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**Northern Athens enjoy warm atmosphere**

Just a few years ago, Michal Kleofas Oginski's mansion in Zalesie (near Smorgon) was in a state of neglect **Page 9**



Night of Museums-2015 art-project at National Art Museum champions motto of 'Everyone has their own silence'

Cultural insomnia blurs the boundaries of late evening and early night

The *Night of Museums* event, first held in Berlin in 1997, is now popular worldwide, taking place annually to mark International Museum Day, on May 18th. On this night, in an atmosphere of romanticism and mystery, thousands of museums throw open their doors to visitors through the dark hours. Belarusian museums presented their own diverse programme from the evening of May 16th through to the early hours of May 17th, encouraging Minsk in cultural insomnia.

Imminent reshuffle in the hierarchy of leading partners

Following the visit of China's President, Xi Jinping, to Minsk, Belarusian-Chinese relations are likely to be long to the fore. The recent meeting has resulted in dozens of beneficial contracts being signed, including for the finance of various projects.

By Alexander Pimenov

Economy Minister Vladimir Zinovitsky tells us that China is allocating over \$7bn of credit to Belarus, with around \$3bn offered on privileged loan terms (extremely beneficial interest rates) and another \$4bn as commercial loans to our banks, to finance business projects. Mr. Jinping also brought news of a major grant for Belarus (800m Yuans over three years), primarily targeting social projects, including housing construction.

The Government is delighted that Belarus has concluded over \$1bn of credit agreements with China's Eximbank. Meanwhile, the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park is becoming established in Belarus, with seven enterprises registered and another 14 applying. Not long ago, China's Commerce Ministry announced that initial direct investments by Park participants should reach around \$2bn.

During the visit, a change to the Park's shareholders was discussed. China Merchants Group is eager to join, as the second largest shareholder after Sinomach. The corporation's arrival would be beneficial for Belarus, which boasts great experience in industrial park management and logistical project development. Jointly with Sinomach, they would become a catalyst for the attraction of other Chinese businesses, placing the Park as a key platform for the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative.

The Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park may attract sub-parks from various Chinese provinces,



Model of Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park

CONCRETE FACTS

Regarding long-term credit agreements reached during Mr. Jinping's visit to Belarus, the Finance Ministry notes the total volume as around \$3.5bn (repayable over 15 years). The Finance Ministry has signed two credit agreements on privileged terms for around \$330m (to be repaid over 12-15 years) with China's Eximbank: directed towards engineering and transport infrastructure within the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park and assembly of passenger cars until 2030 (BelGee JSC). Under government guarantee, two 15-year credit lines have been agreed, to realise \$1bn of projects in the spheres of transport, energy, industry and infrastructure, involving small and medium-sized businesses. In addition, under government guarantees, Belarusian Railways JSC has signed three credit agreements (worth \$175m) with Eximbank, to develop the rail network.

In realising the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative, Belarusian Railways has concluded a long-term cooperative agreement with Eximbank to extend the rail network, attracting up to \$500m of Chinese loans. Meanwhile, the Finance Ministry, China's State Bank of Development, Belarusbank JSC and Slavkaliy JSC have signed a memorandum on mutual understanding, planning to use a government-guaranteed loan of \$1.4bn to construct a new mining complex at Nezhinsky field of the Starobin potassium salt deposit.

with some already expressing readiness to build mini-parks: the city of Harbin, the provinces of Sichuan, Guangdong and Zhejiang, and CPC International.

Prime Minister Andrei Kobaykov names a five-year co-operative agreement between the Belarusian Potash Company and Sinochem (supplying Belarusian potassium fertilisers to China) as one of the

most lucrative deals, although prices are not 'set' since they will reflect the global market.

Various agreements and memorandums on co-operation should bring significant financial benefits to both sides, raising China from its current position as Belarus' fifth major trading partner beyond the CIS (and seventh regarding investments).

Place to meet partners

Over 240 organisations from eight countries take part in Belarusian Industrial Forum

By Nikolay Ponomarev

Belarus' Deputy Industry Minister, Pavel Utyupin, opened the event, saying that its goal is to seek out 'breakthrough projects' to inspire the development of the economy and show new partners (primarily foreign) the industrial developments being made in Belarus. He held up the joint Belarusian-Chinese enterprise,

BelGee Plant, as an example, saying, "The future of Belarus is in such projects. We're organising the manufacture of passenger cars previously unseen in the country while also producing necessary auto-components."

The Chairman of the State Committee on Standardisation, Victor Nazarenko, underlined that the forum is a perfect venue for Belarusian manufacturers to

demonstrate their achievements and explain their goals, through exhibitions, round table discussions, seminars and other events.

This year, the 19th Belarusian Industrial Forum has been held under the aegis of industrial co-operation within the Eurasian Economic Union market. The forum's business programme has featured over 15 events, dominated by a plenary session with the



At Belarusian Industrial Forum

Eurasian Economic Commission. Moreover, 12 international forums have been held in addition to a

traditional contest of Belarusian welders and the 5th Exchange of Subcontracts.

Not only forthcoming elections are a true test for authorities. Other aspects are also vital.

During his recent visit to Minsk Tractor Works JSC, Alexander Lukashenko notes that private sector development is a priority for Belarus, with new Chinese loans being directed for these purposes

By Vasily Kharitonov

According to the Head of State, new Chinese credit lines will be used to develop private business in Belarus. He commented that loans on preferential terms are destined not only for large projects, since small businesses also need support. "I'd like to give these loans to small businesses, in the private sector. They are free to take them, provided repayment is guaranteed. We need to accelerate the creation of an alternative economy and would like more private businesses to emerge, work and develop," he underlined.

The recent state visit by China's Chairman, Xi Jinping, has addressed a number of co-operative issues between MTZ and its Chinese partners. "If you're unable to reach the Chinese market and work there after this, it's a lost cause!" Mr. Lukashenko declared.

The Head of State stressed that Mr. Jinping is a friend of Belarus and is genuinely interested in finding new avenues to advance co-operation. "He has gathered his people, giving them concrete instructions with one purpose: to help Belarusians, because they have never failed. It was a milestone visit," Mr. Lukashenko added. "When he was leaving Belarus, he said that he hadn't expected Belarus to be as it is or for his visit to be so productive. Chinese never say anything without reason."



Alexander Lukashenko during his visit to Minsk Tractor Works

According to the President, a major step has been made in the development of inter-regional ties between Belarus and China. He believes that serious changes have been introduced into Belarusian-Chinese relations as a result of the visit, which will help address 'trouble spots' in the Belarusian economy.

"You must understand the present situation. Hold on to your jobs and listen less to babblers," Mr. Lukashenko told MTZ staff. According to the Head of State, tough com-

petition is a global truth, so Belarusian enterprises need to manufacture competitive products, with good design and quality. He warned that, while Belarusian goods sometimes command double the price of their rivals, this is a situation which may not continue forever.

The Head of State is convinced that world conflict stems from economic reasons: the desire for oil, natural gas, metals and final product sales. He states, "Fierce fighting is occurring, sometimes transforming into hot war-

fare. In these hard times, and being a small state, we need to withstand, sustain and preserve our country, its production facilities and labour."

According to the President, the forthcoming Presidential elections (scheduled for 2015) will prove a test for authorities. "We need to prepare worthily, avoiding populism — so that people do not reproach us after the elections for having made false promises."

Mr. Lukashenko has asked the Government to do all it can to protect the do-

mestic market from the unjustified import of products which can be manufactured domestically. "God forbid if our companies buy tractors and other equipment which is produced in Belarus," the President said. He did not exclude the possibility that modern equipment can have certain drawbacks. "We should understand that we've developed some technologies from scratch in recent years; naturally, time is needed to fine-tune equipment," Mr. Lukashenko admitted. "With this in mind, some draw-

backs are possible. Minsk's authorities have imported equipment for municipal services despite a plant [producing Belarusian tractors] being situated nearby. However, this plant can immediately repair any component," he added.

