

# Trustworthy talk with the President

Alexander Lukashenko answers  
questions from Russian media

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INTERNATIONAL

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# Trustworthy talk with the

**The President often meets representatives of the Russian media; the present meeting was the thirteenth of its kind, gathering over a hundred representatives from print media, radio and television, alongside bloggers. As well as being a record attendance, the geographical reach was impressive, boasting journalists from forty-six regions of Russia.**

**Before the meeting, the media delegation travelled Belarus on a special press tour, learning how Belarusians live today, and how our country is developing. The meeting at the Palace of Independence lasted almost six hours, allowing many questions to be asked, proving constructive and straightforward. The President chatted about Belarusian-Russian relations, Eurasian integration, the economy, energy resources, reforms and foreign policy. Many questions related to his private life, and he answered candidly, without keeping anything back.**

## Belarusian-Russian relations

“Russia was and remains a brotherly state for Belarus. That’s why our trustworthy dialogue with representatives of the Russian regional mass media has become a good tradition,” said Alexander Lukashenko. “The main goal of such meetings is the rapprochement of our nations and the possibility of providing objective information about a country, I hope, you view as being as close to you as your own. The Russian Federation was and remains not only a strategic partner and ally but a close and brotherly state for us.”

“I’d like to note that we remain committed to all our agreements with Russia: within the Union State, the CSTO, and the EAEU. We protect your economic interests, preventing attempts to import banned goods from the West. At the same time, we’re doing our best to replace their import with consumption of our domestically produced goods. Amid the current, complicated situation, we suggest introducing the idea of a Union State Product into legislation. This would secure equal access for our products [from Belarus and Russia] regarding national and regional programmes of support for domestic producers,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

“Belarus and Russia have the chance to raise relations to a whole new level, inspiring speedy EAEU development,” stated the President. “I’d like to stress that the Union State served as the basis for establishing the EEU. Within the goals and tasks included into the EEU Treaty, this integration association still has a long road to cover, in many directions, in order to reach the level of our Union State.”

Alexander Lukashenko noted that citizens of both countries are now used to the absence of borders between our two states, as well as



Alexander Lukashenko speaks to the press

equal access to education, healthcare, a single approach to the system of social guarantees, free employment, freedom of movement, and choice of place of residence.

“In this challenging time, Belarusians and Russians need to stand together,” stressed the President. “To be strong, command respect and defend interests together. We enjoy the treasures of peace and harmony, and must do our best to protect this heritage.”

## Language

“The Belarusian soul resides in the Russian language. We lived together for a long time, communicating in this language, putting our soul and our values into it. This is our common language: our greatest asset,” noted the President. “Such a legacy cannot be abandoned.”

Mr. Lukashenko reminded all of the referendum held to give Russian language the status of a state language; the majority of the population supported the issue. Meanwhile, recent polls show that over 90 percent of Belarusian residents are in favour of exclusively good relations with Russia.

Speaking of the various reports appearing, from time to time, in the media regarding ‘soft Belarusianism’ and harassment of Russians living in Belarus, President Lukashenko flatly stated, “Half of the Belarusian government is Russian, maybe even more. We have no such problems. There’s no religious or ethnic conflict in Belarus. We’re proud to say so; this is our reputation.”

## Interdependence of two economies

“If the Belarusian economy comes to a halt, tomorrow, ten million people in Russia will lose their jobs,” warned Alexander Lukashenko. “We buy components and raw materials, as well as other products from Russian plants.”

Russian enterprises produce

50-60 percent of the parts used by Belarusian plants. “Industry and agriculture are huge sectors, providing employment to at least 10 million Russians,” Alexander Lukashenko explained.

## Unequal working conditions

The President noted that unequal conditions exist for economic entities in Russia and Belarus, citing as an example the production costs of the Belarusian automobile engineering company MAZ and Russia’s KamAZ. While KamAZ pays \$65 per cubic metre of natural gas, MAZ pays \$278, while electricity is charged at 2.8 cents and 12 cents per unit respectively.

“The difference is enormous,” stated the President. “To compete within our common market, we must reduce our costs, including the amount spent on salaries. Taxes are lower, servicemen paid to protect our common space receive lower wages, and so on.”

## Privatisation

“Russians often criticise us, saying that I don’t want to privatise four enterprises,” said the President. He noted that Russia would like Belarus to sell these major enterprises, among them the manufacturer of trailers and vehicles for the transportation of ‘Topol’ missile systems, nuclear warheads and missiles.

“Belarus is the only such manufacturer. In the USSR, this enterprise was powerful. We kept and upgraded it. Russians also have their eye on space industry enterprises: those making computing technology and integrated circuits. They want us to privatise these.”

