

BATE – champion

Club from Borisov has again taken championship title — for 12th time



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Polina Bogusevich WINS,



Polina Bogusevich

Polina Bogusevich of Russia wins *Junior Eurovision-2017*

Song Contest, with representatives of Georgia and Australia in top three while Helena Meraai of Belarus finishes fifth



Helena Meraai

Helena Meraai – FIFTH



Minsk is to welcome guests for *Junior Eurovision-2018*

The finals of the children's song contest recently took place in Tbilisi, with Belarus' Helena Meraai occupying fifth place with her song *I Am the One*. The composition asserts that each person is a universe, with their own dreams, in which we must believe. Victory was claimed by Russian Polina Bogusevich, who performed *Wings*: a song with a deep social message. The Olympic Palace welcomed young talents from sixteen European Broadcasting Union member states: Australia, Albania, Armenia, Belarus, Ireland, Italy, Cyprus, Macedonia, Malta, the Netherlands, Poland, Portugal, Russia, Serbia, Ukraine and the host of the competition — Georgia. The Russian representative was given the highest score, of twelve points, from four countries: Portugal, Macedonia, Georgia and Australia. Meanwhile, Belarus' Helena Meraai received the highest score from Malta. Belarus gave its twelve points to Georgia. Minsk, with its wonderful concert halls and comfortable hotels, is to welcome guests for *Junior Eurovision-2018*, as decided by the European Broadcasting Union. Belarus will be hosting *Junior Eurovision* for the second time, with the contest having taken place in Minsk seven years ago. Beltelecompany has already announced an open contest for the symbols of the musical forum, inviting applications to design an eye-catching emblem and slogan in English. According to the TV press service, proposals are already flooding in, with over 300 received. Residents from CIS and non-CIS states may join Belarusians in entering.

Dialogue through the lens of promising dimension

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus and Georgia to expand trade-economic co-operation and inter-parliamentary interaction

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has discussed bilateral collaboration with the Chairman of the Georgian Parliament, Irakli Kobakhidze, during a visit by Georgian parliamentarians to Minsk. Meetings have focused on preparations for the official visit of the Belarusian Head of State to Georgia, scheduled for H1 2018. Mr. Lukashenko notes that Belarusian-Georgian trade turnover could reach \$200 million, saying, "We've reached an agreement on this, and now need joint efforts to arrange the forthcoming visit so that we may influence economics and trade between our states."

"As far as politics is concerned, I'm very grateful to

you. In spite of certain differences in focus, we maintain absolutely fraternal relations," continued Mr. Lukashenko. "I know what it costs for Georgia but you've always supported Belarus in an honest and sincere way, since the time of Mikheil Saakashvili. When everyone was set against Belarus, he spoke openly about our country, in a warm and positive manner, about our people and even about the Belarusian President, although it wasn't popular to do so at the time."

According to the President, the current government of Georgia is building its relations with Belarus comprehensively, and without concealment. "Times have changed but our improved relations with the West, with America, are largely down to Georgia, for which we're very grateful," asserted the Head of State.

He stressed that there are no contradictions or misunderstandings regarding political processes between our two countries and we share our evaluation of the international agenda. "We're always ready to meet each other half-way," said the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko thanked the Georgian side for delivering pharmaceutical products to Belarus. Belarus, in turn, has helped Georgia in difficult times, when old-growth forest was on fire and prompt assistance was provided by Belarus.

"Of course, these are just episodes, but they show that our countries are building a trustworthy atmosphere around bilateral relations," Mr. Lukashenko underlined.

Praising the visit of the Georgian delegation to Belarus, the President asserted, "The parliamentary delegation visit is very important.

We're well aware of the role played by the parliament in Georgia and how influential deputies are in Georgian society. Public diplomacy (you are at the top of such diplomacy, being 'common' people), strengthens inter-parliamentary ties and creates a good basis on which to build trade-economic relationships. Without this, it's impossible to create deep, long-term relations between states. We attach great importance to the parliamentary dimension and I'm very grateful for your visit to Belarus."

On the eve of the PA OSCE session in Minsk, a Belarusian delegation visited Georgia, for a parliamentary session, to learn from its experience in organising the event. During the meeting, it was underlined that recent years have seen Belarusian-Georgian inter-parliamentary contacts improve, with

friendships established between both countries' parliaments. The Georgian Embassy to Minsk also deserves praise in this respect. At present, parliamentarians are organising a joint action plan, to create concrete content.

The Head of State invited the Georgian delegation to see the development of the agrarian sector in Belarus, since bilateral collaboration in this sphere is planned. He noted also the potential of Belarusian machine building and automobile building, wood processing and the potash industry, encouraging the delegation to learn more. Belarus is already manufacturing tractors adapted to meet Georgian farming conditions. The meeting also tackled the expansion of contacts in pharmaceuticals and tourism.

Irakli Kobakhidze believes that Belarus and Georgian should strengthen their



Irakli Kobakhidze

friendship, saying, "We have wonderful relations, with intensive dynamics." The Chairman of the Georgian Parliament notes that we are developing constructive inter-parliamentary co-operation, while interacting in the political sphere. "We're connected by wonderful political, diplomatic relations and, primarily, by friendship between our nations. Close relations between Georgia and the Republic of Belarus are important and we know that your personal contribution to this is huge, for which we're grateful."

Global trends in shouting loudest

Before the New Year celebrations, Paris decided to ban the Christmas crib. Meanwhile, in Polish Warsaw, citizens marched with white and red flags under the slogan: 'We Want God'.

By Nina Vasilyeva

A scandal has erupted in the French town of Ploërmel, where it was proposed to remove the cross from the monument to Pope John Paul II. Several days ago, deputies of the European Parliament in Strasbourg expressed concern about the persecution of Christians on a global scale. Belarus enjoys interfaith and ethnic peace and has something to say on this topic. Since the 'Helsinki-2' negotiation platform is gaining real features, why not initiate a global discussion in Minsk?



VITALY PIVNARCHIK

Europe, with its many divides, has few places where matters can be fully discussed.

Warsaw residents came out on Independence Day under Christian and patriotic slogans. As a result, the ruling party has been subjected to fierce attacks from its own people. Moreover, the Warsaw Mayor tried to block permission for the march. One of the major newspapers named those participating as 'xenophobic' and even 'fascist'. Truly, this is a house split internally. If you want to publicly quote the gospel from Mark or Matthew, you'll also be prohibited.

At the other end of Europe,

in France, the State Council has finally banned the installation of Christmas cribs in state institutions. This Christian symbol can be found everywhere — including churches and bakeries. Even the Élysée Palace has been traditionally decorated with a Christmas tree, with gifts for its employees' children. So, what should be done now? Should all be removed and crosses demolished — as with Pope John Paul II's monument?

According to French philosopher Bertrand Vergely, until recently, governments — even socialistic and 'secular' — have been smart enough to accept the coexistence of

the republican secular system and the Christian people's past. The situation has now changed, with the secular system acting in a way that is both petty and fundamentalist, becoming stupid and dangerous as a result. A fire of discord is erupting as the secular system emulates the behaviour of the Islamic fundamentalists against which it is struggling...

Why shouldn't Minsk arrange a discussion of tolerance, openness and respect for religions, sharing Belarusian experience. Happily, the Belarusian capital has previously hosted a philosophical congress...

Moving along clear trajectory

By Maria Drukova

Government reviews strategy of science and technology development until 2040

In December, Minsk will host the 2nd Congress of Scientists: the final landmark meeting in the Year of Science. The event will focus on goals while elaborating a strategy for development and interaction with the private sector. The Science and Technology: 2018-2040 strategy, developed by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, aims to support long-term planning, with a draft recently discussed at a session of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers.

The strategy draws on proposals from the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly and the Presidential Administration, as well as from state authorities, and various institutions and organisations, including academic. The programme is divided into three stages (2018-2020, 2020-2030 and 2030-2040) aiming to raise the share

of innovative goods in the total volume of production, from today's 16 percent to 25 percent.

The Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences, Vladimir Gusakov, has no doubt that a clear trajectory of development requires strict orienting points, and goals, as well as indicators of success. "All this is being laid in the strategy," he explains. "Financing of science is being expanded

but, more importantly, we're moving to a new stage of industrialisation. The world is on the threshold of a new industrial revolution, entitled 'Industry 4.0', based on intellectualisation, informatisation, and a digital economy. We're relying on our current manufacturing, specialisation and large industry but we need to keep up with global developments in IT, artificial intellect and robotics. Our country shouldn't lag behind; we have good potential, well-equipped science, and well-trained personnel, with a high qualification level."



Truth becomes clear during communication with people

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, tours Gomel Region on working visit

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Head of State wanted to improve his familiarity with socio-economic development and the prospects of the Buda-Koshelevo District, as well as of the region overall. Issues of social development and the beatification of district centres and settlements of the Gomel Region were high on the agenda.

In particular, the President visited Buda-Koshelevo Central District Hospital, which is known for studying and treating illness following the Chernobyl nuclear power station accident. In this district 193 settlements belong to the zone of radioactive contamination, making provision of proper medical services a matter of urgency. Social orphans are also prevalent in the region, with many children facing difficult life situations.

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the optimisation of the healthcare system remains an important issue and cannot be removed from the agenda. He drew attention to the need to ensure access to healthcare services for all, regardless of where someone lives, in a big city or a small town. Moreover, the President demanded that everything should be optimal, that a rational approach should be applied to everything.

The Head of State toured Buda-Koshelevo Central District Hospital, seeing its conditions for treatment and its modern medical equipment. Mr. Lukashenko also talked to medical workers and patients, being keen to learn about the medical services provided at the hospital and the problems it faces. The President



Spiritual conversation at family-type foster home

was briefed on the level of medical services in the Gomel Region, especially in areas suffering from the Chernobyl disaster, including the Buda-Koshelevo District. The President asked whether more medical institutions are needed in the district and was assured that this isn't the case.

President Lukashenko donated a mini-tractor with a set of mounted and trailed agricultural tools to a family-type foster home in Buda-Koshelevo and visited the Novikov family, where Alexey and Victoria are raising three of their own children and seven adopted.

"The tractor for you has been left

in the yard. The governor and chairman of the district executive committee will let me know how much land you plough and what you plant. You'll be given as much land as you need," said Mr. Lukashenko, addressing the couple.

The President wondered whether living conditions are comfortable and asked about plans for the future, especially regarding the children.

The President also spoke about other important issues.

The Head of State noted that global and regional security issues remain of concern and that Belarus is playing a major role and is keen to

play an even bigger one. "Belarus is a quiet, orderly, dignified country: a protagonist for security on the European continent. Its status is rising in Europe," commented the Head of State. "We see, we hear, we appreciate it and we'll always be willing to compromise to accommodate the interests of European states, as long as we're not asked to choose between Russia and Europe (as in the past). I don't even answer such questions."

"The decision to send the Foreign Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Makei, to Brussels was taken long before the *Eastern Partnership* Summit," the President stressed, commenting on

the degree of Belarus' representation at the summit and claims that Russia is connected to this. "There is no conspiracy. There are no Russian, American or Ukrainian traces," explained the Head of State. "We received a personal invitation to attend the summit. It was addressed to the President, as in previous years. However, it's the Minister of Foreign Affairs who always attends. Probably, some people don't really want to see me in the European Union, but this is ancient history. The point is that all of my international visits and working trips are planned a year in advance to fit with domestic events."

Mr. Lukashenko spoke of prospects for Belarus-EU relations, citing the German Foreign Minister, who has announced his desire to see Belarus as a connecting link between East and West. "This is what we've always stated: we'll have proper relations with Europe because we are the heart of Europe ourselves. Our role and our future are to be a link, if Europe wants it. And we see that it does want it. We are at your service. We have our own interests and our people. Our interests don't contradict those of Europe and our people aren't a burden to Europeans. They've never caused any problems for anyone. Belarus will never be a source of trouble for Europe," assured the President.

The President promised that Belarus will continue developing cooperation with Europe. "They have cutting-edge technologies that we need. We're interested in them and we'll acquire them," noted Mr. Lukashenko. "We have an interest in the European market."

Eastern Partnership envisages increased traffic

By Oleg Bogomazov

EU leaders speak of vital partnership with Eastern neighbours, including Belarus, during Eastern Partnership Summit in Brussels

"I'm absolutely convinced that we need Belarus as an important partner. Tight economic ties are in place and we'd like to develop them," Federal Chancellor of Austria Christian Kern told the media. He notes that Austria is extremely interested in the healthy development of the region, not only for the sake of stability but for economic co-operation.

The Federal Chancellor of Germany, Angela Merkel, stressed that the European

Union's relations with Eastern Partnership countries are vital. "On the one hand, we're interested in the wellbeing of the people and in democratic development. On the other hand, it has a lot to do with security," she stated.

In recent years, Belarus and the EU have normalised relations, Latvian Foreign Minister Edgars Rinkēvičs told journalists on the sidelines of the summit. "The nature of relations between the EU and Belarus will depend on Minsk, Brussels and other EU states. If we compare EU-Belarus relations in December 2014 and today, as we approach December 2017, I think we can say that we've normalised our relationship,"



At the summit in Brussels

asserted the Minister.

Regarding signing an agreement between Belarus and the EU, he noted that Minsk, Brussels and other countries need to determine how far and across which issues to interact. "I see good progress. The most important thing is to avoid doing harm,

and to continue a sincere exchange of opinions," he underlined.

Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, had brief meetings with foreign leaders on the sidelines of the *Eastern Partnership* Summit.

Despite the summit being held behind closed doors,

members of the press were admitted to the venue before the event, where they spotted the Belarusian Foreign Minister talking to Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev, Armenian President Serzh Sargsyan, the EU High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Federica Mogherini, and representatives of other countries. During the official welcome ceremony, Vladimir Makei was welcomed by the President of the European Commission, Jean-Claude Juncker, the President of the European Council, Donald Tusk, and the Prime Minister of Estonia (currently holding Presidency of the EU), Juri Ratas.

Belarus' participation in

the summit was also welcomed by German Chancellor Angela Merkel as she talked to the press. Chatting to the Belarusian media, Romanian President Klaus Iohannis noted the importance of Belarus as a partner of the European initiative. He also expressed optimism about the further development of relations.

The *Eastern Partnership* is an EU initiative aimed at strengthening relations between the European Union and Armenia, Azerbaijan, Belarus, Georgia, Moldova and Ukraine. This initiative, an eastern branch of the European Neighbourhood Policy, focuses on the establishment of bilateral and multilateral relations.

Budget aims to serve the goals of social policy

By Vasily Kharitonov

According to the National Bank, this year, the country will have the lowest rate of inflation since its independence. "Six percent in 2017 is very good. However, the 2018 forecast rises to 7 percent, due to inflationary expectations, which we are encouraging," noted Mr. Lukashenko.

The President is concerned regarding investments, saying, "I've been informed that, next year, investments will be just 65 percent of the 2011 level. It's not enough to maintain the competitiveness of our economy. If we lack our own capital, we must seek investors and affordable loans. We currently lack projects," noted the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the budget should serve social policy goals. The President is also concerned about private sector debt, where the share of troubled assets is high. The Government and the National Bank have taken only 'cosmetic' measures, rather than finding real solutions, according to the President. He has asked for the final version of the 2018 budget by December 20th, praising the draft that so far exists. "Everything is well calculated. In fact, what you've said is right. But please focus on the

Forecast for Belarus' socio-economic development for 2018 should be realistic yet ambitious, asserts Alexander Lukashenko, hearing report by Government, National Bank, regional executive committees and Minsk City Executive Committee on this year's economic performance, assessing achieved results and forecasting social and economic development for 2018



Minsk Bearing Plant renewing its production technology

needs of people who want to live well," he stressed, asking that funds be allocated to support public sector employees and the most vulner-

able categories of people.