Addressing top level Governmental officials, Mr. Lukashenko stressed, "We are not a WTO member, so we do not have obligations. Let's protect our domestic market of irons, tractors and cars." According to the Head of State, a special session is planned soon, to discuss these issues. The Government is to report on measures taken and explain the feasibility of certain imports. "We have opened the country to everyone but we must also protect and support local manufacturers, promoting their products. Only in this way can we diversify our markets," Mr. Lukashenko added.

"As regards the West, they [representatives of Western countries] have visited me and I have warned them. I'd like the Government to realise this. We have told them that they have fenced themselves off from us. If we do the same, we'll see how they find routes through the Baltic States or Ukraine," the President said.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that, even when Russia imposed retaliatory sanctions on a number of western products, Belarus never stopped co-operating with western suppliers.

Situation controllable despite crisis symptoms

Labour market is in the limelight of another principal conversation at top level

By Vladimir Khromov

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has urged the Government to do its best to retain a skilled workforce. Speaking at a session dedicated to the current situation on the labour market and the social protection of the population, he remarked on the importance of the issue, saying, "It affects the interests of many people and impacts on the stability of the state." Mr. Lukashenko has heard alarming trends, such as the

number of employed population falling and the number of part-time employees rising.

A monitoring group presented its views at the session, looking at reasons for problems, obstacles to improvement and measures to be taken to ensure employment and stability on the labour market. A special monitoring group has studied the situation in the regions.

Prime Minister Andrei Kobaykov's report noted that the labour market is both controllable and

stable, with current measures restraining unemployment and ensuring necessary guarantees and compensations to the population.

At present, just 0.9 percent of the able-bodied population is unemployed (within the 1.5 percent target). The decree on the prevention of social parasitism has helped, as has external labour migration. Last year, the inflow of labour migrants from Ukraine tripled (to almost 18,000) but most have found employment in manual labour, such as farm work.

// We cannot allow social tension in society or the labour market. This is the main priority for the Government and local authorities. Social tension is not the main point though; the main point is that every person should have the opportunity to work, to make a living, and to provide for their family.

Nevertheless, the Prime Minister admits that external crisis factors are leading to negative trends seriously affecting enter-

prises, primarily in industry and construction. However, most enterprises are finding their own solutions.

General of sand pits

BelAZ introduces first automated dump truck, using intelligent software, navigation and broadband links, to follow set route and estimate conditions

By Maria Dronova

Times of 'difficulty' often inspire us to seek out alternate solutions. BelAZ may have been obliged to cut its production volumes by a third in the first three months of 2015, but it has no plans to surrender. Despite its partners suffering economic difficulties and world mineral prices falling, the plant hopes for better times.

Director General Piotr Parkhomchik explains his optimism, saying, "The globe's mining industry is in crisis: Australia (a leader) has reduced its extraction volumes by 70 percent, while Russia (a main importer of our goods) has reduced its purchases by nearly 12 percent. Last year, our neighbours bought many of our mining dump

trucks: Kuzbassrazrezugol bought 80 heavy dump trucks, while the Siberian Coal Energy Company purchased 30 units. They need time to adapt to new economic conditions."

In June, Novokuznetsk is hosting a trade fair at which Belarus hopes to conclude contracts with leading Russian companies. Meanwhile, by the end of the year, co-operation with the Sverdlovsk Region should yield results; our partners are working on a new generation engine, which will replace the powerful American and German engines currently found under the huge bonnets. There are also hopes for the Indian market, which intends to double its coal mining production within the coming five years. Naturally, they



In the cabin of robotised dump truck

need to purchase machinery and Belarus is ready to supply it.

A recent meeting at Zhodino, gathering visitors from 23 countries, saw the presentation of the world's second largest mine dump truck: able to carry 450 tonnes. The Kemerovo Region has one such vehicle (in four months, it has transported 2.5 million tonnes of ore) and is now awaiting delivery of its second. The new, automated dump truck is the result of six years' planning, combining intelligent software, with navigation and broadband links: allowing it to follow a route independently, to estimate conditions and to seek out help from a remote traffic controller if necessary. Also on show was the prototype of the world's biggest loader. Various companies

are showing keen interest, leading BelAZ to continue creating its range. Its unique system even allows each wheel to be operated separately, while its 'shovel' can grasp more rocks than its rivals.

Benjamin Escobar, the purchasing director of a Mexican mining company, which owns open-cast mines in the USA and Argentina, hopes to close a deal in the near future. Meanwhile, the director of a mining company in Peru, Mario Rabines Salmon, is convinced that Belarusian machinery outranks others. He emphasises, "The plant should concentrate on promoting its brand in Latin America, so that others see it too." The idea isn't new: BelAZ certainly has plans to expand its presence in this region.



Work by unmanned BelAZ, accompanied by the front-side loader, demonstrated in Zhodino

Effects from first tank

By Nikolay Zhdanovich

Belorusneft filling stations network launches BN-92 premium fuel, jointly produced with German BASF

The Belarusian company has announced: 'Due to its high anti-corrosion, lubricating and cleaning properties, this premium-gasoline improves the functioning of your engine and increases its service life, while reducing average fuel consumption. Positive effects are felt from the first tank.'

The price is currently being set to match that of traditional fuels.

Alternative gas energy

Major bio-gas facility being realised in Belarus, fuelled by organic waste from animal breeding and processing farms, including herbage and food waste

By Veronika Artemieva

The Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Igor Kochanovsky, tells us that Finnish investors have made the proposal. Finland operates a few such bio-gas facilities, processing production waste. The plant would solve the problems of several districts, as he explains, saying, "We're currently looking for suitable sites,

well placed to ensure that transportation of organic waste is feasible. We've distributed this information across all Belarusian regions and, after the Finnish experts arrive, we'll join the Ministry of Housing and Communal Services in visiting potential land plots."

He notes that Belarus could save around 90 percent of current gas usage by operating such plants, lacking its own natural deposits.

"Our people have become used to gas so it would be problematic to shift to local fuels but, in this case, we can produce our own gas for general supply. Our communal machinery could use it and it could also supply gas-fuelling stations. Europe is already growing herbage for this purpose, while Belarus has it in great quantities. We simply need to use it wisely," adds Mr. Kochanovsky.

Income depends on economics

By Nikolay Zhdanovich

Civil servant salaries to rise, though modestly, from April

The rise is being determined by the Council of Ministers' 2015 regulation 'On Measures to Improve Payments to Workers of Public Sector Organisations and Other Subsidised Organisations, Whose Employees are Entitled to the Same Salary Terms as Workers in Public Sector Organisations.'

Coefficients relating to the base wage rate are multiplied according to a specific system, to govern the increase in such salaries, and will be separate from all other bonuses relating to employment. Much will depend on the state budget and funds saved by individual organisations but public sector employees will see their wages increase, though modestly, from the months of April, July and October.

Good prospects clearly outlined

By Natalia Stepankova

Belarus and Latvia jointly implement over 2,000 investment projects

"Belarusian-Latvian co-operation enjoys centuries-long history, characterised by the expansion of contacts and interaction," notes the Chairman of the Belarusian Twin Towns Public Association. A member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Boris Batura, has told those gathered for the third meeting of Belarusian and Latvian Twin Towns and Partners, "Latvia is Belarus' major partner and investor, ranked 10th for direct investment into the Belarusian economy."

He continued, "The total number of jointly implemented investment projects in trade, transport and financial services, alongside industry and agriculture, exceeds 2,000. Belarus has over 660 organisations with Latvian participation (including individual entrepreneurs) and 31 representations of Latvian companies. Meanwhile, Latvia has over 1,500 firms with Belarusian investments."