Having said this, he pointed out that Belarus has its own interests it wishes to fulfil. “You’re interested in these companies and want to buy them out. Meanwhile, I’m interested in oil production. You supply us with 25 million tonnes, which we process

locally. We’d like to pump 7-8 million tonnes ourselves, for domestic use. When the privatisation of Bashneft was announced, I sent a proposal to your government and leadership. I think Belarusians would understand me if we gave these enterprises, on the condition that they come to operate better than they do at present, in exchange for the Bashneft shares which were transferred or sold to Rosneft. So far there has been no answer, which means there is no interest.”

## Conflicts in Ukraine

Commenting on the conflict in Ukraine, the President emphasised that the longer the conflict lasts, the worse impact on Ukraine and Russia. “I’m not even talking about people in the zone of conflict. How are these people to blame? Yes, it is terrible to wait for something to fall and explode nearby; uncertainty is even worse. These people don’t know what will happen tomorrow or the day after tomorrow. What’s to be done.”

“I recently told Vladimir Putin that we must do whatever’s necessary to reverse the process and restore relations. There will be no winners in this war,” said Mr. Lukashenko. “It’s necessary to improve the situation. We’re ready to play any role to restore peace.”

## Donald Trump

Alexander Lukashenko called for an end to all the talk surrounding the election of Donald Trump as the new president of the USA. He stated, “Everybody is whining that the wrong person has been elected. I say, he is the right man! He’ll pursue a pro-American policy for sure. He’s a hardline pro-American citizen, who will put America first. We should start thinking about our place in this policy. He’s a new man. He has no commitments to you or me. He’s promised nothing.”

The President believes that

America voted for Donald Trump in a bid to resolve a number of domestic problems. “If the middle class rejects everything and votes for such a man, certain conclusions can be drawn. We shouldn’t make the same mistakes. We should address our internal problems -- in Russia, Belarus, and Kazakhstan. They’re abundant. If our government agencies give top priority to resolving them, we’ll be able to greatly bolster our domestic economies, which will surely reflect positively on the state of foreign policy. We should strengthen our foundation. Then, it will be easier to talk to America and other countries,” the President is convinced.

## Average salary

The average salary in Belarus should reach \$500 equivalent next year.

“Next year, we’ll reach this amount or draw closer to it. I’ll do my best to reach this level,” said the President.

However, growth in labour productivity is needed for raising salaries. “If there’s no labour productivity, how can we discuss salaries? Private and state-owned enterprises and companies should be encouraged to pay more attention to this issue.”

The Head of State cited statistical data on average salaries in Russia and Belarus, comparing these figures with the cost of services. At present, the average salary of Belarusian workers is close to \$400: 1.5 times less than in Russia. However, utility bills are much lower in Belarus than in Russia, Ukraine, and European countries. In particular, each cubic metre of water costs 15 cents in Minsk (and even less in the Belarusian regions), against 53 cents in Moscow, 41 cents in St. Petersburg, 36 cents in Smolensk, 27 cents in Kiev, and \$2.50 in Berlin. The same can be said of other utility services, such as water disposal, hot water supply, heat supply, technical maintenance, and elevator maintenance. Besides, Belarus provides free healthcare and education: about 90 percent of students access free higher education.

## Agricultural reform

The President declaimed against thoughtless reforms in agriculture.

“We’ll never artificially destroy agriculture or industry, as you did once,” said the Head of State. “If, for example, there’s a good private trader willing to buy a collective farm, or as they were called ‘sovkhoz’, please, come forward. A quarter of agriculture is already private, but we didn’t cut it into pieces, as you did in some places. About 15,000 hectares are needed to apply machinery effectively, to obtain a reasonable profit and to feel confident within the market. How can ten hectares be cost-effective?” noted Mr. Lukashenko. “If we just divide this land into lots, we’ll kill it; it will become overgrown with weeds. We’ll sell a collective farm as a whole to those who wish to buy it, for a modest price. Many Russians

# President on vital issues

have bought large 'latifundia' estates in Belarus."

## Housing and public utilities

"This sphere cannot be broken into pieces and privatised, now or in the foreseeable future," the President told journalists. "Private companies will not be able to achieve their desired results if they work honestly and with strict oversight. However, you know perfectly well that it's vital to keep an eye on this situation, because it affects every one of us: journalists, teachers and doctors," explained the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko stated that Belarus has decided not to privatise the utilities industry but has begun improving the system instead. A working group has been created to verify the cost of services.

"We've calculated the average price and I've signed a decree to approve the cost of services. No one but the President can change this. People used to pay 30 percent of the cost of utilities and the state budget covered the remaining 70 percent; now, citizens pay 52 percent, nearly double. Can you imagine how private companies would be able to fiddle with these prices? Who controls them?"

