

Obviously much can be achieved if there's peace



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'I was always making the pictures I wanted to...'



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INTERNATIONAL

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Upcoming traffic should bring results

By Dmitry Alexandrov

In January-July 2018, Belarusian-Uzbek trade turnover has increased by 65.2 percent. This is probably the best illustration of the fact that interaction is currently experiencing a true renaissance.

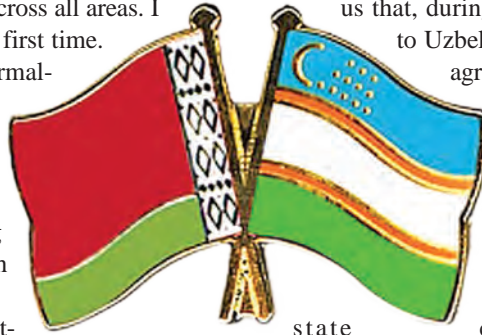
During the meeting with the Secretary of the Security Council, under the aegis of the Uzbekistan President, Viktor Makhmudov, at the Independence Palace, Alexander Lukashenko focused attention on the evident progress in developing bilateral collaboration. "In relations with Uzbekistan in just a couple of years we have made more progress than in the last two decades. Of course, this is more thanks to the work of my good friend, Shavkat Mirziyoyev [the President of Uzbekistan].

He has done well across all areas. I say this not for the first time. He has quickly normalised relations with neighbours and conducts himself well in the international arena, having good relations with the West and East."

During the meeting, Viktor Makhmudov said that the Security Councils of Belarus and Uzbekistan have developed a new 'roadmap' of co-operation for 2019-2020. Moreover, the two sides asserted that the previous document, to 2018, was completely fulfilled. Both Minsk and Tashkent are pleased with the results of the joint work.

The President of Belarus reminded

us that, during his recent visit to Uzbekistan, a range of agreements has been reached at the top level on the development of interaction across various sectors. The heads of state concluded that it's necessary to develop a concrete plan of interaction and one of its sections — military-technical collaboration — is supervised by Viktor Makhmudov. The President noted, "I've already told the President of Uzbekistan: let any representative come and we'll tell them and show them everything that will be of interest to the defence complex of Uzbekistan: start-



ing from personnel to weaponry. You're aware of what we can do, and you've already seen something of this. What you haven't yet seen — you're welcome to view. I assure you once again that all our agreements with the President of Uzbekistan are sacred. We'll fulfil the commitments we've undertaken."

Mr. Makhmudov passed on words of greeting from the President of Uzbekistan to Mr. Lukashenko. The guest highly appreciated the level and content-richness of negotiations with his colleagues from the Security Council of Belarus, as well as mutual determination for even closer interaction. The programme of the visit of the Secretary of Uzbekistan's Security Council envisaged meetings and talks with the leadership of a range of enterprises in the defence industry.

FOCUS



Minsk today

Named among the top three cleanest cities

Belarusian capital among top three cleanest cities of the world, according to a rating compiled by *The Street* digital financial media company

By Svetlana Savelieva

The list compiled by *The Street* includes 30 cities, with Minsk ranked third. "The capital and largest city of Belarus is often touted by tourist sites as the world's cleanest city.

Diligent workers take care of the city's many parks and regularly keep the streets sparkling clean," *The Street* said.

Singapore and Tokyo take first and second. Another Japanese city, Kyoto, is fourth. The top ten also includes Kazan, Medina,

Abu Dhabi, Taipei, Zurich and Stockholm. Russia's capital, Moscow, is placed 14th, while the US city of Boston completes the first thirty. The list has been compiled based on the feedback from users of the booking.com online service.

Financial focus of the next year

By Vladimir Velikhov

Draft budget for 2019 submitted to Head of State

According to Belarus' Finance Minister, Maxim Yermolovich, the 2019 budget bill will shortly be sent to Parliament. "I think that all procedural issues will be resolved in October-November and the bill will arrive in the House of Representatives for consideration," noted Mr. Yermolovich.

It's expected that the bill will be adopted before January 1st.

The 2019 budget bill is drafted on the expectation of the US Dollar exchange rate averaging Br2.2160. Moreover, the estimated figures set out in the draft budget for next year, envisage the country's GDP growth rate at 102.1 percent, average annual inflation at 105.3 percent, the refinancing rate at 10 percent, and

oil price at \$60 per barrel.

The draft budget is based on a baseline scenario of economic development. When planning revenues, the bill's authors considered the approaches embodied in the new edition of the Tax Code, as well as measures to consolidate budget revenues. The tax burden in 2019 will not exceed the level envisaged in the main documents on socio-economic development of the country in

the five-year period.

In 2019, the revenues of the consolidated budget are expected to reach Br36.6 billion (101.6 percent of the expected revenues this year) while those of the Republican budget — Br23.5 billion (100.1 percent). This is primarily due to a more conservative oil price next year, envisaged in budget revenues, alongside the impact of the oil tax policies in Russia.

Digital technologies as rocket fuel

Belarus suggests UN member states establish international co-operation in the sphere of digitisation and make technological forecasts for sustainable development

This was noted by Vladimir Makei during the general debate of the 73rd UN General Assembly in New York.

"The purpose of such co-operation is to help developing nations find and occupy their own niche in the global digital economy, to multiply the benefits of digitisation and ensure their uniform distribution," explains Mr. Makei. In his words, Belarusians understand perfectly well the importance of the digital economy for sustainable and comprehensive economic growth and take the relevant steps. The Decree On the Development of Digital Economy came into force in March and the High-Tech Park is developing rapidly.

Digital technologies are rightly described as rocket fuel for national economies. They facilitate the rapid adoption of innovations in human life, including education, consumption, and social interaction. Digital technologies make business more active, generate tangible profits, and create jobs.

At the same time, digitisation will radically change the labour market. It will make a number of professions obsolete, making people employed in the relevant industries vulnerable. "It is obvious that the governments of developed countries and many developing ones will soon have to deal with the task of adapting their own economies to the global processes of digital transformation. They will have to decide how to manage the processes effectively at national level and how to tackle the unintended social consequences of digital technologies," said Mr. Makei. He welcomed the establishment of the High-level Panel on Digital Co-operation and expressed the hope that the group would pay close attention to the enhancement of the potential of nations.

Obviously much can be achieved if there's peace

Alexander Lukashenko and Petro Poroshenko conduct negotiations in Gomel and visit 1st Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine

By Vasily Kharitonov

Undoubtedly, the plenary session featuring Alexander Lukashenko and Petro Poroshenko became the central event of the Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine in Gomel. They discussed economics, trade, investments and new projects. However, the major issue on the agenda was, of course, ways to settle the conflict in the east of Ukraine. Speaking at the forum, Mr. Lukashenko announced Belarus' position very clearly, "There is one goal: end the war and keep Ukraine united and indivisible! We cannot leave the problem to our children. It will be a crime of our generation for those who will follow us. Let's be honest, securing an agreement between Russia and Ukraine will not suffice. An agreement can be reached, but it will not be enough. Let's be honest one more time: they've lost trust in each other. Therefore, to get Belarus' point across to our Ukrainian brothers, and those who hear us, to avoid all kinds of speculation, I would like to say plainly: we are ready to get involved in this conflict where things are difficult, if there is no trust where should be. We're ready to do it for the one and only goal: peace. In my opinion, this problem has to be resolved by our three Slavonic nations. It is our sorrow. Not Europeans, Americans, or someone else's. We should be the ones to resolve this problem to prevent it from simmering on the backburner like other hot spots in the ex-USSR do."