Mr. Batura stressed the dynamic development of mutual trade, including in the spheres of transport, tourism, information, and computer and business services. Belarus and Latvia have good prospects to expand co-operation across logistics, IT and the manufacture of innovative goods.

Latvian consumers are well aware of Belarusian agricultural and automobile vehicles, with small-scale 'Belarus' tractors assembled in Latvia, alongside construction and municipal vehicles. Belarus' Amkodor entered the Latvian market with its loading equipment in 2014.

Mr. Batura noted that Belarus exports a wide assortment of food products, clothes, knitwear, footwear and household appliances to Latvia, while Latvian food products and cosmetics are well-known in Belarus. Latvia is an important transit partner, with 80 percent of Belarusian exports shipped by sea via Latvian ports.

Strong reinforcement for hundreds of metres of walls

New town being built near the small Belarusian town of Ostrovets, to accommodate construction and service staff of the first Belarusian nuclear power station

By Vladimir Yakovlev

Construction of residential district #1 is close to completion, along one side of a newly asphalted road, leading to the station. Thirteen multi-storey buildings are already open and the state commission is soon to sign off upon another two. The second residential district is being built on the opposite side, with three buildings ready and another five to come. The district will reach full completion by 2016 and, a year later, construction of a third will be launched, where the current centre of the original town exists.

In addition, a school and kindergartens are being built, as the Chairman of the Ostrovets District Executive Committee, Adam Kovalko, proudly explains. He tells us, "We'll provide comfortable accommodation to all those building the station. As regards future staff, many have already arrived with their families so we'll soon launch construction of a new kindergarten. We need to develop communal housing, while expanding heating and sewerage infrastructure. We'll soon begin on a new block for the local hospital, supplying 400 beds and the latest equipment, at a cost of over Br1 trillion."

According to forecasts, after the second reactor comes into operation, Ostrovets' population will grow to 25,000: triple its original size. The Belarusian-Russian construction site will see the biggest physical changes this year, including the raising of a 167m cooling tower (rivalling the tallest Minsk



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

buildings) — for cooling the nuclear power station's aggregates.

The construction site is the most important in Belarus, with 102 major objects, the tallest so far being 34m high. The first reactor will be over 44m tall (above sea

level). This year, more than \$650m is being spent on construction at the site, with around 50,000 tonnes of fittings assembled (transported by a thousand railway carriages) and 360,000 cubic metres of concrete spread. The trucks necessary

New residential micro-district will soon welcome its dwellers

At the construction site of Belarusian nuclear power station

to deliver so many construction materials would connect Minsk and Moscow! The scale of the thick reactor casing is also difficult to comprehend; it requires several dozen cranes.

This year, 6,200 specialists will be working on the site (up from 3,500). Most will be from Belarus, with some Russians (workers with the general contracting company and those assembling necessary equipment and devices). Most of the equipment has been imported from Russia and is now on site. The power station's general director, Mikhail Filimonov, notes, "I must praise our joint work. The plans we outlined at the begin-

ning of construction have been realised."

The high pace of construction is assisted by technological approaches, such as large-block assembly of the reactor. Thick segments of steel corrugated fittings are pre-welded, ready for assembly on site by cranes. Their anti-corrosion covering will prevent against rust for years to come. Meanwhile, huge steel pipes to circulate the cooling water supply are being welded in Belarus (saving the cost of importing from Ukraine and Russia).

Of course, we could leave everything to the general contractor, including the employment of its own workers, but it saves a great deal of money to work locally. Today's expenses will influence the prime cost of the electricity first produced by the Belarusian nuclear power station, launching in 2018 (for 60 years). Naturally, costs must be recouped.

Trust forms basis of negotiations

By Alexander Pimenov

Vienna hosts signing of debut agreement between Belarusbank OJSC and Austrian Control Bank, financing export-import transactions between Belarusian and Austrian businesses, under guarantee of Austrian Finance Ministry

Chairman of Belarusbank's Board, Sergei Pisarik, signed the document with Board member and Director General Rudolf Scholten, of Austria, alongside employees of corresponding business subdivisions of the Austrian financial institution.

"Such guarantees are an outstanding and unprecedented case, testifying to the high trust in our bank and recognition of its business reputation. This debut agreement allows us entrance to a new

level of relations in the sphere of international business," notes Mr. Pisarik.

Belarusbank is convinced that the implementation of this transaction will facilitate the strengthening and development of collaboration between our two countries.

The Austrian Control Bank was founded in 1946 and is a specialised institution in Austria, focusing on the promotion of Austrian industrial produce to foreign markets by providing insurance of export loans. It combines the functions of an export insurance agency and a bank.



Obvious response to dynamic Finnish trade

By Polina Kononova

Although Minsk is just one hour from Helsinki by plane, the pace of our bilateral trade is far from ideal, with most of the \$160m+ trade figure stemming from Finnish imports. Minsk's recent hosting of the Belarusian-Finnish Business Forum has enabled discussion of bilateral co-operation and paths to progress, building upon the existing platform.

The Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vladimir Ulakhovich, is convinced that our exports to Finland can grow in volume, with recent business meetings and forthcoming contract signings sure to raise levels. The sphere enjoys potential.

Meanwhile, Finland views Belarus as a 'bridge' to sales across the Eurasian Economic Union, and we



At business forum

see Finland as a gateway to the Scandinavian market. Our states face a strange situation since Finnish producers are calculating losses due to Russian sanctions while Belarusians are searching for diversified exports. The Under-Secretary of State for External Economic Relations, Matti Anttonen, has outlined several spheres for co-operation: forestry, energy, IT and ecological developments. The first two are of special focus, as our Finnish partners concentrate on

wood processing and paper-making.

The Finns are ready to propose complex packages — including technologies and equipment. In the sphere of energy, they are seeking to improve energy efficiency, the use of alternative energy sources and the development of peat mines. Timo Luukkainen, who headed the recent Finnish business delegation, is confident that energy efficiency and renewable sources could dominate our future bilateral relations, as he believes that Belarus enjoys potential in this sphere. He adds that the Finns are ready to share their experience and developments, including the use of wind energy, which is saving huge resources in Finland.

The forum attracted representatives of over 20 companies from Finland. Our foreign partners have now invited Belarus to take part in the SLUSH Forum: annually hosted by Helsinki, in November.

Smiled upon by Vozhyk

Belarusian Vitaly Ortyukh: the designer of last year's mascot for the Ice Hockey World Championship, held in Minsk, and the mascot for the 2015 World Futsal Championship

By German Moskalenko

Vitaly, who designed the mascots for two world championships (perhaps deserving of the Guinness Book of Records) is talented in everything.

What induced you to design the World Championship mascot?

Since my time at the institute, I've enjoyed entering competitions so, as soon as I heard about the contest to design the Ice Hockey World Championship mascot, I decided to take part. I was inspired by my disappointment with the Buslik (stork) mascot used at the Minsk Youth World Ice Hockey Championship, feeling that I could do better. It was this that made me try my hand, as I didn't want to see a mascot chosen that disappointed me. Once I began thinking, I realised that I needed to choose one of our two national symbols: the stork or auroch. I felt disposed towards the second, although I was initially worried as to how to draw an auroch on skates, playing ice hockey. However, on my third day of sketching, I began to make progress with Volat.

Has your life changed since designing the Ice Hockey World Championship mascot?

It has, as I now have more or-

ders on the sports theme. I've developed an emblem and uniform for the ice-hockey team, and was asked to design medals for the Freestyle World Cup stage, held in Raubichi. My first certificate of honour hangs on the wall, signed by Mikhail Myasnikovich, the then Prime Minister, in gratitude for my help.



What inspired you to create Vozhyk (the hedgehog in Belarusian): the World Futsal Championship mascot?