A conservative scenario predicts 1.2 percent GDP growth in Belarus, as part of the 2018 draft budget. Aver-

age annual parameters will be as follows: Belarus' GDP growth at 1.2 percent, the level of inflation at 7.4 percent, the refinancing rate at

11 percent, oil prices at \$43 per barrel, and the US Dollar exchange rate at Br2.038 and 62.3 Russian Roubles.

Republican budgetary

income is expected to reach Br20.5 billion (up 7.5-7.8 percent on 2017) while budgetary expenses are estimated at Br19.8 billion (up about 7 percent). The Republican budgetary surplus will reach Br718.3 million (0.64 percent of GDP) and will be used to repay some state debt.

Priority objectives for 2018 include the timely and full repayment of foreign state debt, full payment of social allowances and salaries to the public sector and state administration, and support of Belarusian-made exports, to maintain 2017 levels.

The Head of State underlines that people should not only have jobs but should earn fair salaries, with an average of Br1,000 by the end of the year. "The way forward is to raise wages for those being paid less than the average," asserts Mr. Lukashenko.

On this subject, Prime Minister Andrei Kobaykov has noted that, from January to September 2017, salaries rose by 3.8 percent (against the previous year): slightly more than labour productivity growth. "This isn't very good but there's no need to worry, as it's quite explainable, due to raising salaries within the state administration and budgetary sphere."

Business without barriers becoming a reality

Alexander Lukashenko signs decree 'On Entrepreneurship Development' — a key document from a package of legal acts aiming to improve the business climate in the country

By Alexey Fedosov

The decree envisages radical change in the way government agencies interact with private companies. It will minimise the interference of government officials in the operation of commercial entities and will give more leeway to private companies in managing their affairs, while raising the responsibility of private companies to the public. The minimal level of state control remains unchanged.

The notification procedure of performing most types of economic activity is being introduced, to cover consumer, tourist and social services, trade and public catering, transportation of passengers and luggage, merchandise production, production of construction materials, and some

other popular types of business. The document should cover about 95 percent of Belarusian small and medium-sized private companies.

In order to start up a business, a private entrepreneur will need to notify the local executive body using the one-stop principle, either via mail or digital services on the website. The entrepreneur will be authorised to pursue their chosen activity from the very next day.

The decree aims to reduce administrative barriers based on complicated and lengthy bureaucratic procedures, with a large number of certificates, approvals, and permit documents. Retail and public catering companies will no longer need approval from municipal government agencies for the working



Good news for entrepreneurs

hours of shops, restaurants or cafes. Outlets open at night (from 11pm to 7am) are an exception. Transport manifests for transporting passengers and luggage at irregular inter-

vals will no longer be required.

Excessive and costly requirements and restrictions upon businesses specialising in manufacturing, civil engineering, transportation,

retail, and some other spheres are being scrapped. At the same time, the document will introduce administrative responsibility for company heads, for the smooth operation of their enterprise.

In particular, if an executive fails to take measures to prevent harmful consequences, he or she will be liable for a fine of 10-200 base amounts, provided the failure is not classified as a crime or an administrative offense.

This measure should increase the social responsibility of private companies, while relaxing business requirements. Moreover, the decree should inspire entrepreneurship initiatives, encouraging business activity by citizens, and improving the country's investment climate.



Solar energy used for cooling

By Alexey Fedosov

Minsk's Atlant JSC liaising with German partners to create cooling from solar batteries

Jointly with German partners, Atlant is implementing a project to create a mobile cooling device, using solar power. Such units are indispensable where there's no electricity, or where there's a shortage in its supply. The idea is to allow devices to work overnight, using stored energy. A prototype has already been produced, notes the First Deputy Industry Minister of Belarus, Gennady Svidersky. He tells us, "We're still early on, but the topic is very interesting and has a future, I think." The project was recently discussed at the Belarusian-European Investment Forum, in Luxembourg. Negotiations with French colleagues have included plans to expand supplies of Belarusian technologies to the African continent. "The fact that our machinery is in demand in Africa, and is adjusted to meet their conditions, is clear. The most complex aspect of expanding supplies is the provision of financing. A scheme is being developed to create the most comfortable paths of promotion for Belarusian goods to Africa, using export credit systems and international funds," explains Mr. Svidersky.

According to the First Deputy Industry Minister, the Belarusian automobile industry is keen to purchase composite materials manufactured within the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. These can rival metal components in strength, making them suitable for use in the production of automobiles and agricultural machinery. "We'd like the domestic automobile industry to use these materials," Mr. Svidersky underlines.

Green light for high-tech

Belarus lacks deposits of non-ferrous metals but isn't held back in developing its information technologies, becoming an IT-oriented economy. Thanks to the High-Tech Park, which unites over 150 residents and over 25,000 IT specialists, the dream is becoming a reality.

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus boasts a developed pharmaceuticals sector, with success in bio- and nano-technologies, involving about fifty organisations. In 2019, the first block of the Belarusian nuclear power station will be commissioned, enabling the country to receive sufficient volumes of electricity

to automate production. Meanwhile, the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park will soon be complete, housing high-tech production facilities.

The High-Tech Park is annually increasing its volumes and, this year, may achieve \$1 billion in export of computer services. Residents of the High-Tech Park have entered new markets: Japan,

Saudi Arabia and Qatar. Exports to Singapore have risen ten-fold, and those to Denmark five-fold, while exports to the Netherlands are up 2.5-fold. According to Alexander Martinkevich, the Deputy Director of the HTP Administration, the HTP is working to create venture funds, and conditions for the attraction of large international corporations to Be-

larus. "Our country is known globally but has some way to go. Belarus is positioned as one of the largest IT clusters in Europe, but much work lies ahead regarding worldwide status. Another important task is the promotion of the Belarusian IT industry abroad, presenting our business potential and IT investment opportunities," he says.

Obviously convincing victory

Unique device — invented by Mogilev's schoolboy — recognised at international competition in Stockholm

By Svetlana Markova

How to quickly and accurately determine the quality of water? It is a matter of concern to many people. Daniil Sharoikin, from Mogilev's secondary school #18, pondered over the issue as well and has made a major step towards determining the concentration of nitrates and ions in surface and ground water: the boy has developed a unique device for this purpose. His work has been

highly appreciated in Belarus and, he was recently awarded recognition at the international competition — *Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2017* (held in the Swedish capital).

To present his development and answer all questions of the strict jury, the teenager studied English thoroughly. As Daniil admits, his rivals were serious. "Overall, 68 students and schoolchildren from 34 countries — aged 15-20 — took part," he explains.



Mogilev schoolboy wins international competition Stockholm Junior Water Prize 2017

Famous scientists recognised the topicality of the young Belarusian's invention. They also admit its practical usefulness as the device can be used in industry. It took over a year for the talented Daniil to enjoy this landmark event. He was assisted

by Yekaterina Kapralova (his chemistry teacher) and biologist Natalia Yeliseeva. "We conducted tests not only in our school laboratory. When needed, we asked Mogilev's Kuleshov University and Food University for help," he noted.



As the teachers assert, the teenager is not only talented but positively stubborn. If necessary, he can work day and night. Unsurprisingly, his results are amazing. Interestingly, the device has required little money: outwardly, it looks like two cups put one into the other. However, their contents have a scientific basis. The system makes it possible not only to analyse the composition of water but also to transmit data to a computer. Daniil has already filed an application to the National Intellectual Property Centre to obtain a patent. He plans to continue work in this direction in the future.

During his trip to Stockholm, the teenager was much impressed — primarily, by the reception of the King of Sweden. The international recognition of Daniil's practical scientific work is not his only achievement. The tenth grade pupil is a lead singer of Mogilev's famous Raduga (Rainbow) Studio. As an activist and excellent pupil, he's represented Mogilev this year during the meeting of Belarusian students with the President — 'Youth: Looking to the Future'. He admits that the sincere and open dialogue has become another impetus for him to learning, creativity and scientific research.



