaya Street was developed.

April 4th. In 1997, a mutual memorandum was signed to put a Berlin-Warsaw-Brest-Minsk trans-European fibre-optical communication line into operation.

April 4th. In 2006, the Capital Transport and Communication state establish-

April 5th. In 1972, the Yanka Kupala Memorial Reserve — Vyazyinka — was founded.

April 5th. In 1978, the Museum of Folk Crafts opened in Zaslavl but, in 1990, it was closed — with all artefacts moving to the National Art Museum.

April 6th. In 1962, Belarus'

first specialised Yuny Tekhnik (Young Technician) shop opened.

April 6th. In 1992, the Belarusian Carting Federation public organisation was founded.

April 7th. In 1926, the general primary education was launched in Belarus, for 8-11 year olds.

April 7th. In 1926, the Belarusian Society of Friendship and Cultural Ties with Foreign States was established.

April 7th. In 1972, the German Democratic Republic's General Consulate opened.

April 7th. In 1995, the Belarusian-American Centre for Reproduction and Genetics opened in Minsk's Orlovskaya Street (on the basis of clinic #7).

April 7th. In 2006, the Football House solemnly opened in Minsk's Pobediteley Avenue.

April 8th. In 1844, Slutsk's manufacture of silk sashes closed as, since the mid-19th century, silk sashes were going out of fashion.

April 8th. In 1956, the Young Spectators' Theatre opened.