Soon after I was asked to create the mascot, Sergey Safonov, the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Futsal Federation and head coach of the national team, mentioned that he'd prefer me to



Designer Vitaly Ortyukh

use a beaver or a lynx. I wasn't keen, feeling that I couldn't connect them with football. I chose the hedgehog for its ability to roll itself into a ball. Plus, the championship starts in April, which is when hedgehogs emerge from hibernation. People are fond of hedgehogs of course. Instead of showing it rolling apples, mine rolls balls. When I first brought my sketch to the federation, they seemed bewildered but they soon came round to my arguments. They did ask me to remove the footballs from hedgehog's needles though. My hedgehog is giving a thumbs-up gesture of encouragement. In Belarusian, he's called Vozhyk which is rather similar to Volat.

Are you a citizen of Minsk?

Yes, I was born and I live in Minsk, having grown up near the well-known Minsk Traktor Stadium. It has my favourite forest park, in which I climbed as a child. I knew every tree. My father's family comes from the village of Artyukhi, in the Stolbtsy District of the Minsk



Region. My great-grandfather was a forester to the Radziwill family, working alongside Yakub Kolas' father. My grandmother went on to live in his forester's hut and that's where I often spent my holidays.

Do you enjoy sport?

Since childhood, and very much so! I like its sense of fair play. Most of all, I love cycling; the bicycle is the most ingenious invention! When the weather is kind, I cycle 10-20km daily, followed by 3km of running. In winter, I ski or snowboard. In reward for designing the Ice Hockey World Championship mascot, I received tickets for our Belarusian matches and for the final round: for me and for my family. I made myself a costume by attaching an auroch's forelock with horns to my cycling helmet and received a prize from the sponsors of the championship for my efforts.

Our futsal players are the most titled Belarusian national team, being double champions of Europe. Our sportsmen are ready to rival any team worldwide, as our Minsk World Championship confirmed.

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

How to beat cholesterol



Reducing your cholesterol level through diet
(L. Tarasov, Bykhov)

Cholesterol is one of the main causes of atherosclerosis (hardening of the arteries), which kills millions annually. In fact, the human body contains a great deal of cholesterol, which is essential to all cell membranes. Cholesterol exists in two forms: low-density lipoprotein (LDL) is 'bad', since it hardens the arteries; while high-density lipoprotein (HDL) is 'good', as it protects vascular walls.

In general, we are advised to have a cholesterol level of less than 5 millimoles/litre (less than 4.5 millimoles/litre for those suffering from cardiovascular diseases or diabetes). High concentrations of cholesterol in the blood can promote the hardening of artery walls, placing us at risk of serious cardiovascular diseases, such as stenocardia (ischemic heart disease) and myocardial infarction, cerebral stroke and restricted blood supply to the lower extremities.

To maintain a healthy body, keep your consumption of cholesterol to within 300 mg a day; meanwhile, those with hypercholesterolemia and cardiovascular diseases should consume no more than 200 mg a day. However, you need a holistic approach to lower cholesterol levels. Consult your doctor to choose the right path for your age, lifestyle and current health situation.

General recommendations are as follows:

- Observe a healthy diet (see diet recommendations below);
- Stay within a healthy weight;
- Increase your physical activity;
- Don't smoke;
- Take your prescribed medications.



Basic recommendations to reduce your blood cholesterol level via your diet:

- Consume more polyunsaturated fats and fewer saturated fats; eat less beef, pork and mutton, choosing lower-fat meat, such as chicken (remove skin and fat before cooking).
- Swap whole milk for skimmed and replace animal fats (butter, lard and dairy products) with vegetable oils (such as sunflower, olive or corn).
- Eat more oily fish (at least two portions weekly): the polyunsaturated fats reduce cholesterol levels. Try salmon, mackerel, herring, sardines or lake trout.
- Include sea kale in your diet; its considerable quantities of iodine support lipid exchange, helping your body remove blood cholesterol.
- Eat more water-soluble fibre, as found in apples, dried beans, peas, kidney beans and rolled oats. Try some porridge and other whole grains and cereals: brown rice, buckwheat and dark bread.
- Eat at least 400g of fruit and vegetables daily (including legumes but excluding potatoes).
- Reduce your consumption of table salt to 5-6g a day and your alcohol consumption to no more than one glass of wine or one measure of spirits daily.

If advised to change your diet to reduce your cholesterol level, stay focused. Try not to 'break' your regime more than once every fortnight, to allow you to enjoy celebrations and gatherings where temptation cannot be resisted.

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

Rumours dispelled as smoke disperses

Strong fires within the Ukrainian Chernobyl affected zone have aroused 'Internet panic' with people speculating that burning vegetation (within which radionuclides remain) may emit dangerous air-borne radioactive smoke. Such proclamations as 'Don't go out without a respirator!' and 'Toxic smoke can easily enter your lungs and stomach, almost guaranteeing cancer!' are unfounded, asserts the head of radioecology laboratory at the Institute of Radiobiology, of the National Academy of Sciences.

By Lyudmila Kirillova

Candidate of agricultural sciences, Alexander Nikitin, tells us, "Serious scientific studies show that even powerful fires in heavily radionuclide contaminated 'Chernobyl' forests have no impact on the population!"

The question of transference of radionuclides via forest fires in the exclusion zone has been raised repeatedly over the years, especially during dry months. Belaru-

sian and Ukrainian scientists have devoted much time and energy to investigating the risks to human health. The NAS Institute of Radiology reports that pollution of the lower atmosphere by radionuclides depends on the time of year, the distance from the exclusion zone, anthropogenic factors and forest fires. Their radioecology risk-model allows them to forecast possible outcomes (named among the top ten achievements of the NAS last year).

Model evaluation has shown that the probability of a significant increase in volumetric activity of 'Chernobyl' radionuclides is very low, even near problem areas. Mr. Nikitin assures us, "More remote Belarusian settlements have very little chance of ever being affected. Our conclusions are supported by gamma background measurements taken by the Institute from April 28th-30th, in the Belarusian part of the exclusion zone, in the Kh-

oiniki District and in Gomel. Additionally, the Republican Centre for Hydrometeorology, the Control of Radioactive Pollution and Environmental Monitoring has been taking measurements." He refutes all speculative advice about spending less time outside, saying that natural radon, which accumulates indoors from building materials, is more prevalent than radionuclides allegedly brought from forest fire smoke from the Chernobyl area.

Love conquers everything

Young Belarusian artist dreams of establishing children's icon painting school: the first of its kind countrywide

By Yuri Mirsky

On meeting pupils from the Sunday school of St. Peter and Paul's Church, in the agro-town of Senitsa (Minsk District), I was soon convinced that parents were sending their children there from neighbouring villages and, even, from Minsk with good reason. The children's talents for poetry and painting are encouraged with kindness, spirituality and artistry.

Among Father Boris' teachers is Ivan Petrushik: a professional designer and a heaven-sent teacher.

Ivan's icon paintings can be found adorning various Kiev churches. At the Sunday school, Mr. Petrushik lectures in drawing and how to get along with our fellow man. Confined to a wheelchair since suffering from severe

illness, his determined spirit remains evident: he has been named Belarusian Paralympic skiing champion four times. On arriving at his workshop, I find Ivan painting an icon.

Why aren't your works on display in Belarusian churches, rather than in the 'mother of Russian cities': Kiev?

It was Fate. While unwell, I underwent treatment in Kiev and met my spiritual father. With his blessing, I began mastering the secrets of icon painting. In fact, my relatives live in Ukraine, so I try to visit them

as often as possible. Sadly, this is now more difficult, because of the unstable situation. It pains my heart to think of brothers attacking each other with weapons and killing. With this in mind, I hope that the icons I've painted for Ukrainian churches, over 20 in number, will make a spiritual contribution to bringing peace in the east of the country.

As regards Belarus, few know of my icons, as they've never been showcased to a wide public here.

Icons usually depict Biblical themes and stories, promoting kindness and fairness rather than exploring violence.