Etiquette for export

Are Belarusian hotel concierges ready to welcome European Games 2019 guests?

Guests from fifty countries are coming to Belarus for the European Games in 2019, and should be welcomed in a manner inspiring them to wish to return. Concierges are overseeing this at hotels, and gained their own community a year ago. They are already experts in their field, being aware of where to send guests to eat, and buy essential items and souvenirs, as well as the current shows and exhibitions on offer. Our *MT* reporter investigates the daily life of a concierge.

Just like children, who love to say 'I wish', guests at hotels often make outlandish requests. However, the best hotels do their utmost to fulfil those wishes, locating tickets not publicly on sale, for instance. Concierges seem to have unique talents in this sphere.

Looking forward, to the 2019 European Games, you might wonder how vital the work of concierges will be.



VITALY GIL

Concierges to provide anything a foreign guest may request

Won't there be enough volunteers, arena and hotel employees, with all necessary knowledge? Meanwhile, mobile apps are being developed to share all salient information on the country's infrastructure. Meeting representatives of the Kateria Republican Public Association, I was at once wooed by their charm. Their open smiles and polished appearance made my heart melt. "We solve guests' daily problems," explains Yelena Kuzmenkova, the deputy manager of a Minsk hotel. "We organise transfers from and to the airport and the railway station, and book tables at cafes and restaurants, but also handle many other requests, some of which are unusual."

Young concierge Bogdan Tikhonovich tells us,

"We once searched for a client's 'first love'. He arrived in Minsk from abroad and wished to find his classmate with whom he'd studied at a rural school. We used the phone book to find her parents and, later, contacted the woman, who

agreed to meet. However, we have no information on what happened afterwards."

The list of requests and wishes includes many interesting things: on one birthday night, guests wanted a fridge to chill their drinks, and per-

sonnel were able to oblige. In need of home pickles and hand-made sausage when all the shops and markets are closed? The concierges are there to help. Need a limited-edition handbag only available in Poland? It's only a matter of moments for one concierge to phone another and solve the problem. They enjoy a network of contacts.

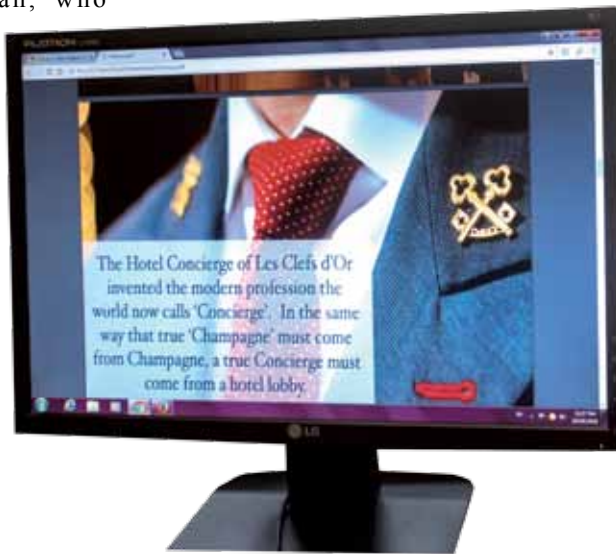
"The main mission of our association's establishment is to represent our country and its hotels in the best way possible. Concierges aim to help foreign guests and perform super-tasks," notes Ms. Kuzmenkova, who's responsible for concierge recruitment. "In choosing candidates for this position, we look at their behaviour, education, foreign language knowledge and ability to attract others. They

should be charming, unselfish and eager to help. Moreover, concierges should know the city well — including its institutions, corners and facts."

Concierges usually have many connections in Minsk and abroad. For example, if a guest leaves Minsk for another country, then a concierge can call the hotel where they'll be staying with a request to meet the guest with their favourite wine. This might look miraculous but it works! "Five star hotels tend to behave in this way, but even those with fewer stars need such specialists. Guests will never return to a place where they receive unfriendly treatment or aren't respected," she adds.

I set a test, to see if the concierges could guess what I'd be interested in. Some suggested the National Art Museum and residential districts, deciding that I was interested in seeing real people's lives and the city's smaller streets, such as Marx and Revolutsionnaya. Others proposed a tour of historical buildings, saying that I looked keen on photography. They also suggested a trip to the Musical Theatre, or to the youth bar in Zybityskaya Street. Amazingly, they were right! I loved all their ideas.

Any concierge eager to join the International Union of Hotel Concierges Golden Keys (Union Internationale des Concierges d'Hotels Les Clefs d'Or) knows that they should try out each experience before suggesting it to clients, to protect their reputation and that of their country. Certainly, Minsk's concierges take their job seriously.



Assessing great mastery

By Tatiana Malysheva

Belarusian restorers' work in preserving wall paintings of St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral in Minsk praised by jury of international Europa Nostra Awards 2017

The cathedral's wall paintings have received special mention by this year's Europa Nostra Awards, with the jury praising Belarus as a perfect example of restoration methods, using research to ensure that correct materials and methods are applied to multi-layer paintings. The jury stressed the educational value of this work.



St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral

The Deputy Director of Minskaya Spadchyna enterprise, Alexander Kokhan, tells us that the project is dedicated to conserving the layered

wall paintings within Minsk's 17th century St. Peter and Paul's Cathedral. For almost four centuries, the building has kept its architectural appearance, while its pictorial interior has changed five times. The project's goal was to preserve each layer of painting, to show the multi-faceted historical and artistic elements of our cultural heritage.

The pan-European Federation for Cultural Heritage, Europa Nostra, is viewed as Europe's most prestigious award-giving body in the sphere of safeguarding cultural and natural heritage. In 2017, 202 entries were received, from 39 European countries.

Remembering French pilots

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarusian flag raised in Rouen to mark 75th anniversary of legendary Normandie-Niemen squadron

Solemn events — dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the legendary Normandie-Niemen squadron — have been hosted by French Rouen, attended by the Ambassador of Belarus to France, Pavel Latushko, representatives of the Russian and Serbian embassies, heads of the Normandie Region and Rouen, members of the military, students of city schools



and representatives of public associations, including the Normandy-Niemen Association.

Participants of the event laid flowers at the monument to the Normandie-Niemen squadron, located opposite the City Hall of Rouen (the region's capital). Flags of France, Belarus and Russia were raised and an exhibition dedicated to the history of the squadron opened in Rouen City Hall.

Pavel Latushko stressed that Belarus remembers the bravery of French pilots who fought for the liberation of its lands.

Even the air is filled with history here

Five reasons to visit Polotsk

By German Moskalenko

1. Returning to the origins of history

The oldest city in Belarus was founded by the Krivichi, at the confluence of the Zapadnaya Dvina and the Polota rivers, in 862. It's especially beautiful in autumn, when the lush foliage on trees thins, revealing the city's architecture. In Polotsk, which is the same age as Kiev and Novgorod, even the air is filled with history.

The capital of Polotsk Principality was a strategic city on the legendary route 'from the Varangians to the Greeks'.

Scandinavian sagas tell us of Polotsk's troops, which travelled to Constantinople, while *The Tale of Igor's Campaign* glorifies the bravery of Polotsk's men and the wisdom of Prince Vseslav (nicknamed 'the Miracle-Worker').

2. Touching the holy walls of St. Sophia's Cathedral

The pearl of ancient Polotsk architecture is Saviour Transfiguration Church, within the 12th century Monastery of St. Yevfrosiniya. It's the oldest in Russia, founded almost nine centuries ago by Princess Predslava-Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya — a great granddaughter of Prince Vladimir. She's revered both in Belarus and in Russia, and her relics rest in the church. Orthodox pilgrims visit continually.

The church walls feature unique frescoes depicting the saint. The symbol of spirituality for the Belarusian nation, Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya's Cross, disappeared during the war but, around fifty years after the Great Victory, was recreated by Brest jeweller Nikolay Kuzmich.