The President stressed that Belarus doesn't ask to be mediators or peacemakers. But it's impossible to be an indifferent observer of existing events. Mr. Lukashenko reminded that, after the start of this war, many Ukrainian citizens arrived in our country, "We've given jobs, free education, kindergarten and medical servicing to each of them. We've adopted them as our natives. Dear Ukrainian brothers, you see how you are welcomed here. It is impossible to fake this attitude. This is really the attitude of the Belarusians to you. We are extremely worried for you. We would like this blessed land with its rich resources and extremely hardworking people to flourish. And it will!"

Mr. Lukashenko said that he couldn't but raise this issue, "Belarus has been pushed into this problem from all sides. And I want you to know our position: if we enter Ukraine from the north — I would like the Ukrainian military to hear me — we will be driving harvesters, tractors, trolley buses and buses. We will never be driving tanks into Ukraine. We don't ask to be mediators or peacemakers. We just worry for you."

Petro Poroshenko thanked Belarus and Alexander Lukashenko personally for creating the conditions for the Minsk negotiation venue, "Documents that were signed in Minsk will forever enter the textbooks of diplomacy. They are called the Minsk Agreements. Do I trust Lukashenko? I trust him 100 percent. Your mission is extremely important. A trilateral contact party is working in Minsk. Belarus is doing everything to organise this, therefore I'd like to thank Alexander Lukashenko, the Belarusian nation and the city of



Presidents of Belarus and Ukraine during their meeting in Gomel

DIRECT SPEECH

Alexander Lukashenko:

I want you to know our position: if we enter Ukraine from the north — I would like the Ukrainian military to hear me — we will be driving harvesters, tractors, trolley buses and buses. We will never be driving tanks into Ukraine. We don't ask to be mediators or peacemakers. We just worry for you.

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Minsk."

After the speech by the President of Belarus and the return words from Petro Poroshenko, it seemed the major topic of the Forum of Regions was fading into the background. Of course, this was not the case. Alexander Lukashenko highly regarded the importance of this event, "People are very pleased, they have agreed on many issues and many have signed contracts. This event has good prospects. Both Belarus and Ukraine have a colossal demand for furthering the development of relations and strengthening of traditions of friendship and good neighbourliness."

"We've made sure that our conduct of the forum was correct," noted Mr. Poroshenko. "A whole range of agreements have been signed between our regions. Both Ukraine and Belarus will only benefit from these contracts."

Upon his arrival in Gomel, Petro Poroshenko laid flowers at Taras Shevchenko's bust in the public garden which bears his name. Then he spoke to representatives of the Ukrainian diaspora. Before visiting

the regional public and cultural centre, Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Poroshenko conducted a one-on-one meeting.

Ukraine remains one of our most important trade-economic partners. Our interest is to establish direct economic ties with the region, as this will help reinforce the position of Belarusian manufacturers in the Ukrainian market. In the end, such forums work for the development of national economies, i.e., for the enhancement of people's well-being.

Belarus isn't a strange country for Ukraine and during the bilateral meeting with the Ukrainian leader, Mr. Lukashenko noted this especially, "You probably feel that Gomel doesn't differ in any way from wonderful Ukrainian cities. This is natural, as the border is very close. Many Ukrainians live here, as do citizens of Ukraine who have moved because of the conflict. We had to help people and give them work and we treated them as our own citizens. So, Gomel is a good and warm city for Ukrainians."

Mr. Poroshenko sincerely regarded

this hospitality, "This is better than words of propaganda about tensions between our nations. There's trust between Ukraine and Belarus, as there's trust between Lukashenko and Poroshenko. I'm absolutely convinced that this trust will result in security, reliability, friendship and collaboration.

Secondly, in its foreign trade turnover with Ukraine, Belarus is ranked second among the CIS states and fifth among all the partners of Ukraine. According to Mr. Lukashenko, Belarus is ready for close cooperation with the Ukrainian mining and smelting enterprise. It's no secret that its technological fleet is primarily ensured by the BelAZ quarry machinery — reliable and time-tested.

Mr. Lukashenko also believes that there's significant potential for collaboration in transport logistics, "More efficient use of the geographical advantages will facilitate successful implementation of various projects as part of the multi-modal transport corridor from the Baltic Sea to the Black Sea. It's important to use its railway component, river navigation and to integrate maritime ports of Ukraine into logistic chains."

Mr. Lukashenko invited Ukrainian businesses to more actively invest into our country, "Belarus and Ukraine should focus on the establishment of joint ventures which produce goods for the markets of third states. I think that Ukrainian business will be interested in such promising venues as the High-Tech Park and the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. A favourable investment climate, as part of these initiatives, will enable them to implement large-scale projects in the innovation sphere."

In total, during the forum, Belarusian and Ukrainian companies signed contracts worth more than \$100m. It's expected that the final figure will be even higher.



Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park acquires new buildings

Stone to become a satellite in the future

Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park may soon become a town-satellite of Minsk

By Alexey Fedosov

“Today we’re discussing the construction of the road which continues Vaupshasov Street [a highway in the direction of Minsk National Airport which will go through the Belarusian-Chinese Industrial Park]. The section of the road inside the Park is already being built,” noted the First Deputy Director General of the Industrial Park Development Company, Kirill Koroteev.

Plans include a fast tram and metro service track laid within the Great Park.

The Industrial Park focuses on social infrastructure and the first residential housing is to be constructed here for 156 flats. The next step will be the construction of the hospital

in the Park and this project is almost ready. Furthermore, in future, there are plans to build around 120,000 square metres of housing: six-storey houses and one-storey buildings.

At present, the Industrial Park has 38 residents. “Today, according to the residents’ business plans, the total investments announced so far is estimated at \$1-1.1bn — a good figure,” added Mr. Koroteev. “Moreover, we’ve already developed around 350 hectares of land — the start zone of the first stage where about \$380m has been injected.”

Around ten projects are currently in the stage of active construction. “The most important of these include MAZ Weichai, Ruchtech (that will be manufacturing laser equipment) and Zoomlion (the production

of mechanised machinery). China Merchants has already implemented the first stage and is now launching the second. Around 150 hectares of land already belong to the residents,” noted the First Deputy Director General.

The number of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park’s residents should reach at least 40 by the end of the year. In 2020, this should increase to 100 and the volume of investments is expected to reach \$2-2.5bn. One of the model projects which is to be realised is the production of thin-filmed solar panels. According to Mr. Koroteev, this is an industry-forming project. A whole sector could be established in Belarus that would impact on other productions because of the synergic effect.

Oil products for industrial enterprises without restrictions

By Olga Korneeva

Oil products for industrial enterprises of Belarus will be supplied by Russia without restrictions as part of the indicative balance sheets signed by both sides, noted the Russian Ambassador to Belarus, Mikhail Babich, during his working trip to Mogilev

“There are a number of oil products, which are required for the development of various branches of the Belarusian production sector. The relevant negotiations are nearly over; we only have to determine the final consumption figures. There is no doubt that the necessary volume of oil products will be supplied without restrictions. It is particularly true for the enterprises, which are vigorously developing. An agreement has been reached to increase the delivery of oil products to petrochemical enterprises by 10-15 percent,” noted the diplomat.