That is so, and my plots are exclusively Biblical. I never paint anything from my own imagination. I study my chosen plot and its significance for the Christian world with care. As a rule, iconographers prefer to use previously depicted plots. Of course, I could use a Biblical theme never before drawn but it would be a huge responsibility.

Why do you want to set up a children's icon painting school in Belarus?

There are examples of art bringing inspiration in troubled times: when people have lost heart and are disconcerted. I dream of launching a school to unite not only pupils but all those with interest. Many children who attend our Sunday school drawing classes have talent. Probably, my dream will come true: in Senitsa's St. Peter and Paul's Church,



Family icon *refer to use previously depicted plots. Of course, I could use a Biblical theme never before drawn but it would be a huge responsibility.*



Ivan Petrushik (in the centre) works

"There are examples of art bringing inspiration in troubled times: when people have lost heart and are disconcerted. I dream of launching a school to unite not only pupils but all those with interest."

or in my hometown of Kobrin.

How do you combine icon painting and sport? You are part of Belarusian Paralympic history.

Seven years ago, I met some wonderful people: coaches of Belarus' Paralympic team. They recommended that I try my hand at sport, so I stayed in Minsk, with the state paying for my residence at the Or-

bita Hotel during long months of training. Later, a deputy from the House of Representatives, Mikhail Volkov, helped me greatly. I began with skiing but then turned to roller sports and adapted academic rowing.

My countrymen helped me collect money to buy my own boat, which has been equipped for Para-

lympic performances by coaches Tamara Shimanskaya and Alexander Popov. God grant them good health! They also train multi Paralympic champion Lyuda Volchek, who specialises in ski racing, rowing and kayaking on mountain rivers. I'm a quadruple Belarusian champion in ski racing, having taken part in international competitions. I'm also proud of being the only handicapped sportsman (in my class) with back problems who's managed to cover 15km in the Swedish mountains. I was suffering from nosebleeds due to tension but I reached the finish line, where I received a standing ovation.

Spirituality is surely no empty phrase

By Natalia Stepankova

The publication of the Gypsy Bible was an event of great significance for the Romany community in Belarus last year, notes Valdemar Kalinin, who worked upon it for 25 years. Now in London, he is teaching English, conducting research, and translating the edition into Belarusian.

Most of the Romany community is deeply religious, with over 80 percent being practising Orthodox Catholics, as Oleg Kozlovsky, the Chairman of the Belarusian Gypsy diaspora, notes. He explains, "The green colour on our flag signifies unification with the earth that feeds us, while blue represents spiritual life, which helps us to overcome all difficulties."

The Bible in their native language is to be distributed



Among popular books

across all churches sited in regions home to Romany communities: a move yet to be taken in Russia, Ukraine or the Baltic countries. The International Day of Gypsy People was first marked on April 8th, 1971: celebrated in Belarus by about 60,000 people. Known for preserving their customs and traditions with care, the community has more than ten artistic collectives in Belarus:

one such is the Gypsy Dzhana Roma group, which has won various competitions.

"Gypsy people have no need of borders; no nation or city 'holds' us; we seek only peace. Belarus' kind and tolerant people offer a place where representatives of various nationalities may feel comfortable," comments Mr. Kozlovsky, speaking on behalf of the diaspora.

Place of human birth can't be changed

Those who have read Ilf and Petrov should gain acquaintance with the writing of their contemporary, Belarusian Andrey Mryi

By Victor Andreev

His *Notes of Samosuy* were written at the same time at *The Twelve Chairs* and *The Little Golden Calf*, presenting a satirical critique of Belarusian life in the 1920s. Mryi only gained a public following towards the end of his life, having had his work repressed for many years. Only recently has his real birthplace been located, alongside the Minsk street on which he lived. His daughter, literary critic Natalia Prushinskaya, returned from Petrozavodsk, Mryi's later home, to help. She tells us that encyclopaedias list

Mryi (real name Andrey Shashalevich) as being born in Paluzh (today's Krasnopolie District) but that his true birthplace was Dolgovichi, in the Mstislavl District.

Few believed Natalia's assertions, until she located the personal records of her father at the Central Archive of the Committee for State Security, showing his actual place of the birth. The documents also reveal the address of his Minsk home, where he lived until his arrest in 1934: Stolpetsky Lane's Building 6, Apartment 1. The address no longer exists but is indicated on old maps as having led from today's Romanovskaya



Andrey Mryi

Sloboda Street (between buildings 9 and 11) to Korolya Street (between buildings 12 and 18).

Several pre-war buildings remain from those days, indicating the likely style of Mryi's home, while our knowledge of its approximate location allows it to be included on literary tours of the capital. Meanwhile, those in the Mstislavl District can visit his birthplace.

Thousands rally to demand resignation of Macedonia's PM

Anti-government protesters say they will camp out on the streets of Skopje until the prime minister resigns

Tens of thousands of protesters took to the streets in Skopje on Sunday, the capital of the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia. The crowds called for the resignation of Prime Minister Nikola Gruevski in the central avenue outside his government office.

Since February the Prime Minister, who has served for nine years, has faced a wave of embarrassing revelations against him and his ministers in relation to taped conversations that appear to expose tight government control over journalists, judges and the conduct of elections. Gruevski says he did not order the recordings and that the audio has been doctored.

The opposition Social Democrat leader Zoran Zaev says the tapes were made illegally by the government as part of a mass surveillance operation targeting 20,000 allies and opponents alike, and leaked to him by a whistleblower. The combination of Macedonian and Albanian flags in the crowd revealed a dramatic display of ethnic unity against the government. Ethnic Albanians currently account for some 30 percent of the population but the two communities live largely separate lives.



Protesters wave Macedonian and Albanian flags during the demonstration

In 2001 the Former Yugoslav Republic was on the brink of civil war following an ethnic Albanian insurgency. The opposition has asked for the protests to continue until the Prime Minister steps down but Gruevski is standing his ground. Speaking to the pro-government Sitel TV he said: 'If

I back down it would be a cowardly move. I'll face down the attacks.'

The protests in Macedonia may only be the beginning of the threat to stability in the Balkans. Last week, gun battles in the Balkan city of Kumanovo, about 20 kilometers (12.5 miles) from Skopje, left eight po-

lice officers and 14 others dead. The country's Internal Affairs Ministry described the targets of the police raid that resulted in the gun battles as a group of roughly '70 terrorists'. Macedonian authorities accused the group of plotting attacks on government institutions.

Lufthansa strikes put on hold as union mediates

Strikes by Lufthansa pilots have been put back until the end of July after their union, Vereinigung Cockpit (VC) agreed with the airline to enter a mediation programme

Lufthansa said late last month it was prepared to hold discussions on all outstanding pay issues, in order to end to a row which has resulted in 15 strikes and cost it over 240 million Euro. The crash of a Germanwings plane in March which appears to have been deliberately caused by the co-pilot may have encouraged more harmony among Lufthansa staff. Germanwings is a subsidiary of Lufthansa.

British unemployment falls to seven year low

'A testament to our long-term economic plan', that was the initial reaction from the UK's new Work and Pensions Minister, Priti Patel, to the official data on employment

Unemployment fell again — down in the first quarter by 35,000 from the previous quarter to 1.83 million, the lowest for seven years. At the same time, the total number in work rose to 31.1 million. Figures for average pay are up 2.2 percent in the quarter compared with a year earlier.

The data means that regular pay is now growing at its fastest rate for nearly four years. One analyst reacted saying the British economy had become 'an incredible job-creating machine'.

Japan car giants in global recall over air bag safety fears

Six and a half million Toyota and Nissan cars are being recalled globally

The move by the Japanese car giants is to replace potentially faulty airbag inflators in several of their models. Toyota said it would affect cars made between March 2003 and November 2007.

It is the latest twist in the saga of the air bags made by Japanese car parts company Takata which has been linked to at least six deaths — all in Honda cars. Honda, the country's third biggest car maker, said it was also preparing to announce more car recalls.