St. Sophia's Cathedral is a shrine for Polotsk and a symbol of Belarus. There are three more Sophia cathedrals in the world: in Veliky Novgorod, Kiev and Istanbul. This one was built by Byzantine architects in the mid-11th century, and held the richest library — including the famous *Polotsk Chronicle*, which disappeared without trace. You can take a tour of the crypt, where frag-

ments of ancient walls remain, and enjoy organ music performed daily under the cathedral's vaults.

3. Touching ancient toys

It's impossible to visit all eleven museums of the National Polotsk Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve in a single day. If you have time for only one, make it the Museum of Belarusian Book Printing, which is housed in the restored building of the former

Bratsk school. It has a unique Medieval atmosphere, as in the times of Francysk Skaryna and Simeon Polotsky, and keeps the largest Belarusian book: an ancient folio as tall as a person. You can visit the studio where books are copied and printed, in the style Gutenberg.

Polotsk is also home to Belarus' only children's museum. Not all its exhibits are kept under glass, so that visitors can touch and play with them, learning the history of such objects as the samovar, postal stamps and cameras. Children love the huge installations, the gramophones, and the sets of old weights, which help



Monument to Belarusian statehood in Polotsk

them understand the meaning of such abstract concepts as time, sound, speed, volume and weight. Meanwhile, the collection of ancient toys is impressive in size...

4. Taking a selfie near the letter 'Y'

There's no need to go to the museum: just visit the art gallery at the former Jesuit collegium. Apart from works by famous domestic masters, there are icons and interesting archaeological finds on show, revealing the secrets of the ancient city.

A walk through the city centre is enough to see that Polotsk is a living museum, with its monuments to Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, Vseslav Charodey, Francysk Skaryna, Simeon Polotsky, Nikolay

the Miracle-Worker and Krivichi (who founded the city and installed Polotsk's streets). It's especially fashionable to take a selfie near the world's only monument to the letter 'Y' (unique to the Belarusian language).

5. Recalling heroes of old battles

During the Great Patriotic War, Red Army soldiers held back the onslaught of superior enemy forces on the outskirts of the city for almost two weeks, from trenches and pillboxes. Some fortifications of this Stalin Line section have been restored.

The museum-apartment of Soviet Union Hero Zinaida Tusnolobova-Marchenko is also worth visiting, showing us the unique fate of the nurse who saved so many lives.

St. Sophia's Cathedral symbolises the spirituality of the Belarusian nation

Opportunities for cultural influence

By Natalia Stepanovich

Paris hosts 39th session of UNESCO General Conference, with Belarus elected onto Executive Board of this influential international organisation

Following a vote by 184 countries taking part in the conference, Belarus has been overwhelmingly chosen to join the Executive Board, receiving 171 votes. Between GA sessions (which take place every two years) the major governing body of the UNESCO is the Executive Board, which includes representatives of fifty-eight member states.

The Executive Board meets twice annually, in spring and autumn, helping influence the adoption of decisions on which sites are to be included on the World Heritage List. The Deputy Head of the Department of the Protection of Historical and Cultural Heritage of the Culture Ministry, Natalia Khvir, hopes that our membership will give us the opportunity to influence particular processes. She explains, "It's a different situation to be observing from the outside rather than taking part in decision making. Being frank, we'll now have the opportunity to lobby for our interests, promoting folios which are on UNESCO's Tentative List."



Almost thirty years ago, Belarus joined the Convention concerning the Protection of World Cultural and Natural Heritage, adopted by UNESCO in 1972. The beginning of this century was the most fruitful, with four sites located on the territory of our country joining the UNESCO World Heritage List. However, our ambitions are grander, with five more sites currently on the Tentative List. Two folios — Avgustovsky Canal — a construction of people and nature, and 16th-19th Century Fortresses — have trans-boundary status, being submitted together with neighbouring states. Meanwhile, The Material Embodiment of the Spiritual Heritage of St. Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya (St. Sophia Cathedral and Saviour Transfiguration Church in Polotsk), as well as St. Boris and Gleb Church in Grodno and fortified religious buildings across the Grodno and Vitebsk regions are exclusively our own, boasting historical and cultural value.

Belarus plans to prepare a complete package of documents for each site, for application to be included on the World Heritage List.



SERGEY LOZUYUK



Balinese Hindus walk after praying as Mount Agung volcano erupts at Besakih Temple in Karangasem

Travel warnings raised as Bali volcano erupts

Dozens of flights have been cancelled to and from the Indonesian island as a thick ash cloud towers into the sky

A volcano on the Indonesian island of Bali has coughed up a huge cloud of smoke high into the skies, disrupting air traffic and leaving thousands stranded at the airport. Indonesia has raised its Volcano Observatory Notice for Aviation (VONA) to red, its highest warning, saying the cloud of ash could reach

more than 6,000 metres into the atmosphere. "The activity of Mount Agung has entered the magmatic eruption phase, it is still spewing ash at the moment, but we need to monitor and be cautious over the possibility of a strong, explosive eruption," said Gede Suantika, an official at the volcanology and geological

disaster mitigation agency. Authorities say Bali is 'still safe' except for a 7.5-kilometre zone around Mt. Agung. Some 25,000 people were evacuated from the area in September, when the volcano showed signs of activity for the first times in more than 50 years. The volcano's last major eruption, in 1963, killed more

1,000 people and wiped out several villages.

The ash cloud is thought to be moving eastward towards the island of Lombok, and the main airport there has been closed. The cancellations have so far affected several thousand people, many of them Australian tourists.



Egypt mourns victims of mosque massacre

Three days of national mourning have begun in Egypt for the 235 people killed in a bomb and gun attack during last Friday prayers at a mosque in North Sinai

Assailants killed 235 people when they bombed a mosque in North Sinai during last Friday prayers. More than 100 others were wounded. No group has claimed responsibility for the carnage at the Al Rawdah mosque in

the town of Bir al-Abed. But a branch of the so-called Islamic State group has been waging an insurgency in the mainly desert region. Attackers in vehicles bombed the mosque then fired on worshippers as they fled. Local sources said the mosque was frequented by Sufi Muslims, who are regarded as unbelievers by extremist Islamist groups. Other reports said military conscripts also worshipped there.

Europe's retailers chase sales boost with Black Friday offers

Retailers across Europe chased shoppers on 'Black Friday' in a test of consumer confidence, particularly in Britain where the spending spree imported from the US has become most popular

After suffering their biggest decline in sales volumes for four-and-a-half years in October, British retailers are pinning their hopes on discounts to get shoppers, who are being squeezed by inflation and low wage rises, spending again. Meanwhile, the recent budget statement from chancellor Philip Hammond did little to address Britons' falling living standards or purchasing power. In the UK the annual pro-



motional event, which has historically focused on electrical goods, has been mainly online since 2014 when it was marred by chaos and scuffles in stores. "I think it will be our busiest trading day of the year," John Rogers, chief executive of electricals to toys retailer Argos, which is owned by Britain's second biggest retailer Sainsbury's, said.

Cuba, North Korea reject 'unilateral and arbitrary' US demands

Cuba's Foreign Minister and his North Korean counterpart rejected the United States' 'unilateral and arbitrary' demands while expressing concern about escalating tensions on the Korean peninsula

North Korea is searching for support amid unprecedented pressure from the United States and the international community to cease its nuclear weapons and missile programmes, which it carries out in defiance of UN Security Council resolutions. The country, which has made no secret of its plans to develop a missile capable of hitting the US mainland, has maintained warm political relations with Cuba since 1960, despite the island's opposition to nuclear weapons. Some diplomats said Cuba was also one of the few countries that might be able to convince North Korea to move away from the current showdown with the United States that threatens war. The ministers, meeting in Havana, called for 'respect for peoples' sovereignty' and 'the peaceful settlement of disputes', according to a statement released by the Cuban Foreign Ministry.