According to the Ambassador, the oil products will be delivered in line with the signed indicative balance sheets, which will be approved every year, “Moreover, the agreement stipulates a procedure, which can be used to revise the balance figures if an increase in the consumption of oil products is justified. As far as the price for natural gas is concerned, we’ve agreed on one for 2018 and for 2019. In line with the agreement, the two sides have signed to say that the price will stay in place, as well as compensatory mechanisms.”

Partnership reached at nuclear level

By Maxim Yemelyanov

Uzbekistan has officially launched the project for the construction of its first nuclear power station, with engineering surveying started for the selection of the construction site. It plans to build two energy units with VVER-1200 type reactors, which refer to 3+ generation and completely meet IAEA modern requirements in the sphere of security. In other words, Uzbekistan is following in the footsteps of Belarus, so is keen to learn about our achievements and experience.

The opportunity of Belarus’ participation in the realisation of the Uzbek project for the construction of its first nuclear power station was discussed in September, during the meetings of the presidents of the two states, Alexander Lukashenko and Shavkat Mirziyoyev, in Tashkent. At that time, it was announced that, in



Installation works at the construction site of Belarusian NPP

future, Belarus and Uzbekistan plan to sign a memorandum on mutual understanding in the sphere of nuclear engineering.

This was confirmed by the Deputy Director of the Nuclear Energy Department of the Energy Ministry of Belarus, Lilia Dulinets, at the Energy and Ecology Forum recently held in Minsk, “We’ve signed a memo-

randum with Kazakhstan on mutual understanding in the sphere of nuclear energy. A similar document with Uzbekistan is practically ready for signing and it’s planned that this will happen this year. We adhere to the principle of openness and actively share our experience with other states. Delegations from Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Bangladesh, Tur-

key and elsewhere visited Belarus and familiarised themselves with the construction experience of the Belarusian nuclear power station.”

The construction of the Belarusian nuclear power station deserves trust, as does the attention paid towards security issues. Recently the IAEA completed its mission tackling emergency

readiness and response for nuclear disasters and radiological emergencies. This inspection, like many previous, was conducted at the request of the Belarusian Government. The use of mechanisms of international assessments missions and partnership inspections is a reliable means to receive qualified external assessments and recommendations, while also enabling us to guarantee the compliance of the nuclear power station in Belarus to contemporary international security standards.

As far as the latest mission is concerned, its conclusion was voiced by the IAEA Deputy Director General, Juan Carlos Lentijo, “Experts of the mission came to the conclusions that Belarus has efficiently functioning and reliable mechanisms in the sphere of emergency preparedness and response. We’ve identified good and applicable practices and outlined strong points, as well as those areas where further improvement can be conducted.”

Exhibits for every taste is a real feast for the eyes

Football Manege in Minsk hosts the international *PRODEXPO-2018* trade fair

By Oleg Bogomazov

Expoforum is already a landmark event for the food industry, as it gives an opportunity to establish mutually beneficial co-operation and to sign long-term contracts for the supply of food products and associated goods. If we look at the current exhibition, it stands out for the wider geography of its participants. The Russian Federation, Moldova, Poland, Greece, Latvia, Uzbekistan and Armenia — it is no accident that the CIS and non-CIS states take an increased interest in this international forum.

“This is an orienting point for manufacturers and consumers. Participation of domestic and foreign companies gives an opportunity to compare demand and supply, while also laying the groundwork for the future, considering global trends in the food industry. It’s very important if we want to turn our qualitative raw materials (generated by our agro-industrial complex) into a popular product with high value added,” said Valery Ivanov, the Chairman of Belkoo-soyuz’s Board.

Belarus’ Deputy Agriculture and Food Minister, Igor Brylo, agrees, saying that, “The country which supplies



the dairy goods to 50 countries, and meat and bread products to 20 states of the world, desperately needs such a venue for signing contracts and agreements.”

The key topic of the current exhibition, given a special forum, became the discussion of the peculiarities and nuances of the work with export partners to the countries of South East Asia, including the protection of Belarusian brands which are exported to the PRC.

The entertaining part of the exhibition was also rather intensive, with visitors able to take part in the *Champion of Taste* tasting competitions with independent testing of food products and ‘blind’ degustation.

However, the international championship of confectionary art and the awards ceremony was the brightest event at the trade fair. Professional confectioners, as well as amateurs, alongside pupils and masters of colleges competed for victory across ten categories. They brought together wonderful and sometimes fantastic works which were more like pieces of art.

PRODEXPO-2018 has already beaten last year’s records, when the event brought together 15 countries, more than 220 exhibitors and over 10,000 visitors.

Searching for mutually beneficial opportunities

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus Days held in the German Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia, in the town of Luenen

The forum was attended by business representatives from Germany and Belarus, aimed at further strengthening and development of economic relations between the two states. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Germany, Denis Sidorenko, believes that Belarus Days in the Federal State of North Rhine-Westphalia will become an important landmark on the path of Belarusian-German trad-economic collaboration, in the search for new opportunities for interaction and development of co-operation with the federal states of Germany.

According to the Chairman of the Board of Directors of the German Eastern Business Association, Michael Harms, increasing numbers of Ger-



Belarus Days hosted by the town of Luenen

man companies see potential in bilateral co-operation and injection into the Belarusian economy. Because of its transit location between the EU and Russia, Belarus is viewed as a starting point for German business in the Eurasian Economic Union.

In January-June 2018, bilateral trade rose by almost 13 percent compared to the same period last year. German exports to

Belarus exceeded 735m Euros (up 12 percent) while Belarusian exports amounted to 290m Euros (up 15 percent).

The Belarus Days were organised by the German Committee on Eastern European Economic Relations — German Eastern Europe Business Association, Belarus-Germany Business Co-operation Council and the Belarusian Embassy in Germany.

WTA Affairs Centre by 2020

National Centre on World Trade Organisation Affairs to be established in Belarus by 2020

The WTO Affairs Centre will perform consulting functions, including analysis of the economic consequences of joining the WTO. It will work out recommendations on improving national laws and provide expert assistance with Belarus’ work in the WTO bodies. “Joining the WTO is not the most important thing. The vital element is organising interaction with WTO members and the centre intends to do just that,” noted Maxim Gubsky, a supervisor of the UNDP *Assisting the Government of the Republic of Belarus in Accession to the World Trade Organisation through Strengthening National Institutional Capacity and Expertise* project.

Organisational work is now in progress, in particular, decisions are being made on which government agency will be used as the basis for establishing the

centre. The experience of setting up similar structures in Russia (where a WTO centre operates under the aegis of the central government) and in Kazakhstan is being currently studied.

During the roundtable session involving representatives of the private sector, Olga Kazakevich, Head of the WTO and Trade Regimes Unification Department of the Foreign Trade Policy Office of the Foreign Economic Activities Department of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, said that Belarus is at the epicentre of negotiations on joining the WTO. “We have negotiations with key WTO members ahead of us, including with the USA, the EU and Canada. It’s difficult to predict how long the process will take but we hope that Belarus will be able to join the World Trade Organisation in 1.5-2 years,” noted the official. Ms. Kazakevich stressed that, as a member of the EAEU, Belarus has lived by WTO rules since 2012, as these rules lie at the heart of EAEU legislation.