Toyota and Nissan said the move was for investigative purposes and no accidents or injuries have been reported.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Cuba's vintage and classical cars in focus

They are iconic symbols of Cuba like cigars and rum: pre-revolution 1950s American classic cars

But the Cadillacs, Chevrolets and Oldsmobiles are not nostalgic collectors' items on the island; they are necessities for Cubans who have no modern alternatives — and breakdowns are frequent.

Maintenance can be a nightmare for workshops such as 'Nostalgicar' in Havana; spare parts have to be smuggled out of the US and are increasingly hard to find.

The thaw in American-Cuban relations has focused thoughts on the future, should trade barriers

come down.

"What could happen in Cuba in my opinion is that modern cars will quickly follow in our streets, but there will still be a niche market for classic cars," said Nostalgicar's manager Julio Alvares.

Cuba of course faces questions that go beyond the fate of the old vehicles, whose elegance has been noted by many an awestruck visitor, but which have been described as 'a legacy of the country's isolation'.

Asked whether he is optimistic for the future, Alvares paused lengthily and answered cautiously, "I do believe in the changes that are taking place in Cuba."

Melting of Larsen C ice shelf in Antarctic may raise sea levels

One of the largest ice shelves in Antarctica is under threat, thinning dramatically on both sides, its surface and beneath. The ice shelf is called Larsen C and its two neighbours, Larsen A and B have already collapsed in 1995 and 2002.

A study by the British Antarctic Survey has found that the ice shelf is melting not just because of hotter air but also due to the warming of the ocean. Until now scientists were not sure about the role of oceans in collapsing ice shelves. Now as it melts, Larsen C will play a role in the rising of the level of the ocean.

"When Larsen A and B were lost, the glaciers behind them accelerated and they are now contributing a significant fraction of the sea-level rise from the whole of Antarctica. Larsen C is bigger and if it were to be lost in the next few decades then it would actually add to the projections of the sea-level rise by 2100.

"We expect that the sea-level rise around the world will be something in excess of 50cm higher by 2100 than it's at present and that will cause problems for coastal and



low-lying cities," explained David Vaughan, a glaciologist with the British Antarctic Survey.

The research team based their findings on combined satellite and eight radar surveys between 1998 and 2012. During that time Larsen C lost an average of four metres of ice and had lowered by an average of one metre at the surface.

The ice shelf is named after Captain Carl Anton Larsen who was the master of the Norwegian whaling vessel Jason, which sailed through these waters in 1893.



At personal exhibition of painter Vladimir Kozhukh at Minsk's Palace of Arts

Picturesque contemplations dedicated to life's diversity

Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus Vladimir Kozhukh presents personal exhibition at Minsk's Palace of Arts, greatly pleasing the audience

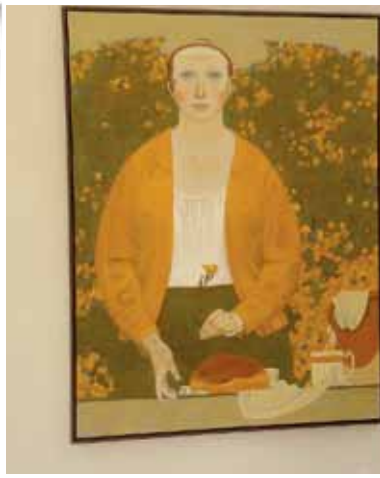
By Victor Mikhailov

Mr. Kozhukh's narrative pictures and landscapes, and female portraits dominate his creativity. As he explains, "Nature and feminine energy are inextricably connected; my pictures tend to be connected with female labour or are devoted to mythological images. Each artist aspires towards unreachable goals and who wouldn't want their work to be compared to da Vinci's *Giaconda* (Mona Lisa). However, I feel sure that my best work lies ahead. I haven't created my 'Giaconda' yet."

Mr. Kozhukh has been awarded the President's 'For Spiritual Revival' Special Prize, bestowed upon figures of culture and arts. However, he remains modest, commenting, "It's very difficult to assess a canvas' artistic value, since everyone has their own criteria. For me, there must be a professional approach; others sometimes focus on a picturesque or conceptual solution."

Born in the Brest Region's Drohichin, Mr. Kozhukh studied at Minsk's Art College (named after A.K. Glebov) and then at the Belarusian State Theatre and Art Institute's Easel Painting Department. He also took studio internships at the Academy of Arts of the USSR in Minsk, and has enjoyed personal exhibitions in Moscow, Minsk, Brest, Gomel, Vienna, Baden-Baden and Berlin.

His most prominent motif is the personification of nature's powers, addressing the archaic layers of Belarus' romantic ethnic culture: he writes as if hearing music, depicting a quiet and melancholic world,



Artist Vladimir Kozhukh and kaleidoscope of his author's works



the nuclear power station site. We changed our clothes for military uniform and felt like partisans! Thank God, none of our group suffered fatal consequences from that trip. The town of Pripyat and the abandoned villages made an especially depressing impression. I remember drawing the portraits of militiamen at roadblocks and, once, a very old woman approached, asking to return to her home. They told her that



without self-irony (a feature common in contemporary art).

His bright and decorative manner is individual, with works often resembling decorative panels, as if in-

spired by the delicate silhouettes of Orthodox icons. His figures are stylised and allegorical, drawn from literature and mythology, classical and Slavonic: spirits of flowers, trees, the Earth, water and sky.

Mr. Kozhukh has no interest in glamour. "If I see something of this kind, I try to correct it," he admits. On the subject of depicting the nature of beauty (so revered by artists) he jokes that he is deemed by Fate to ponder the issues, being born on the eve of

International Women's Day: March 7th. Moreover, his family is filled with women. "I have eight aunts on my mother's side alone. I also have two daughters but no granddaughters yet: only a grandson so far."

Rural female workers are romanticised on Mr. Kozhukh's canvases, resembling the wise female narrators of children's folk and fairy-tales, from films.

A pupil of People's Artists Mai Dantsig and Mikhail Savitsky, Mr. Kozhukh once adhered strictly to principles of realism in painting, until he saw first hand the effects of the Chernobyl disaster.

"A year after the accident, I went to the exclusion zone with a group of painters, being told that it wasn't dangerous there. Concerts were organised across affected territories, to raise people's spirits, with actors and musicians performing. We spent three weeks there and even visited

they couldn't let her in. I remember well, seeing her standing near the barrier, looking sorrowfully into the distance. It inspired me to create a work entitled *Nostalgia*. We made sketches during the trip, which we turned into paintings on our return to Minsk. I didn't want to create a documentary approach, since there were plenty of photos already. Our works were then displayed at an exhibition in the Belarusian capital. The Chernobyl topic was being discussed by the UN at the time, so we were asked to display our work at the UN headquarters," he recalls.

In the 1990s, in the age of publicity, when painters were keen to address topical subjects, Mr. Kozhukh turned to romance. Since then, he has been creating landscapes and still-life paintings. Last year, he made a series of pieces dedicated to Christian festivals, and continues to create his gallery of muses.

Northern Athens enjoy warm atmosphere

Just a few years ago, Michal Kleofas Oginski's mansion in Zalesie (near Smorgon) was in a state of neglect. The favourite house of our outstanding countryman — which attracted artistic personalities and was once proudly called the 'Northern Athens' — left the impression that it might soon be renamed as the 'Northern Ruins'. However, we can now assert that the mansion has been saved and is operating as a centre of culture and tourism. The recent musical festival, the *Year of Oginski in Zalesie*, was a fitting tribute to the composer's work.