Mr. Lukashenko noted that approved prices may yet change but will reflect precise calculations and the situation. He commented, "The IMF wants people to pay 75 percent of the cost of utilities cost today and 100 percent tomorrow. The IMF promises to lend us money. If we force Belarusians to pay 100 percent today, tomorrow will see tremendous arrears, because people will just be unable to pay. We'll start destroying those who provide these services. This is why a very careful approach is needed."

President Lukashenko recalled the decision to raise the cost of utilities by no more than \$5 equivalent per annum.

"We'll proceed little by little. If some unexpected slump happens, or if inflation skyrockets, we'll make calculations and the President will



During press conference

sign a relevant decree. There will be no dishonesty," assured Mr. Lukashenko.

## Guest workers

Referring to some Russian media reports, which state that about a million Belarusians are working in Russia, the President stressed, "There are no Belarusian guest workers in Russia: only organised construction brigades. Some time ago, Moscow authorities asked Belarus to send qualified specialists: bricklayers and tilers. Our construction sector was on the rise and I asked the minister how we could help. He said that he lacked qualified professionals, so we set up subsidiaries of our state companies and sent our specialists to Russia: first of all, to Moscow."

Mr. Lukashenko believes that Belarusians prefer official employment in such companies, and that Russian citizens find work in Belarus in a similar way. He cited the ongoing construction of the Belarusian nucle-

ar power plant as an example, saying, "They live not like guest workers, being provided with good living conditions. We've already built thousands of flats and have given them to people coming from Russia to help build the plant."

Once the nuclear power plant is commissioned, housing will be given to those working at the facility, with Russians having the option of applying for positions.

## Doping conflicts

The President emphasised that it was not only Russia but also Belarus and Kazakhstan who came under pressure.

"There are many accusations against us, but we have even more against our opponents, who are supposedly clean," Mr. Lukashenko stressed, citing the World Anti-Doping Agency leaks. "Sportsmen must be genuine; our athletes can win without doping or pharmaceuticals, but we need to make sure that we operate

under equal conditions. This industry needs to be more transparent. It isn't good when three bureaucrats make a decision and you have to go to court. Who are the judges?"

Revisiting the situation with Russian sportsmen, the President stressed, "There should be no blanket bans on the team or the state. You cannot claim that top leadership is involved without evidence. If they're involved, prove it."

## Magic numbers

The President told journalists that his favourite number is thirteen. "If I'm engaged in sporting activities or I'm skiing, I choose a 13km circuit: not 10km, not 15km, but 13km. If I'm exercising, I undertake thirteen repetitions. I'm fine with it. People say that thirteen is an unlucky number but a priest once told me that clergymen view it almost as a sacred number. So, I'm fine about it and use it quite often."

On the subject of 'good luck',

he stated, "If you're a president and you're lucky, thank God. You have to work hard to be on the right side of luck. I can't remember luck ever falling from the sky. I believe in luck as any other person, and who'd refuse being lucky? No one. Same with me."

"Honestly, sometimes I'm out of luck," the President smiled.

## Freedom of speech and the Internet

Russian journalists asked Mr. Lukashenko about pressure on the media, to which he assured them that there is none. He underlined, "No major mass media outlet will say that there's excessive pressure on them from outside. Yes, we ask journalists to be objective and to be a little patriotic, for the sake of peace, calm and stability in the country. I criticise them for lack of criticism; if people see that we say the same things all the time, they will stop reading. It's necessary to show both positive examples and shortcomings. There should be a balance."

Regarding clamping down on the Internet, he explained, "We're the freest country as far as the Internet is concerned. When attempts to stage colour revolutions via the Internet were made in Belarus, many people told me that we needed to shut it down. I said we should fight these people on these websites, using their own methods. So, instead of shutting them down or restricting access, we worked tirelessly through social networks."

The Head of State added that the Internet brings huge benefit but comes with many drawbacks. He admitted being prejudiced against it to some extent because he treasures printed books.

"When the Internet engulfs everything, creating online 'addicts', I grow concerned," noted the President. He has no pages of his own on social networks and is no Internet addict. Meanwhile, he keeps an eye on how much time his youngest son spends browsing online.