Automatic control equipment often used at Minsk National Airport

What deputies discuss

Social issues and border security high on the agenda at the session of the National Assembly's House of Representatives

By Oleg Bogomazov

The Chairman of the State Border Committee — Anatoly Lappo — has introduced changes to the laws on border security. You are currently only allowed to stay in the restricted area if you have a passport. With the adoption of the law, instead of a passport, it will be possible to present a driver's licence or a service certificate. To increase tourist attractiveness, foreigners will be able to

transit through the border zone to sanatoriums, rest homes and visit roadside service facilities without passes. In addition, it is planned to introduce automatic border controls.

“These are so-called ‘electronic gates’ and will enable us to carry out border control without the participation of the controller,” explains Mr. Lappo. “In 2015, such equipment was successfully used as an experiment at Minsk National Airport. As a result, the pos-

sibility of its implementation has been decided. Due to the planned introduction of biometric passports, the use of automatic controls will significantly reduce the time required.”

At the same time, border guards will receive additional rights. For example, they will determine not only the place of entry or entrance to the border strip, but also the time spent in the restricted area.

Journalists asked about the situation on the Belarusian-

Ukrainian border. Mr. Lappo admitted that the problem of movement of weapons exists and it's a matter of concern. “This year, Ukrainian border guards have detained about 100 weapons, about 12 thousand rounds of ammunition and several dozen grenades. Belarusian border guards have detected almost 80 weapons and 1.2 thousand rounds of ammunition. We will do everything to stop this flow. We are strengthening the borders and

we will put additional outposts in place.”

Speaking about the demarcation of the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, Mr. Lappo noted that the work is going according to plan and should be completed by 2026.

Deputies also approved at the first reading, amendments to the law on the transplantation of human organs and tissues. More than 550 organ transplants were performed in the country last year. Belarus is unrivalled in the CIS in this respect. Moreover, this is an attractive indicator for most European countries as well. “However, recently, the number of transplants from living related donors in the country has gradually decreased,” stated the Director of the Minsk Scientific-Practical Institute of Surgery, Transplantation and Haematology, Oleg Rummo. “The main reason is that Belarusian families are small, and it is quite difficult to find healthy people in these families who are willing to donate organs to their loved ones.” It is proposed to expand the range of living related donors, including not only close relatives (parents, siblings) but also cousins, second cousins, sisters, nephews and so on. It is also planned to legalise cross-transplantation, which will solve the problems arising from genetic incompatibility between the donor and the recipient.

Amendments will be made to the law on assisted reproductive technologies. The age threshold for male donors of sperm cells will increase from 40 to 50 years.

Plenty topics for discussion

By Alexey Fedosov

India to study the opportunity to give electronic visas to Belarusian citizens. The meeting between Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrei Dapkiunas, and his Indian colleague, Ruchi Ghanashyam, in New Delhi, tackled the necessity for further simplification of conditions for mutual trips.

The practice of inter-ministerial consultations is a traditional instrument of co-operation between Belarus and India, to consider acute bilateral and international issues. The previous round of consultations was held in Minsk in November 2016.

During the current meeting, the deputy foreign ministers of Belarus and India discussed the state of political and inter-parliamentary dialogue, economic and investment collaboration, inter-regional interaction, as well as sci-tech, educational and cultural ties, the development of legal basis between the countries, co-operation in international organisations and separate issues on the international agenda.

The programme and practical agenda of mutual visits at a high level for the near future was also tackled. In developing inter-



Andrei Dapkiunas and Ruchi Ghanashyam

parliamentary contacts, an opportunity was under discussion dealing with the creation of the Belarusian-Indian inter-parliamentary group of friendship. The Belarusian part of this planned group has been already formed in the National Assembly.

Moreover, the two sides agreed to continue dialogue on further practical steps aiming to develop a concept of the Belarusian-Indian production-investment cluster in a special economic zone at Bremino-Orsha. It's known that the decision to create a working group for de-

tailed discussion of this topic was adopted by the Belarusian-Indian Inter-parliamentary Commission on Co-operation in Economy, Trade, Industry, Science, Technology and Culture in October 2018. India confirmed its support for Belarus' joining the World Trade Organisation. During the meetings in New Delhi, opportunities were also studied to develop interaction between the two states as part of multi-lateral organisations, including the UN, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and the Non-Aligned Movement.

Insurance in case of an emergency

By Svetlana Savelieva

Emergency Ministry of Belarus has registered national resources for providing international aid in the Response and Assistance Network of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA)

The IAEA Response and Assistance Network was established in 2005 within the framework of the IAEA strategy on facilitating the practical implementation of the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. Belarus is a party to the convention. Resources of 31 countries are now registered in RANET, including the resources of Germany, China, Russia, USA, Ukraine, France, and Japan.

According to the Emergency Ministry, Belarusian resources available to other countries via RANET include qualified specialists, equipment, and materials, such as the Republican Emergency Management and Response Centre, the Republican

Special Operations Detachment of the Belarusian Emergency Ministry, the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Emergency Ministry (Gosatomnadzor), the Material Reserves Department, and the Civil Protection University of the Emergency Ministry.

RANET is designed to provide international aid, agree the procedures for rendering the aid and sharing information in case of a nuclear or radiation emergency. RANET's assistance can be requested by countries where such an emergency occurs.

Belarus' registration in RANET will allow expanding the agenda of co-operation with the IAEA in addition to simplifying the procedures for rendering international aid in the course of implementing the Convention on Assistance in the Case of a Nuclear Accident or Radiological Emergency. Registration in RANET will also help position Belarus as a country able to respond to nuclear or radiation emergencies in its own territory or provide highly qualified aid to other countries.



This comes from the results of the sociological survey, entitled *The Attitude of Belarusians towards Organic Farming Products*. The poll was conducted by the Information and Analytical Centre of the Presidential Administration, on the order of the Centre for Environmental Solutions, with the support of Swedish partners from the Clean Baltic Coalition. Four hundred respondents were polled by phone, 120 were asked in the streets of Minsk, Grodno and Mogilev, while 30 more people — via in-depth telephone and personal interviews. Those polled include ordinary residents, buyers and potential consumers of organic goods, as well as citizens involved in the production and processing of organic produce and managers of retail chains.

Olga Fablinova, consultant advisor in the Sociological Poll Department at the Information and Analytical Centre, stressed that Belarusian people have different ideas regarding what organic products are and these don't often meet the reality. Most respondents (80.5 percent), questioned in large cities, have heard the combination of words, but only 53.7 percent of these have some idea of what 'organic products' are. Informed residents of large cities often understand these are grown without chemicals or genetically-modified organisms. More rarely, respondents characterised such goods as natural and ecologically clean, grown using natural fertilisers. Only a few mentioned such issues as shorter periods of storage.

According to the results of farmers' in-depth interviews, insufficient work by producers advertising and promoting their goods can affect the de-

Belarusians gradually vote for organics

Domestic consumers believe it's necessary to mark organic goods with special labels



gree of citizens' awareness. Meanwhile, buyers themselves unanimously point to the necessity of special labelling for organic goods. "Enlightening work will enable us to enhance the population's literacy regarding the mixture

of markings 'eco', 'bio' and 'organic'. The results of the survey speak about the potential interest of Belarusians in such products. The respondents from large cities primarily want to receive information about organic produce.

Women aged under 40 with a higher education are the major target group of buyers of organic produce, on whom manufacturers and marketing specialists should focus," notes Ms. Fablinova.