By Irina Ovsepyan

2015 is the Year of Oginski, as declared by UNESCO, marking the 250th anniversary of the great man's birth; 200 years ago, the composer's mansion was built in Zalesie, becoming a hub for musicians and artists not only from Belarusian lands but for all Europe. The first concert to be hosted by the site was *Oginski's Musical Treasures*, with *Vytoki* band entertaining guests from Minsk, Molodechno and Smorgon. International laureate Alexey Frolov (fagotto) joined Sergey Makhov (flute) and Irina Avdeeva (piano forte) in opening the festival, playing Michal Kleofas Oginski's G-major *Polonaise*, followed by works composed by Karol Oginski, Michal Kazimir and other members of the famous and talented family.

Some might think that these rare and little known pieces are valuable only to specialists, since the Oginskis were amateur musicians rather than professional composers. However, the Zalesie festival aims to recreate the chamber and spiritual atmosphere which reigned in this 'Northern Athens'. The hall, 200 years ago, gathered amateur musicians and famous singers and composers alike: talent to rival the greatest concert halls of today.

The festival audience so eagerly anticipated hearing Oginski's polonaise that they quite 'demanded' it to be played. Kleofas' famous



Year of Oginski in Zalesie Festival begins with concert by Vytoki band soloists



Zalesie to become new cultural and tourist centre of Belarus

Farewell to Homeland inspired a standing reception, accompanied by some tears and, of course, a riot of final applause.

Zalesie mansion has been restored in a relatively short period of time and may yet become one

of Belarus' major tourist brands, rivalling Mir and Nesvizh. All work has been carried out by Belarusian specialists, with the restoration process involving construction organisations from Smorgon; 19th century furniture has also

been restored by Belarusian specialists, as Tatiana Kleshchenok explains. The junior research assistant at the museum-mansion tells us that few of Michal Kleofas' possessions remain, obliging items to be purchased at auction. Some

truly reflect the spirit of the age. Meanwhile, the house now has nine hotel rooms, including bed linen, suitable for those wishing to stay the night. "We receive many such requests," she explains.

The newly restored rooms, smelling of lacquer and wood, lack many exhibits as yet, but a local greenhouse has supplied cheese plants, dragon-trees and bright phalenopsis to fill empty spaces. Eventually, a café will open, and the house will gradually fill with more artefacts. By September; there should be a complete collection. Newly-weds are already heading to its apple orchard with their photographers, admiring the beautiful and romantic setting.



PAVEL CHUYKO

Night of Museums at Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace in Gomel

By Boris Svetlov

Sounds of Time exhibition presents instruments and possessions of legendary head of Pesnyary, Vladimir Mulyavin, within Night of Museums-2015 at Gomel's Palace and Park Estate

From 9pm until 11pm, Gomel's Palace and Park Estate, within the halls of the Rumyantsev-Paskevich Palace, presented the *Sounds of Time* musical exhibition, with traditional exhibits accompanied by music typical of the time of their creation and existence. Visitors were introduced to new exhibits, some on loan from other museums, cultural institutions and private collectors from across the Republic.

Of particular note was a display of clocks from the time of Napoleon III and guests were able to join a pottery master class or watch dance and music groups, in the Colonnaded Hall, and on the open ramp in front of the Palace. The highlight of the *Sounds of Time* project was a performance by *Drum Ecstasy*, a Belarusian rock band whose tracks have been used for such films as *Night Watch*, *Day Watch*, *Dark World*, *Hitler Kaput* and *Men Don't Cry*. More than 500 museum exhibits were on display for the special evening.

Descendant of great poet responds to proposal

By Anastasia Shoplya

Great-great-grandson of legendary poet Alexander Pushkin supports K.U.K.L.A. international charity initiative, by the Zapashny brothers, being implemented with Belarusian Association of UNESCO Clubs, premiering K.U.K.L.A. show of famous artists, producers and directors

The initiative aims to find talented young people with special life stories, through art envoys around the world. Alexander Pushkin is the only direct descendant of the Russian literary genius and now lives in Belgium, with his wife Maria. Alexander set up the foundation to support Russian culture and charity ventures, being keen to encourage young people to explore their creativity, rather than spending time on the street or at computer screens.

He emphasises, "I really like the idea of the famous brothers gathering unique children's stories and dreams from around the world. I've gladly accepted the title of 'art envoy', deciding to support this initiative in Belgium. We've outlined some plans. I've never been to your country or to an authentic Russian circus so I'm happy to come to Minsk to see the show."

Project participants and art envoys will be making dolls for display in September, during the *K.U.K.L.A.* show, by the famous brothers, at Minsk-Arena. Also taking part are former Iron Maiden member Tony Moore, People's Artist of Moldova Constantin Moscovici, and others.

Action devoted to eternal values

By Svetlana Vegero

Spiritual Night of Museums hosted by Brest's Saved Artistic Treasures Museum

Eternal Treasures launched this year's *Night of Museums* project, at Brest's Regional Local History Museum's branch — Saved Artistic Treasures Museum. Devoted to universal Christian values of faith, hope, love, motherland, peace and beauty, Brest-Kobrin Epar-

chy helped in its organisation. The Pilgrimage Department of the Eparchy offered tours of Orthodox shrines across the Brest Region and Belarus. Meanwhile, Sunday school teachers helped visitors participate in master classes on embroidery with golden threads, and the making of Easter gifts.

Kryly Halopa Theatre premiered its documentary project, entitled *Stories of Belarus. Velikoe Selo*. The guests to the museum were



Visitors to the Brest museum

also able to see the shadow puppet show *Stories of Velikoe Selo*, staged by the the-

atre's artiste Yelena Shtyk and featuring students from Velikoe Selo settlement, in

the Pruzhany District.

Other programme events have included exhibits never before displayed publicly, and a performance of *Meeting in Feodosia*, by the Svetloyar Russian club. The interactive *Feast of Feasts* exhibition was performed by Brest State Musical College students (named after Grigory Shirma) and the Blagovest Children and Youth Choir of Holy Simeon Cathedral's Sunday school entertained with sacred choral music.

Losing to Canadians but reaching quarter-finals

Before the match, fans believed that Belarus would be able to defeat Canada in the World Championship's quarter-finals; sadly, miracles don't happen that often! Belarus appears to have used up its luck by having beaten the US squad. The Canadians arrived in a mood ready to crush their opponents and, unsurprisingly, tore our team apart.

By Yegor Glebov

Within barely a minute, the Canadians had scored their first goal. Some fans had hardly had time to open their beer bottles. More goals were steadily forthcoming, with fans almost hiding their eyes in horror. Of course, ice hockey is a sport for 'true' men. Dave Lewis' trainees played until the final whistle, ending with a score of 9:0.

The head coach of the Belarusian team made no attempt at excuses, saying, "Let me congratulate Todd, his training staff and all personnel, who demonstrated wonderful ice hockey. Their skills, speed, puck management, powerful attacks and tactics were at the highest possible level. There is nothing we could have done: we were simply surviving. I'm happy that this match is over. It's definitely not the style of ice hockey we must and can play. The team did a great job in reaching the quarter-finals. Probably, it surprises some. We have a wonderful team and I'm proud of them."

Despite the Belarusians' loss to Canada, many are proud of the team, which has performed well so far throughout the World Championship, winning fans' hearts. It seems that the whole city of talking about ice-hockey, on every trolley bus and in every café. Our team is now among



Canada's Tyler Ennis (L) fights for the puck with Belarus' Ilya Shinkevich

the eight strongest squads globally, and the Canadians are known as world leaders.

Following their World Championship play, Kevin Lalonde, Andrey Kostitsyn and Alexey Kalyuzhny have been named best players, with

Alexander Kitarov, Yevgeny Dadonov and Sergey Kostitsyn also worthy of recognition. All team members have shown their mettle, taking the squad into seventh place in the tournament ratings and 9th in the latest rankings, allowing Minsk to host a qualifying

round for the 2018 Olympic Games from September 1st-4th, 2016. Mr. Lewis' team will 'challenge' the ticket to Pyeongchang with the national teams of Denmark and Slovenia, as well as the squad that will earn this right in February 2016.