Tesla cranks up big battery in Australia

Tesla Inc has completed construction of the world's largest lithium ion battery in Australia, putting it on track to meet a 100-day deadline for switching the battery packs on

Tesla won a bid in July to build the 129 megawatt hour battery for South Australia, the country's most wind power-dependent state, with a vow from Chief Executive Elon Musk to install it within 100 days of signing a grid connection agreement or give it to the state for free. When the grid connection deal was signed on September 29th, Tesla was already half way through installing the battery packs. The Tesla Powerpacks have now been fully installed at a wind farm run by France's Neoen, and testing is set to begin to provide grid security services in South Australia. "While others are just talking, we are delivering our energy plan, making South Australia more self-sufficient, and providing back up power and more affordable energy for South Australians this summer," state Premier Jay Weatherill said in a statement.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Art project vividly presenting panorama of young creativity

Belarusian contemporary art continuously expanding its international language

By Vladimir Velikhov

International jury members evaluating works at the *Autumn Salon*, with Belgazprombank participants, have praised the development of Belarusian art. Ukrainian art critic Konstantin Doroshenko, who curates contemporary art, notes that this year's works appear more precise and conceptual. Choosing winners, the jury took into account national characteristics, which remain important despite the natural evolution of Belarusian art to reflect global trends.

Artist Dovilė Tomkutė, who directs Vilnius' Arka Gallery, is attentive to technique and admits that the Minsk show demonstrates the excellent traditions being employed by young Belarusian artists. Ms. Tomkutė comments that her heart has been touched by several dozen authors and that she is looking forward to hosting an exhibition at the Arka Gallery in December: her personal prize for Belarusian artists.

Artist Gaspare Manos, from Italy — a consultant and a curator of contemporary art for corporate, state and family art collections — notes that the development of Belarusian art is obvious. He is impressed by what he's seen and



promises to promote Belarusian art through his work.

According to the Chairman of

Belgazprombank's Board, Victor Babariko, Belarusians are wary of contemporary art, although the



number of visitors to the exhibition has grown over the years. The *Autumn Salon* is helping promote

the Belarusian art market and Mr. Babariko is keen to organise a festival of Belarusian contemporary art, as another landmark event in the cultural life of our country.

The 3rd *Autumn Salon* with Belgazprombank art exhibition has presented a panorama of young Belarusian artists' works, hosted by Minsk's Palace of Arts. In the selection round, 141 authors received the right to participate in the country's largest exhibition-sale. In addition, fourteen galleries, from Minsk, Brest, Vitebsk and Gomel, took part this year — presenting works by thirty-seven artists. The show has been attended by over 10,000 visitors, and fifty-six works have been purchased.

Photos go on show

By Veniamin Mikheev

Photo exhibition about Vitebsk Region churches hosted by National Historical Museum of Belarus

The *Churches of the Vitebsk Region* photo exhibition has been organised as part of the *Belarus: Revival of Spirituality* project. Vasily Belyakov recorded his travels around the Vitebsk Region, from 2013-2016, covering over twenty thousand kilometres on foot and by cycle. His shots not only show the beauty of the region but reveal much of the life of the artist and traveller. None of the exhibition shots have been digitally altered; rather, he found angles from which industrial elements became invisible, with the focus on religious buildings and surrounding nature.

Mr. Belyakov's photos feature picturesque, refined, monumental and discreet churches of Orthodox, Catholic and Old Believer faith, each with its own special style and

unique history. Mr. Belyakov graduated from the Geological Department of Irkutsk State University, and the Military Academy, being a lieutenant colonel in the reserves. He currently lives in Postavy, in the Vitebsk Region, and, since 2009, has helped organise exhibitions, co-operating with the Scientific Department of Narochansky National Park. The towns of Postavy and Myadel, and the village of Naroch have hosted his *Nature of My Native Land* photo exhibition.

In 2013, the photographer — with assistance from the Green Cross organisation — prepared his *Traces of History* show, dedicated to the events of WWI. In 2014, Mr. Belyakov joined the Scientific Department of Narochansky National Park in launching the *Their Fates Merge* exhibition, focusing on the legacy of WWI in the Postavy, Myadel and Smorgon districts. In 2015, his exhibitions were hosted by Vitebsk and by towns across the Minsk Region.

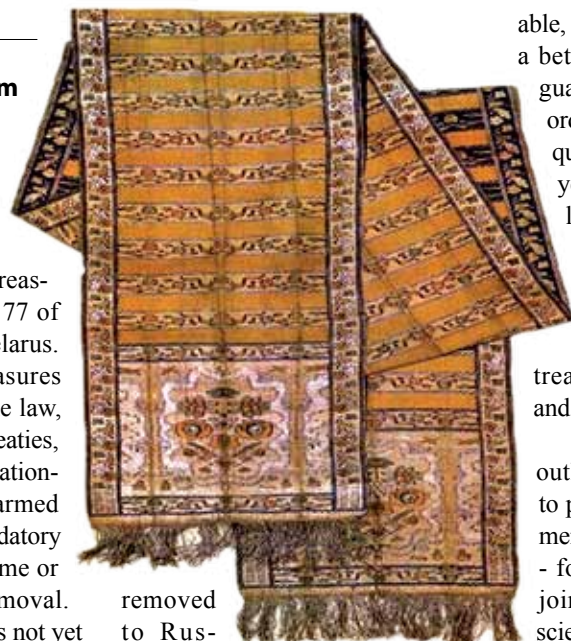
Changes to Culture Code

By Vladimir Mikhailov

Developing a mechanism for return of historical and cultural treasures previously taken abroad

The obligatory return of historical and cultural treasures is covered by article 77 of the Code of Culture of Belarus. It states that cultural treasures exported in violation of the law, of Belarus' international treaties, or of other norms of international law, as well as during armed conflict, are subject to mandatory return, regardless of the time or circumstances of their removal. However, the mechanism is not yet specified. With this in mind, an initiative group is studying the issue.

As explained by the Deputy Chair of the Standing Committee on International Affairs at the House of Representatives, Olga Popko, Belarus has the opportunity to address Russia, asking that treasures



removed to Russia during WWII be returned, according to the federal law 'On Cultural Treasures Displaced during WWII and Present on the Territory of the Russian Federation' (1998).

While items displaced in the 18th and 19th century are irretriev-

able, those lost during WWII stand a better chance, as Russian laws guarantees ownership rights. In order for Belarus to appeal, adequate laws are needed, and none yet exist. Sadly, 18 months after locating a treasure, ownership rights are lost, according to Russian legislation. Nevertheless, Russia has several times returned cultural treasures taken from Germany and Hungary.

A concept has already been outlined and a certain approach to preparing the necessary documents is ready. The Commission - focusing on detection, return, joint use and introduction into scientific and cultural circulation of cultural treasures situated outside the Republic of Belarus — is supporting the proposal. According to Ms. Popko, no special law will be developed. Rather, amendments will be introduced into the existing Code of Culture of the Republic of Belarus.



Alexandra Butor

Director, writer and producer in a single personality

Nowadays one doesn't need a great deal of equipment to shoot a movie: a good phone with a camera is often enough. What will happen to the film and who will be interested in it is a different question. However, the fact remains that, thanks to uncomplicated technology and the resourcefulness of individuals, Belarusian independent cinema does exist. Our reporter visited the set of the first producer project directed by Alexandra Butor — *No Entry into Personal Space* — to investigate the audience for such films.



Alexandra's film makes viewers both laugh and cry

By Natalia Stepuro

Several cars are parked along Sadovaya Street in the Minsk suburb of Tarasovo. Nothing indicates that a movie is being made here. There are no actors' vans and no trailers. Everything is simpler and there are just fifteen crew. Two years ago, Alexandra's *Sweet Farewell of Vera* — shot at Belarusfilm — featured over fifty people.