Many producers believe

that Belarus needs its own domestic certification company. A specialist in organic farming at the Centre for Environmental Solutions, Lyubomir Klepach, analysing the results of the survey, concluded that to develop organic farming in Belarus, the following steps are needed: improvement of the legal basis, organisation of special shelves in supermarkets and the creation of professional associations of farmers for promoting their interests.

The degree of availability of organic goods in the country can't be called high, as is seen by the number of citizens surveyed who noted difficulties while looking to buy organic produce. Some retail chains try to promote it but it's not a mass phenomenon. It's done more for effect and the expansion of a range. In general, today it's possible to buy such goods in supermarkets, some convenience stores and markets. Moreover, the participants of the survey who buy organic goods, mention that they often look for them in the markets, while city-dwellers prefer convenient shops located close to their house. Choosing qualitative products, they primarily pay attention to freshness and good appearance, while advertising in the media and advice from friends and acquaintances have little influence on the choice of goods.

The introduction of voluntary certification is envisaged by the draft law 'On the Production and Circulation of Organic Produce', which was recently adopted by the House of Representatives at the second reading. It's expected that, after the final adoption of the law and when it enters into force, domestic manufacturers will have the right to place a special green sign on their organic produce denoting an 'Organic Product'.

Gold and silver dolphins Film about BelAZ vehicles earns prizes at Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards 2018

By Alexander Pimenov

The corporate film *Continental Race*, from the BelAZ 70 cinema project, won two trophies at the annual Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards 2018. The film clinched the Golden Dolphin in the Corporate Image Films category and the Silver Dolphin in the Internal Communication Award.

The film was shot by Novosibirsk's LBL-Production. The main idea of the film is to show the power of the Belarusian trucks that operate so well in different climatic conditions. The film shows a simultaneous start of the 220-tonne BelAZ trucks in Russia's Kemerovo and South Africa's Cape Town. It also features loading, unloading, and a confident

run along highly technical roads. "Who will win in the difficult climatic conditions of the *Continental Race*?" it asks. "It is going to be the BelAZ hauler, capable of operating both in the S i -

berian winter and in the African summer. The Belarusian Automobile Works has

never stopped evolving, designing vehicles that are in demand worldwide for the past 70 years," note the authors of the film.

The Cannes Corporate Media & TV Awards is one of the most prestigious reviews of corporate and documentary films, with laureates of Oscar and Emmy awards being among the jury members.



Project that is worth 7m Euros

By Yan Zhur

In 2019, Belarus may launch the construction of two special centres for migrants

This information has been announced by the Head of the Office of International Migration Organisation (IOM), Zeynal Hajiyev, at the opening ceremony of the project *Helping Belarus Address the Phenomenon of Increasing Numbers of Irregular Migrants*. This project is financed by the EU and it's being implemented by the IOM in Belarus together with the State Border Committee and the Interior Ministry of Belarus.

According to Mr. Hajiyev, centres of open or mixed type will accommodate approximately 200 persons each. It's expected that their construction will be started simultaneously next year. "The centres should appear in Lida and Novopolotsk. The final

decision will be made involving experts and various issues will be thoroughly studied," explained Mr. Hajiyev. He also noted that it's planned to allocate about 4m Euros for the construction while the project's total budget stands at 7m Euros.

The Head of the EU Delegation in Belarus, Andrea Wiktorin, said that the idea of this project originated several years ago, after the negotiations between Belarus and the EU on the simplification of the visa regime and agreement on readmission. Later the two sides signed a Joint Declaration on a Mobility Partnerships.

"The implementation of the project of international technical assistance will enable Belarus to properly fulfil its international commitments adopted in line with the signed agreement on readmission," stated the First Deputy Interior Ministry Nikolay Melchenko.



Greece was struck by destructive earthquake

A massive 6.8 magnitude earthquake has struck off the coast of Greece and was followed by a series of 22 other quakes

The epicentre of the 6.8 magnitude quake was located in the Ionian Sea, near the Greek Island of Zante and about 50 miles north-east of the city of Pyrgos. The quake had a depth of around 16 kilometres. So far, three people

have been taken to hospital. One British tourist Joanna Jones described the 6.8 magnitude earthquake experience as being in Jumanji. She said, "Have you seen the new Jumanji? That was exactly what it was like. The floor, beds and

every bit of furniture bouncing and shaking up and down." Civil protection agency press spokesman Spyros Gorgiou said, "We're checking out the villages on the islands, where there are several older buildings. The lack of elec-

tricity is a problem, but technicians are trying to restore power." According to reports, the quake lasted 15 to 30 seconds. The EMSC said the earthquake sparked a small tsunami of 15 to 20cm on local beaches.



The world's oldest intact shipwreck

More than a mile below the surface of the Black Sea, researchers have found a ship so old they never expected to see one like it

The members of the Black Sea Maritime Archaeology Project successfully radiocarbon dated a small piece of the ship to 400 BC. That makes this the oldest intact shipwreck ever discovered.

"A ship, surviving intact, from the Classical world, lying in over 2 kilometres of water, is something I would never have believed possible," said University of Southampton Professor Jon Adams, the Black Sea MAP's principal investigator. "This will change our understanding of shipbuilding and seafaring in the ancient world."

The ship was a Greek trading vessel, which researchers matched to ancient Greek pottery like the 'Siren Vase', on display at the British Museum. "There are ships down there that have never been seen apart from in murals and paintings and in books, and this is the first time they have been seen since they were afloat," said Edward Parker, CEO of Black Sea MAP.

Over the last three years, the global group of researchers have used remotely operated underwater vehicle surveyors, equipped with high-resolution cameras, flashes and lasers to map the floor of the Black Sea. The kind of technology they used has previously only been available for oil, gas and renewable energy companies.

Global businesses review commitments with Saudi Arabia

The mysterious disappearance and possible murder of a Saudi journalist in Turkey made business executives around the world review their commitments in Saudi Arabia



Richard Branson has halted discussions with Saudi Arabia's sovereign wealth fund about a planned \$1bn investment in Virgin's space companies and suspended his participation in two advisory boards.

His move was followed by news that Dara Khosrowshahi, Uber's chief executive, Viacom boss Bob Bakish had all reconsidered their attendance at a high-profile Saudi conference.

Media companies CNN, the Financial Times, the New York Times as well as reporters and editors from the Economist and CNBC are pulling out of the Saudi Future Investment Initiative, known as Davos in the Desert.

At the same time, the diplomatic row between Saudi Arabia and Turkey might affect the economic ties between

countries. Hilal Khashan, Professor of Political Science at AUB (American University of Beirut) says, "Turkey is in a very difficult economic situation and the Saudis understand this. Turkey also has difficulties with the Trump administration, and the sanctions that he imposed in recent weeks. So Turkey does not want to add to its travails, Turkey wants to minimise them especially since the Saudis have important investments in Turkey and of course, the balance of trade between the two countries tilts in favour of Turkey."

Saudi Arabia is a major market for Turkish companies, while many Saudi businesses have invested in Turkish firms. Over half a million Saudi tourists visit Turkey every year.

World Trade Organisation cuts its forecasts

The World Trade Organisation says growth in 2018 and 2019 is likely to be slower than previously forecast, although the direct economic effects of a trade war that has blown up this year have been modest so far

The WTO forecast world trade in goods would grow by 3.9 percent this year, less than the 4.4 percent it predicted in April.

Next year trade growth of 3.7 percent is expected, a cut from the WTO's previous forecast of four percent. The organisation said in a statement that some of the downside risks it warned of in April had now materialised.