World record in honour of holiday

By Igor Leshin

Kettlebell-lifter Vyacheslav Khoroneko, of the Guinness Book of Records, dedicates his new world record in Minsk to 70th anniversary of Great Victory

Vyacheslav Khoroneko is a master of sport of international class and teaches at the Emergency Ministry's Command and Engineering Institute. His recent achievement has brought him a new world record: lifting a 16kg kettlebell 193 times within three minutes. The multi-time champion and world record breaker in kettlebell lifting holds 150 official records in extreme heavy lifting.

Riders and horses well distinguished

Yelena Telepushkina wins international competition in equestrian sport, hosted by Russian Konakovo and gathering riders from Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan



Yelena Telepushkina

Twice Olympic participant Yelena Telepushkina, from Belarus, won the CCI3* (three stars) level, riding Passat and gaining 69.9 penalty points. Alexander Fominov from Belarus, on Extract, earned 72.5 penalty points and second place. Yulia Zhilina from Russia, on Tamerlan, took bronze. In Ryazan, for the dressage competition, Anna Karaseva, on Arlekino, came second, followed by Olga Igumentseva from Belarus, riding En Hardy.

Darya Domracheva:

'I'd like to improve my shooting accuracy in the new season'

By Igor Grishin

Raubichi press centre is quieter than a library these days: perfect for journalists! Nearby hotels are also tranquil: a far cry from the hubbub of February's IBU Youth/Junior World Championship. Of course, there is always activity of some kind. Although the snow has only recently disappeared, biathletes have begun training for next season.

One hour in the rifle range and three hours in the gym are, probably, not the interesting way for a biathlete to spend their day. Belarusian national team head coach Andrian Tsybulsky is eager to keep fitness levels high.

He tells us, "Last season was transitional for the team, determining athletes and coaching staff



Darya Domracheva during training

across various variants, to find the best combination. We've chosen six sportswomen: Darya Domracheva, Nadezhda Skardino, Nadezhda Pisareva, Anastasia Dubozova, Irina Krivko and Anna Sola. They

are joined by seven male biathletes: Yuri Lyadov, Vladimir Chepelin, Dmitry Dyuzhev, Roman Yeletnov, Dmitry Abashev, Victor Krivko and Maxim Vorobey. I feel 90 percent sure that they will be at-

tending the 2018 Olympic Games, although some from the junior squad may yet join."

Undoubtedly, Ms. Domracheva remains in the limelight, with photographers always keen to take her picture, while journalists surrounded Darya, asking questions. She always responds boldly and in a businesslike manner. She tells us, "During our initial training, we practise shooting, aiming to keep our concentration and nerve. Other Raubichi training is rather monotonous but necessary at the moment. I'd like to improve my shooting accuracy for the forthcoming season and will be training under Andrian Tsybulsky, working on my individual programme. We're still deciding but I may miss the North American stages, focusing rather on the World Championship." As to whether she has her sights set on another Big Crystal Globe, Darya tells us, "We'll wait and see."

Neman to play in hockey league

Grodno's Neman facing German Mannheim and Czech Vitkovice in group round of Champions Hockey League

The winner of the Continental Cup, Grodno's Neman, is beginning the Champions Hockey League in Group 9, playing against German Mannheim and Czech Vitkovice. The group stage will run from August 20th to September 6th this year. Each team will play two matches against each opponent in the group: one at home and one away. The top two teams from each group will then qualify for the play-offs.

Rally of the week



Minsk hosts international rally of retro and classical automobiles: *Retro-Minsk*

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

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

Until 13th July. *Touch of Britain. 18th-19th Centuries British Art*
Until 31st July. *Art at Finger Tips*
Until 6th September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*

Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*
Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 4th June. *Nikolya Chocolate Museum*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 9th June. *Exotic World*

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

Peculiarity photo exhibition

MINSK CITY HISTORY MUSEUM

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street

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

NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 31st May. *Radziwills and the Book*

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

121 Kalinovsky Street

Until 30th August. International festival of sand sculptures

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

22.05. The Fountain of Bakhchisaray 24.05. Aida

25.05. Portraits: Maia Kristalinskaya; The Sleeping Beauty

26.05. Pagliacci

27.05. Don Quixote 28.05. From the 19th Century to the 21st Century ballet night

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

22.05. The Bat 25.05. Blue Cameo

26.05. Once in Chicago

27.05. Sofia Golshanskaya 28.05. My Fair Lady

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

22 and 28.05. Office

23 and 24.05. Kolyady Night 26.05. Pinsk Gentry

27.05. The Black Lady of Nesvizh

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

22.05. Taming of the Shrew

23.05. Private Lives 24.05. Ninotchka

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

22 and 23.05. No One Ever Said Life Would Be Easy

24.05. Robbery at Midnight

25.05. Master and Margarita

26 and 27.05. Even a Wise Man Stumbles

28.05. An Unnamed Star

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

22.05. With Love for You...

23.05. TEART International Theatre Art Forum: Short-timed

25.05. An Uninvited Guest

26 and 27.05. New Generation — Traditions and Modernity

ALFA-THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

27 and 28.05. Scissors

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

May of decades and centuries past comes to life

May 24th. In 1904, song writer Adam Rusak was born. He authored *Be Healthy, My Land, Forest Song* and others.

May 24th. In 1928, Belarusian writer Ivan Panchenko was born — authoring collections of essays and short stories: *People of a Lofty Duty, New Acquaintances* and *Thin Ashberry*.

May 28th. In 1921, an Honoured Architect of Belarus and a State Award holder — Nuta Shpigelman — was born. Among his works are a building of the Polygraphic Factory, a building of the EVM Plant, the Watch Plant, residential houses in Yakub Kolas Square and Chkalov Street, and the Zhuravinka restaurant.

May 30th. In 1896, a director, actor, teacher and People's Artiste of Belarus — Konstantin Sannikov — was born. He was among the founders of the Belarusian state theatre and a laureate of the USSR State Award.

May 30th. In 1910, Anatoly Trus was born in the village of Nizok of the Uzda District — an actor and a People's Artiste of Belarus. He performed Krendelev (in *A Pill below*

the Tongue, by A. Makayonok), Lyapkin-Tyapkin (in N. Gogol's *Inspector*) and Lear (in Shakespeare's *King Lear*).

May 24th. In 1891, the first public fine arts exhibition was organised in Minsk — featuring around 100 paintings by local artists.



May 25th. In 1933, the Belarusian State Opera and Ballet Theatre opened with a *Carmen* performance.

May 24th. In 1952, Minsk's Kladbishchenskaya (Cemetery) Street was renamed into Smolyachkova.

May 24th. In 1975, a Soyuz-18 aircraft was launched, with Piotr Klimuk and Vitaly

Sevastianov as its crew members. Belarus-born pilot-cosmonaut Klimuk was awarded the twice Soviet Union Hero title.

May 24th is the Day of the Belarusian Written Language and Culture.

May 25th. In 1983, a met-

umentation) was founded.

May 28th. In 1889, *Taras on Parnassus* novel was for the first time published in *Minsky Listok* newspaper.

May 28th. In 1927, the National Archive of the Republic of Belarus was established.

May 28th. In 1934, Belarus' largest department store opened in Sovetskaya Street (in the building of the former Polish Bank) — featuring 15 departments. It's now known as GUM.

May 28th. In 1939, rebuilding of Minsk's 19th century railway station began; in line with the plan, a second floor was to be added, as well as three halls for passengers, a restaurant, a hotel, a first aid post and a mother-and-child room.

May 28th is the Day of Border Guards in Belarus.

May 29th. In 1946, construction of the Tractor Works was launched in Minsk.

May 29th. In 1970, Belynich's Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya Art Museum opened.

May 29th. In 1992, the Belarusian Capella theatrical-concert association was established.