"On the one hand, it's good to have such a large team: all the tasks are shared out but controlling so many people is challenging. True, my present situation is not easy: I have a huge responsibility. The main advantage of non-state cinema is that I am my own master. I've given myself a task and I must complete it. I love to joke about how easy it is to solve all the issues between the director and the producer when they are one person. Another advantage is that I've gathered people I wanted. Nobody imposes an operator or actors on you. Only those who understand me and whom I believe in work here," Alexandra says.

It's not enough however, to sim-

ply gather friends and people who understand you. Money is essential. The director does not have a commercial secret: her project costs are 60 thousand Euros and she has personally invested part of the money. After all, she opened her own film school two years ago — firstly, to train her own team and, secondly, to earn initial capital. Three private companies have also agreed to finance the project.

Alexandra's reputation works in her favour: she earned it while working on TV and state cinema. For example, an expensive Jaguar — attracting by-passers' attention in the Sadovaya Street — has been provided by a car showroom free of charge for the period of shooting. Brand new suits for the main character are on loan with the same conditions. The house in Tarasovo is a summer cottage belonging to Ms. Butor's friends; she'll pay no rent for it. However, the director has to pay for an old Volga car with the 'Medical Aid' badge herself.

In short, every little helps, although actors are not usually keen to work for nothing. Alexandra ex-

plains, "In the cost estimate, technical costs and work of the team have approximately equal shares. Actors and the film crew will receive an advance payment and, after the film is sold, the remaining money will be paid."

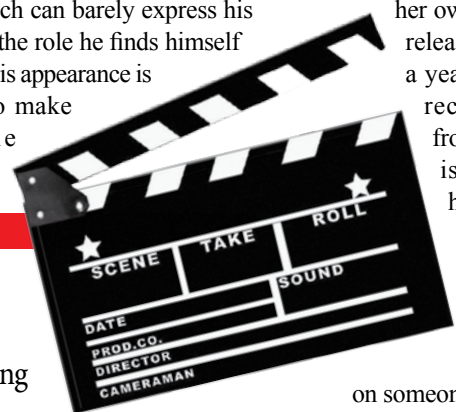
Of course, not all actors — especially experienced and popular ones — will agree to such conditions. However, in this case, the director's good name and old friendships help. Some time ago, Ms. Butor invited novice actor Sergey Zbankov, to her *Belye Rosy: Return* film. He is now present on the set, not just as a token of gratitude: he greatly admires the director and her sensitive and

heartfelt work. Anna Polupanova is a similar story, and has worked with Alexandra on several occasions. This time, the actress has been persuaded by an emotional storyline and a good role. Moreover, young actors who have recently completed their studies at the film school are taking part, as they all are promised a fee.

The main star of the set is a tall handsome man driving the said expensive car. The young actor Erik Abramovich can barely express his delight at the role he finds himself playing. His appearance is enough to make everyone e l s e

WHAT IS THE MOVIE ABOUT

Three storylines develop in parallel. The character of one is young talented programmer Max who suddenly decides to go far from civilisation in the hope of shedding the problems that torment him. The second plot revolves around the 16-year-old daughter of a small café owner; who dreams of becoming a singer. The third story is the true passion of medical assistant Anna Sergeevna and her trainee Anton. One day, the fates of all these characters are intertwined...



smile and after the film is launched, a sex symbol of Belarusian cinema will undoubtedly be born.

A soloist of the *Tyani-Tolkai* band — Pavel Traimovich — is modestly hiding in the shade. He explains, "I'm an assistant here — fetching and carrying. This time, I've got medical gowns for the main characters." Alexandra adds that an old friend also helps with the sound. The musicians have invested their money in the film and their songs will feature in it.

By the end of autumn, the film is expected to be ready, after only ten days of shooting, three shifts of location and a month-long cutting process. Meanwhile, Alexandra has a new business plan, "When my *Belye Rosy: Return* and *Sweet Farewell* of Vera were on show in cinemas, I learnt what movie distribution is and how it works. I'm not expecting any difficulties touring the film around the country".

Furthermore, the young producer plans to move beyond the borders — focusing on the CIS. She was also in negotiations with the Baltic States even before shooting began. The Lithuanian company *Za Granitsu* (Abroad) is among one of the interested partners; it will deal with filming in the neighbouring states. Of course, Alexandra would like to conquer the secondary market — selling her film to TV channels. She isn't disclosing all her plans, as she is well aware that she has plunged into an experiment where the exact outcomes are unclear. At the same time, she dreams of establishing

her own film company to release at least one film a year. She has already received a proposal from an investor who is ready to finance her next project. But she has no plans to taste freedom, you don't really want to depend

on someone else.

On set, everything is serious and progressing well. We wish Alexandra all possible success and prosperity. Who knows: perhaps Belarus will one day make a breakthrough in its independent cinema.

Peaceful finish

By Semen Bondarev

Penultimate round of the group stage of Europa League sees BATE vs Red Star draw without score, while Cologne's victory over Arsenal (1:0) reduces chance of reaching tournament playoffs

Arsene Wenger, in his famous jacket, was absent from Borisov-Arena during BATE's match, since Milan and Barcelona were battling elsewhere. The stands weren't full, but those who attended were not disappointed, despite the no-score draw. BATE's head coach, Alexander Yermakovich, noted that the result could have been better and, probably, players and reporters shared the same view.

BATE defender Denis Polyakov commented, "We played a fluid game today, with only a few dangerous



We believe in our team!

moments. The draw is a natural result. We now need to win in London and hope the Red Star — Cologne match will end in a draw as well. Let's wait until December 7th. Anything is possible. We've previously shown that we're able to outplay major teams. We'll do our best — to later see what will happen."

The possible joining of the Europa League playoffs envisages certain disadvantages. In particular, the team will get on top form earlier than usual next season. Mr. Polyakov noted, "There are more advantages than disadvantages. We must go out to fight. We've already had the experience of an early start in the season. So, there is no problem."

BATE midfielder Mirko Ivanić added, "Either team could have won. Red Star was slightly closer to victory. However, we missed opportunities. With this in mind, I believe the outcome of the present match is logical." Speaking of whether the Belarusian team will defeat Arsenal London, the player stated, "In football, you never know what will happen. We're now preparing for an important match against Gorodeya and we must win. Afterwards, we'll start training for the last round of the group stage of the Europa League."



A chance to score, during the Gorodeya-BATE final match

BATE — champion

Borisov club clinches draw in match against Gorodeya, during fifth minute of extra time, to claim victory in Belarus Football Championship

By Igor Svitov

Remarkably, in the 75th minute, Gorodeya was winning 3:1 when BATE's Vitaly Rodionov (who will probably retire at the end of the season) scored two goals.

Dinamo and BATE both have 68 points, but the Borisov footballers have been awarded gold thanks to their greater number of victories overall. Minsk Dinamo has been awarded silver.

After the hardest Europa League match, last Thursday, the Borisov squad went through to face Gorodeya for the championship title. In the 18th minute, Ivanić scored, giving hope to fans that the match would end with the necessary score. However, Gorodeya always plays well at home, as it demonstrated in the first half. Just six minutes after a missed goal, Dubajić equalised, with Pavlyuchek adding to the score in the 33rd

minute. At the start of the second half, BATE saw catastrophe. Almost immediately after the whistle, just eight minutes in, the hosts sent their third goal into Shcherbitsky's net, thanks to Dubajić.

Borisov fought hard, with Gorodeya confidently defending its net. However, in the 79th minute, the hosts' defender committed a foul against Ivanić in the penalty area, enabling the referee to award a penalty, which was

taken by Rodionov.

Gorodeya defended desperately against BATE's fierce attacks and the referee added four minutes to the match, which was certainly the most intensive and longest of the championship.

The match ended incredibly, with BATE's Vitaly Rodionov scoring the 'golden' goal in the last minute, snatching a draw for the team and claiming the 12th championship title in a row.