Since the WTO's previous forecast, US President Donald Trump has launched a trade war by imposing tariffs on hundreds of billions of US Dollars of imports from China, prompting the Asian giant to hit back with its own tariffs on American imports. Trump has also introduced taxes on aluminium and steel imports from around the world to protect US jobs.

EU leaders prepared to extend UK's Brexit transition period

The European Union said it was ready to extend the length of the transition period designed to smooth the UK's exit from the 28-nation bloc next year

The original plan is for a 21-month period starting March 30th, 2019, as soon as the UK has left. But with the two sides failing to come to an agreement on how the new relationship will work, UK Prime Minister Theresa May has proposed extending this arrangement 'for a few months'.

Speaking at a news conference in Brussels following a summit that was dominated by the Brexit issue, Donald Tusk, President of the EU's intergovernmental body, the European Council, said the bloc's leaders had not discussed the period of transition at the meeting, but said it was unlikely to be opposed. "If the UK decided an extension of the transition period would be helpful to reach a deal, I'm sure the leaders would be ready to consider it positively."

Tusk nevertheless confirmed that insufficient progress had been made in recent time to merit another more conclusive summit for final agreement on the terms of the deal, as previously planned.



No one can remain indifferent at Oleg Skovorodko's exhibition of paintings

'I was always making the pictures I wanted to...'

The National Art Museum hosts Oleg Skovorodko's *Poetry of Colour* exhibition dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the painter's birth in Vitebsk. The exposition displays more than fifty pictorial works from the author's collection, most of which were created by him over the last fifteen years.

By Veniamin Mikheev

Oleg Skovorodko's creativity is a phenomenon in Belarusian art. In his works he successfully combines the traditions of classical and avant-garde art schools, the influence of Art Nouveau and impressionism. The artist works in landscapes, still-life, thematic painting and portrait genres. Oleg Skovorodko's works are

characterised by the philosophical interpretation of images, poetic loftiness and lyricism. Landscapes, which occupy the central place in the master's creative heritage, delight with their delicate, sensitive attitude to the native land.

The overall style of Oleg Skovorodko is distinguished by the richness of colour, open contrast, vast rhythmic brushstrokes and the textured surface of the canvas. With intense colour combinations, the artist boldly generalises form, builds space and sets the rhythm.

Today Mr. Skovorodko is considered one of the most flamboyant painters of Belarus. His



creative success is immediately recognisable, while Skovorodko's pictures can be appreciated by professionals, as well as any regular visitors to Vitebsk and Minsk exhibitions.

"I believe that each painter should have their own author's manner of writing so that it is possible to say confidently at the exhibition that this work, for example, belongs to Oleg Skovorodko not to Levitan, Dantsig, Malevich or Savitsky... A true artist can be recognised immediately and it's difficult to be mistaken," Mr. Skovorodko says about his creative credo.

He admits that he comes to the easel with joy, feeling

something positive always generates a positive result. That's why his canvases are warm, bring joy, surprise and inspire...

Often, when one speaks about Vitebsk, one implies Chagall. A contemporary city appears in front of one's own eyes where a young painter and his be-

loved, bride, wife and model are floating in the white sky, overcoming earth's gravity. One-storey houses are beneath, as well as wooden fences, churches with bell-towers, goats and hens. Moreover, one immediately recalls Kazimir Malevich and his comrades, pupils with their bright canvases, collages, applique works, models, monuments and manifestations of new revolutionary art. They were the painters who have made provincial Vitebsk the most famous Belarusian city.

Skovorodko's canvases aren't like the paintings of the great Chagall and Malevich, but they stick in the memory and are

recognised immediately. Their plots are simple, as the painter sees what surrounds him. Items are recognised, models make us laugh and still-life paintings please the eye. All works are done in an energetic, bright and positive manner, inventively.

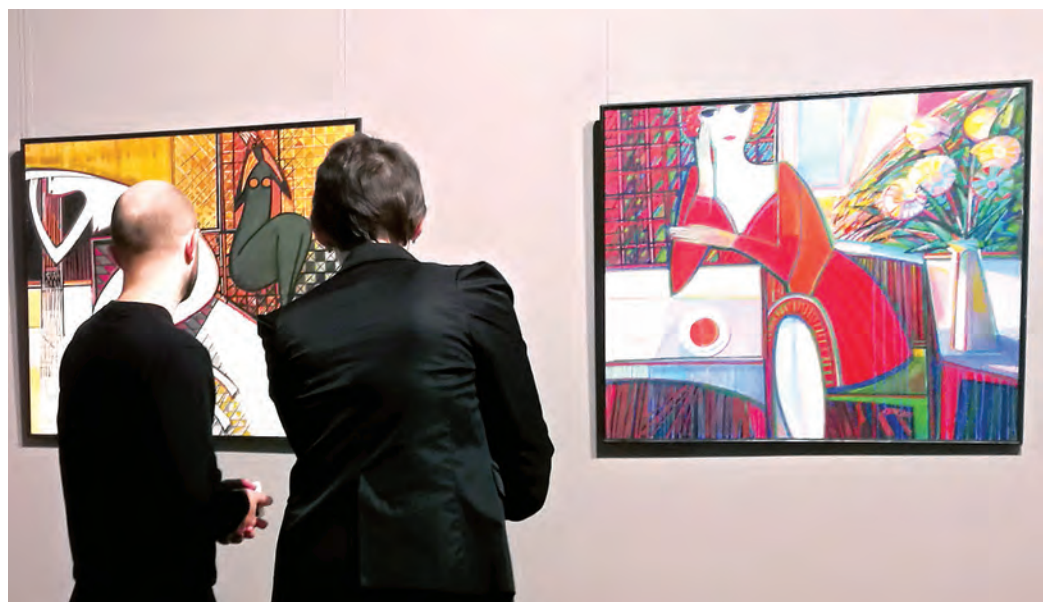
"I always painted as I wanted and what I wanted. I regularly take part in exhibitions and this exposition is purely lyrical. I compiled it from abstract and realistic pictures. Vitebsk has always been and will be a creatively active city, as we have great traditions. All remember Chagall and Malevich while Ilya Repin has also worked here, as has Ivan Khrutsky. Another of our fellow countryman, People's Artist of Belarus, Leonid Shchemelev, once told me not to teach but be involved in creativity. In this case, I will have both the works and the audience."

Oleg Skovorodko followed this advice and has succeeded.

At present, Vitebsk painter Oleg Skovorodko is still a confident and energetic master with his own creative manner of working and world outlook. His works stand out by the riot of rich colours, strained and formally-built composition and

live connections with nature. One is always warmed while standing near his canvases. They radiate sincerity, as well as attention towards the eternal themes of human existence. The painter investigates life around himself: he draws villages with archaic wooden houses, which have traditional simple shapes, huge trees over which white cloths-clouds are floating. He has panoramic landscapes painted with tender colour combinations, still-lives with classical attributes of the material world, which include flowers, vegetables, fruits, greenery, ceramic items... His works are peculiar for their texture, materiality, formal stylisation and vivid symbolism.

Oleg Skovorodko rejects greyness, calmness and dullness in his works. He accentuates colour combinations, while softening the exertion with half-tones and shades. Moreover, he confidently and boldly generalises forms. He doesn't make adjustments for the tastes of consumers or the requirements of the market. For him the important thing has always been and remains the desire to express love towards people who are close to him and his native land.



How can we have music without accordion

Resonators, chords, planks, liens, voices, mechanics, wood, leather, plastic, metal... There are so many machines and devices... Moving from one place to another at the Zonta company, anyone would be amazed, firstly, at the smallness of the team that works here (only 25 people and each is unique), secondly, with the abundance of fine manual work and, thirdly, with the complexity of the tasks. Here, in Molodechno, an hour's drive from Minsk, bayans and accordions are produced specially for both Belarusian and foreign musicians.

By Irina Ovsepyan

Recently, Molodechno instruments, including a unique accordion with a midi-system (the capabilities of which are no less than those of a digital piano) were demonstrated to the President — and made a good impression. Their sound, appearance and technical solutions are on a high level. Our *MT* reporter went to the plant to see with their own eyes the production and people who create these wonderful harmonics.

Somewhere in the back of our consciousness is the belief that the accordion is a simple folk instrument. However, Zonta's staff explain that each instrument weighs about 15kg and has 2,500 parts — most of which are made by hand. Moreover, despite computer programmes, when setting up the instrument, the human ear cannot be replaced.

Bayans have been made in Molodechno since Soviet times, but Zonta has no relation to the Soviet musical instrument factory. "We are competitors who've survived," says Director Rostislav Moisa who came to the company in 1994, a few months after its birth. "It was a difficult time, but it was then that one of the Belarusian musicians had a desire to create a concert accordion; at that time, a good instrument cost as much as a car. We had to start work from scratch and, in 1994, we had only one model: an analogue of the Soviet 'Yupiter' accordion which was played by all the best musicians of the Soviet Union. However, we were looking for our own engineering solutions: from the Soviet accordion we've kept the acoustics, voices and resonators; we've also upgraded the right side and developed the left mechanics. After a year and a half, a new model was launched, it was followed by another and, four years later, we produced a children's accordion. Since 2006, we have reorganised and produce more than 30 models of bayans, accordions and harmonicas under the Zonta brand. Among them is the Kravtsov system accordion — a kind of hybrid of bayan and accordion; Russians tried but failed to make it, while we've succeeded."

It took 18 months for the team to develop the first instrument. At present, Zonta's mas-

ters can create on order any instrument in their range; the process will take no more than three months. Ivan Demidovich — chief designer, chief engineer and chief technologist — has worked at the company since its opening. He participated in the development of the very first accordion and comments, "There are also special orders: when there is a base and technological equipment, we can invent much and search for new solutions."

from thin strips of leather and assemble right or left mechanics. In addition, golosa — metal tongues of different sizes and thickness (there are about 800 of them in the accordion) are cut by hand from special steel and then the master with a file manually adjusts each detail so that the instrument plays the desired note. Mikhail Sitko adds, "These sounds differ when made by different masters and, in this respect, instruments are similar

came to us, he was worried, explaining that, when he woke up at night and heard two mosquitoes, he realised they were not humming in unison. Of course, we use computer programmes and they ease customisers' work, but we still need to adjust everything manually."

Pleasingly, many young employees work at the company, some of them having come after graduation. They learn the required subtleties of the skill

resonators, voices, covers for instruments. However, most of the materials are purchased from abroad. This is largely due to geographical and natural conditions: for example, the sonorous fir tree, without which the production cannot manage, simply does not grow in Belarus. Mr. Moisa explains, "We buy this timber from Russia. From maple and beech, we make some spare parts — like frames and cases. Soft sheep's leather is purchased in Germany and leather-cloth glued over the bellows is bought in Italy: it is not produced in Belarus. All our products are sold out: Zonta's bayans could be rarely found in stores. It takes 3-4 months from the order to the ready instrument — depending on the complexity of the task."

All jobs can be different and not everything depends on a model. One musician needs the accordion to sound in a chamber manner and the other needs lyrical or noisy. These are personal preferences and national characteristics: different mentalities require different sounds and instruments. Some people like sharp sounds and others prefer rough and muffled. Russians order instruments that are sonorous and loud — to stretch the bellows and take the soul to paradise! Europeans prefer medium and quiet sounds: local halls and acoustics are great. The Molodechno company receives orders from everywhere — including the UK and Scandinavian countries. Unsurprisingly, staff have already managed to learn the preferences of customers. Meanwhile, Belarusians are geographically located between Europe and Russia and, as regards sounds, also prefer the golden mean.

"Great masters play our accordions!" says Zonta's director. "Among them are the famous Belarusian, Vladislav Pligovka — a winner of world championships and trophies for accordion playing, the showman, Vitaly Voronko, who prefers the acoustic accordion with a midi-system which can produce the sound of over 1,200 instruments and even vocals."

Furthermore, there is, for example, the American rock band *Gogol Bordello*. Their accordionist Pasha Nevmerzhitsky comes on stage with a Zonta instrument. You need to see it!



Master craftsman pleased with the sound of the instrument

The company staff will never forget the day when an order came from Italy to make a 'reverse' bayan: where the left hand should play what is usually played by the right hand. It might seem not difficult to change sides, but the customer's order required a complex sequence of constructive decisions: each detail had to be produced in a mirror image.

There is the impression that it is even possible to make a spaceship here. Moreover, most of the fine work is made by hand by fitters, assemblers and bellows' makers: they glue bellows

to people."

"Mr. Sitko is the best accordion-maker in Belarus. In Russia, a maximum of 2-3 people can be compared with him in terms of skills," says the master craftsman Mr. Moisa proudly. "In turn, our adjuster Yuri Rabushko joined us after working at the factory which produced bayans. However, 'serial' bayans differ from ours — like a children's bike from those participating in races. It's one thing to adjust two voices in a single one but it's a challenge to work with four of them, especially in different octaves... When Yuri

along with the working profession, hoping to eventually take over from senior colleagues. Yevgeny Kukhtarsky says he is a turner but the director objects, "No! He is Jack of all trades. He is a turner, a miller and an adjuster of automatic lathes and press equipment. He is smart and clever. He is great. At some point, the economic situation was such that the intellectual layer of the working class was washed out of production. This is a difficult topic, we really need smart people — such as Yevgeny."

Everything at Zonta is produced independently: cases,



Final match of the Belarusian wrestler Ivan Yankovsky (R) at the World Championships

Fighting from all sides

In Budapest, everything was turned upside down and stood on its head. At the World Wrestling Championships, which had been taking place in Hungary for several days, every day was full of surprises, incredible tensions and the bright lights of fights. There has not been such a spectacular and uncompromising fight for a long time. The Belarusian athletes, we are pleased to note, have also made a significant contribution to the overall fireworks show of emotions.

By Sergey Kanashits

In a final fight in the under 92kg weight category, Ivan Yankovsky fought against the American J'den Cox, a 23-year-old athlete and musician who masterfully plays the alto, the violin, bass guitar and piano. As it appeared, he also fights well.

Ivan is not young: he is 31. He has never won any world championships until now and therefore his reaching the final round could have been regarded as a success. Of course, we all wanted him to win. Yankovsky has long been considered a tal-

ented and strong fighter but injuries have often prevented him from achieving the top result. This time, he's managed to approach the tournament in full combat readiness — celebrating with a win. However, there was no beautiful fight in the final: both opponents demonstrated cunning tactical actions, waiting for their opponent's mistakes rather than attacking. In the end, Cox proved to be more successful and mature, and it seems he was helped a little by the judges.