Nikita Svirid among new Belarusian judo hopes

Over the past season, judo in Belarus has much progressed in its popularity, achieving a leading position in the country among other fighting sports. A new generation of fighters are loudly declaring themselves. Born between 1995 and 1997, these young wolves are ready to turn the world upside down: Dmitry Minkov, Yegor Voropaev, Vladislav Terpitsky, Daniel Mukete and Nikita Svirid. They may be just beginning their careers on the adult mats but have matured greatly over the recent year, as confirmed by their world rankings: each has significantly improved their position, with Minkov jumping to 8th ranking from 69th a year ago, Voropaev rising to 28th (from 241st) and Nikita Svirid climbing to 43rd position (from 183rd).

By Alexey Grishin

The recent European U23 Championship — held in Montenegro — was triumphal for our team, which took two gold and three silver medals. Every member reached the finals and, importantly, in the category of up to 100kg, two Belarusians fought for gold: 21-year-old Svirid and 20-year-old Mukete. Nikita recalls, "The level of the tournament was very serious. In my category, for example, seven fighters participated, all already performing at adult tournaments. I'm good friends with Daniel in ordinary life, sharing a room with him, and spending time together. It was a shock to face him in the finals as my opponent. Daniel fought seriously,

defeating three top-level athletes. I'd defeated him in the finals of the recent Belarus Championship, in a match lasting fifteen minutes, which I eventually won, but he claimed victory this time."

You were viewed as a favourite...

I really thought I'd win, which may have been my downfall.

Were you upset?

I wanted to become champion very much. Previously, I'd twice captured bronze at the U21 European Championship and, a year ago, I was placed second in the U23 category. I've taken silver this time again.

Don't worry: your progress is obvious. You're winning bronze, then silver... Evidently, you'll

become champion at the adult championship. Also twice!

This has been my first season among the strongest. It's very hard, as the season involved many training camps and tournaments.

Do you feel stronger?

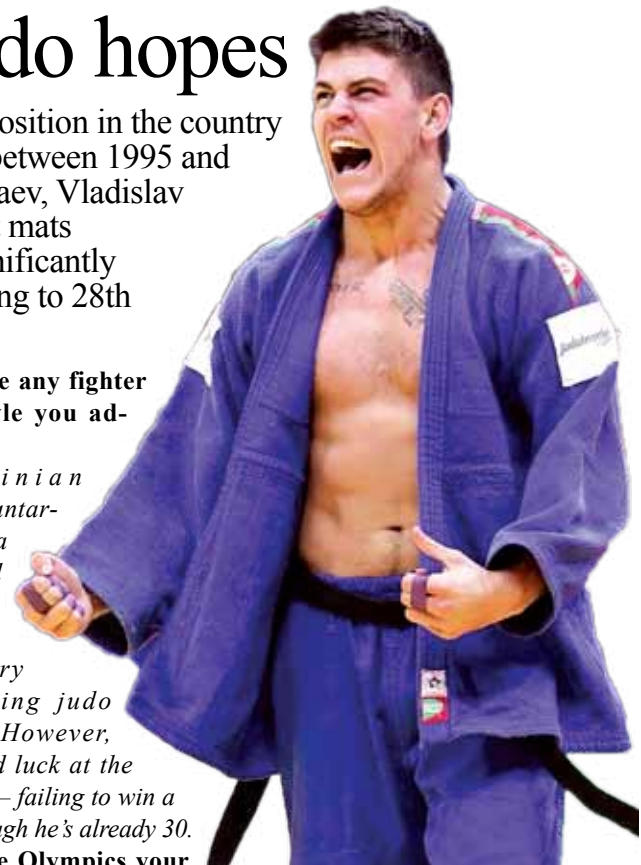
Yes, I've achieved a new level. Although I still recall my first struggle with awe: the Grand Slam Tournament in Paris. Only a world event could have been more impressive. The tournament attracted only the strongest of the world's judoists, and the 30,000 arena was crowded. Everyone was crying and shouting their support, which rather stunned me. I lost in the first fight to the Korean (the 2009 world champion). However, I realised then that I should just relax and do my best.

Is there any fighter whose style you admire?

Ukraine Georgii Zantaria, who is a world and European champion and a very entertaining judo wrestler. However, he's lacked luck at the Olympics — failing to win a medal, though he's already 30.

Are the Olympics your main goal?

I'd rather say: three Olympics! I've calculated everything. In Tokyo — 2020, I'll be 23. I can also attend in Paris (2024) and in Los Angeles



Nikita Svirid

(2028) — when I'll be 31. A heavy-weight fighter is in his prime at the age of 24-27, so I'll still have a chance to prove myself.

Competition of the week



Lida first hosts tournament in winter open water swimming, gathering teams from the Grodno, Brest and Minsk regions

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 3rd December. *Napoleon Orda. Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Country*
Until 3rd December. *Ernst Barlach and Käthe Kollwitz; Beyond the Borders of Existence*
Until 10th December. *Treasures of Ancient Egypt*
Until 12th December. *Lenin '17*
Until 17th December. *Mikhas Ragalevich: Song of Life*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 3rd December. *In World of People*
Until 10th January. *Fashionable Century*

MINSK GALLERY

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 14th January. *13th World Miracle*
Until 15th January. *Robots and Transformers*
Until 15th January. *Museum-Factory of Fir Tree Toys*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st December. *Francysk Skaryna and His Epoch*
Until 15th January. *Passenger from Nastrom*

STATE MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 29th December. *Kandrat Krapiva: from Childhood to Maturity*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 31st December. *Meeting the Master*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Street
Until 6th December. *Ripples of Invisible Fields*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF 1ST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 14th January. *Minsk 1917*

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

84 / 1 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th June 2018. *Legacy of Belarus: Dedicated to Minsk's 950th Anniversary*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street
Until 25th March. *Water Residents*

BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS

32 Nezavisimosti Avenue
24-26, 29.11. *Lighting Stars*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 3rd December. *Hat Show-2017*

THEATRES

PALACE OF THE REPUBLIC

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
30.11 *Sleeping Beauty* 30.11 and 01.12.
Tours of Leonid Yakobson Ballet Theatre
01.12. *Giselle*

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
30.11. *Eugene Onegin* 02.12. *Spartacus*
03.12. *Vytautas* 05.12. *The Grey Legend*
06 and 07.12. *Corsair* 07.12. *Portraits of Edith Piaf*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
02 and 03.12. *Tristan and Isolde*
05.12. *Wedding Bazaar* 06.12. *Sofia Golshanskaya*
07.12. *Women's Revolt; Fairy-tales of Vienna Forest*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
30.11. *Local Cabaret* 01.12. *Abduction of Europe, or Ursula Radziwill's Theatre*
02.12. *Paulinka* 03.12. *Art* 05.12. *School of Taxpayers*
06.12. *People of the Marsh* 07.12. *Jeweller's Jubilee*

CONTEMPORARY ARTS THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
01.12. *Time to Couple* 02.12. *Comedy about Penny Pincher*
03.12. *Mad Money*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
01.12. *Private Lives* 02.12. *Pane Kokhanku*
03.12. *Viva Commedia!* and *Husband Leaves His Wife*
05.12. *The Visit* 06.12. *Woe from Wit*
07.12. *Lady for a Day*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue
30.11 and 01.12. *The Mechanical Man*
02 and 03.12. #13 04.12. *Master and Margarita*
05.12. *Aisedora. Dance of Love*
06 and 07.12. *The Battlefield*

YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street
30.11. *Doctor Not Upon One's Own Will*
01.12. *Belarusian Vaudevilles*
02.12. *Thumbelina*
03.12. *Blue Bird*
05.12. *Taras on Parnassus*
06.12. *Wings of My Youth*
07.12. *Savage Hunt of King Stakh*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
30.11. *This Is All She* 01.12. *White Angle with Black Wings*
02.12. *Two Miraculous Umbrellas; Quiet Rustle of Leaving Steps*
03.12. *Medea Syndrome*
04.12. *1517* 05.12. *Concrete*
06.12. *Portrait* 07.12. *Circles of Love*