Another medal was brought to our team by 29-year-old Ali Shabanov. As always, he

fought cheerfully and with a spark; his attacking manner is much appreciated by fans. The wrestler didn't disappoint his admirers and his result was impressive: 8:0, 10:0, 16:12... In the fight for third place, the strong Iranian contender Ezzatollah Akbarizarinkolaei was defeated in a tough struggle — 8:8; however, due to the last point, the win went to the Belarusian athlete.

In the under 55kg category, our Zalina Sidakova was fighting: on the way to the final, she also defeated the experienced American athlete. For Zalina,

this was her first such success: she has never won medals at the world and European championships. The gap is eliminated now and Sidakova has joined the list of our renowned athletes — becoming the 11th representative of the women's national wrestling team of Belarus which has won medals in top competitions over the last five years. Bravo! She had to fight against the young but titled Japanese Mayu Mukaida for gold; interestingly, her opponent was unanimously predicted as the clear favourite of the championship by specialists.

From within the second hundred to the best 20

By Denis Yemelyanov

WTA recognised Arina Sobolenko as Newcomer of the Year

This season, the leading Belarusian tennis player managed to make an impressive rise from within the second hundred in the world ranking to 12th position. At the same time, Sobolenko won two large tournaments — in US New Haven and Chinese Wuhan.

According to the WTA, the Most Improved Player of the Year was Kiki Bertens of the Netherlands while the American, Serena Williams won in the Comeback Player of the Year category.

Meanwhile, Moscow hosted the Kremlin Cup, which saw Max Mirnyi failing to defend the doubles title.



In the final, playing with Philipp Oswald, the 41-year-old tennis player lost to Austin Krajicek and Rajeev Ram — 6:7 (4:7), 4:6. Mirnyi's teammate, Yegor Gerasimov, reached the quarter-finals, where he lost to the famous Frenchman, Adrian Panatta (ranked 49th) — 6:7, 3:6. In the quarter-finals, Ilya Ivashko also finished his performance at the tournament in Antwerp retiring from the match with British Kyle Edmund (seeded first at the tournament) because of trauma.

Taking great strides

By Semen Novozhilov

In the last couple of years Belarusian chess players have made a bold step in their development

It's known that in line with the decision of the FIDE General Assembly, the 2022 World Chess Olympiad, bringing together all strongest chess players of the planet, will take place in Minsk. Belarus won the right to host the tournament over South Korea and Tunisia. One more piece of news: the Chair of the Belarusian Chess Federation, Anastasia Sorokina, has been elected as the Vice-President of the World Chess Federation (FIDE).

Until recently, it had been viewed as something fantastic, but in the last couple of years Belarusian chess players have made a bold step in their development.



After becoming the Head of the Belarusian Chess Federation, energetic and purposeful Anastasia Sorokina, over a short period of time, has managed to achieve the almost impossible: chess is slowly but gradually joining school education. Moreover, children's schools have received a second wind and our youngsters are taking an active part in the most prestigious international tournaments and, no less importantly, bringing home champion titles. The national squads have also revived, and they have acquired

a programme of competitions, outfit and equipment and a clear plan of further action. Chess in Belarus has become fashionable and popular after a long period of oblivion and decline. Moreover, the World Chess Olympiad, to be held in Belarus, can push chess forward several steps. Ms. Sorokina doesn't conceal her joy, saying, "It's a true breakthrough for Belarusian chess. Firstly, as the host country we have a unique opportunity to declare three women's and three men's team instead of one for women and one for men. It means we have a chance to play at such a level and many of our youngsters will have the opportunity to show themselves. We'll enter the youth squad, where young boys and girls will be able to acquire experience playing against the strongest rivals. Secondly, this means



three weeks of the competitions and a huge number of participants, judges, journalists, fans and coaches from all over the world. 196 states is a serious figure and it's on a global scale. The whole chess elite will get together in one place and at one time. It's great advertising for Belarus worldwide! Together with the right to host the Olympiad, the organiser receives an additional bonus: the conduct of the 2020 Women's

Cup and 2021 Men's Cup. Considering that in 2019 Minsk will be hosting the World Cadet Rapid & Blitz Chess Championships for the third time, it will be a wonderful grandmaster series of annual big tournaments in our country."

We now need to urgently study the Philidor position and Grob's attack, or at least learn how the knight moves. The time has come, and chess is becoming a trend in Belarus.

Fest of the week



Korean festival of friendship with Belarus held in Minsk. Korean artiste Park Min-ji performs

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 8th December. *Deafart*
Until 30th December. *Universe of Yazep Drozdovich*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 7th November. *Silver Age of Russian Jewellers*
Until 12th November. *Or the Other Side of Life: German Occupation in Meer Axelrod's Graphics*
Until 8th January. *Art of Chocolate*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 16th November. *See Belarus Such*
Until 31st January. *Maly Trostenets: exhibition-chronicles of large-scale massacre* Until 7th April. *Fantasy Land*

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

11 Sovetskaya Street
Until 30th November. *Belarusian Lawyers of 19th Century*

OUTLETO TRADING CENTRE

44 Zhukov Avenue
Until 1st January. *Tropics* exhibition of exotic animals

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 11th November. *Romania: 100 Photos Dedicated to 100th Anniversary of Great Unity* Until 18th November. *Muses in Line*

LIBRA

37 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st January. *Somewhere to the West of Minsk: Daily Life of Western Belarus* Until 4th December. *20th Century Avant-Garde*

CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 30th November. *Cat and Autumn*

MAGIC MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 15th December. *Tournament of Three Magicians*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 13th January. *Museum of Fir-Tree Toys*

VANKOVICH'S HOUSE

33a Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 10th November. *Exhibition of Polina Korzun-Fomchenko: At Source of Autumn*
Until 10th August. *Yakub Kolas and Vilno*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
01.11. *Madame Butterfly* 01, 02 and 03.11. *The Sleeping Beauty* 02.11. *The Nutcracker, or Another Christmas Story* 03.11. *Eugene Onegin* 04.11. *The Firebird* 06.11. *The Grey Legend* 08.11. *Cinderella*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
01 and 03.11. #13 04.11. *The Battlefield* 05.11. *Mixed Feelings* 06 and 08.11. *Wolves and Sheep*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
01.11. *Fool*
02.11. *Double Double*
03.11. *Dowerless*
04.11. *Synopsis*
06.11. *Love of Three*
08.11. *Playing Happy Family*

BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS

32 Nezavisimosti Avenue
02, 03, 04 and 07.11. *Circuses of the World*

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
01.11. *Matches / ART*
02.11. *Pan Tadeush*

03.11. *People of the Marshes* 03 and 08.11. *Elza's Land* 04.11. *The Seagull* 06.11. *Two Souls* 08.11. *Inspector*

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
01.11. *An Uninvited Guest*
02.11. *Medea Syndrome*
03.11. *Hunting for Self*
04.11. *Maybe*
08.11. *Ticket to Brest Train*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
01.11. *Zoika's Flat* 02.11. *Dangerous Ties*
03.11. *The Twelfth Night* 04.11. *Tricks of Khanuma* 06.11. *Yevgeny Grishkovets: Pre-Word* 08.11. *Woe from Wit*

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
02.11. *Dog in the Manger*
03.11. *Romeo and Juliet*
07.11. *Sparrow Night*
08.11. *Trouble of Tender Heart*

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
02.11. *Happiness Exists*
02.11. *Dragon*
03.11. *Mad Money*