## OPINIONS OF PRESS TOUR PARTICIPANTS

### Oleg KASHTANOV, Editor-in-Chief of *Izvestiya Mordovii* newspaper:

The President chatted with us animatedly and with attention. Importantly, we not only received answers to our questions, but were able to inform Alexander Lukashenko of how the Russian regions are today, and how they're integrating with your country. In the course of the conversation, we became convinced that this integration is different. Mordovia's interest towards Belarus is significant, as we enjoy good turnover. The main idea we wanted to communicate today is our desire to join efforts to achieve even greater results. It's much easier to survive a crisis when we have common projects. The main issues we raised related to integration processes and economic development. It's important that cultural-historical and ideological aspects are not neglected; in today's world, this is very important. This is my second visit, the first having been eight years ago. I've noticed that, during this time, Minsk has become a truly European city.

### Andrey ANTONOV, *Novy Peterburg* newspaper:

I'm an old-timer at such meetings, participating for the twelfth time. I've seen huge progress in Belarus: your country is developing very well. We've seen a lot of new infrastructure, including schools and a hospital. I've always admired Belarusian agro-towns, which really strengthen villages, establishing good infrastructure for residents. We're completely satisfied with our dialogue with the President: we brought up a lot of issues, probably more than ever before. As usual, our conversation was constructive, frank and informative.

### Alexander USOLTSEV, a blogger, a historian of Moscow, and the Editor of the *Moscow Walks* project:

This was a great opportunity to see everything with our own eyes. Most importantly, we had the opportunity to talk to the Head of State, asking him questions. The conversation lasted for more than five hours. It was especially sur-

prising and pleasant that he set aside so much time to chat with us. It was a genuine conversation, two-way, with clarifying questions. I received a detailed and comprehensive answer to my own question. We could ask unrehearsed questions and there wasn't really a time-limit; it was really cool!

### Venera YAKUPOVA, Editor-in-Chief of *Kazanskie Novosti* newspaper:

There's huge benefit from such press tours. Unfortunately, in Russia, sometimes, we face one-sided and negative information about Belarus. Ordinary people don't understand many things. This is the first time I've visited your country and I've learned a great deal. No wonder they say that seeing once is better than hearing twice. For me, it was very important to meet your President and to hear the answers to many questions firsthand. As a journalist and editor, I received a lot of new information. I'll think about it, analyse, and communicate it to my audience. The atmosphere in Belarus is very positive.

People think about the future and have a good present. It's obvious that spiritual values are not empty words for your people. Belarusians seem to be modest, hard-working and very friendly. I found myself here by chance. On the 70th anniversary of the Victory, I published a book based on the letters of our readers. Unexpectedly, I found out that my uncle, Anwar Yakupov, was killed in 1944 in the Vitebsk Region and was buried there. I felt as if I needed to see his grave. I definitely plan to come back next year.

### Oksana STARIKOVA, Editor-in-Chief of *Semeinaya Gazeta* newspaper:

Everyone I met during this press tour truly loves their country, and wants to live and work in their native land. They're real patriots, which is worth a great deal. Yes, perhaps, Belarus is not as rich as we'd like it to be, but it's comfortable, cosy and quiet. Even the smallest house in a village is neat and tidy. There's a lot of sense in this. Similarly, the whole country looks well-cared-for. There's a lot we can learn from you.

# People deserve their cities to be cosy and beautiful

Alexander Lukashenko tours Mogilev's reconstructed bridge over the Dnieper River along Pushkinsky Avenue, assessing the beautification of the river embankment and nearby territories, including the underground walkway: now a wonderful, educational gallery describing the history and architecture of Mogilev



Mogilev to undergo great renewal

By Vasily Kharitonov

More than once, the President stated his belief that everyone deserves to live in a city not only with

good facilities but with beauty. He visited also the city's largest enterprise, Mogilevkhimvolokno JSC.

The trip coincided with the arrival of a large group

of Russian journalists, visiting Belarus as part of a press tour. On learning that town development is ongoing in Mogilev, the journalists questioned whether

this was necessary, it having drastically improved over the past two decades. Naturally, their comment was very pleasing but, of course, all good things can

be improved upon.

The President's working trip began with a tour of Kopys, his 'small homeland'. Discussion centred on rural development, with Kopys as an example of improving social infrastructure in small towns. By summer 2017, the left bank of the River Dnieper will have been beautified, and the first stage of road works should be complete, alongside new leisure facilities.

Alexander Lukashenko took part in the opening ceremony of Shklov Ice Arena, assessing the quality of the new ice during a match launching the Republican Ice Hockey Amateur Competitions for the Prizes of the President's Sports Club.

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Mogilev should become a very beautiful city by 2020. Gomel and Grodno are beautiful without being pretentious or extraordinary while Mogilev lags behind. It needs sprucing up, which requires an investor.

## WORD-FOR-WORD

**Chatting with Mogilevkhimvolokno employees, Alexander Lukashenko discussed:**

### The future of the enterprise

*Today, we've made up our minds: by 2020, this will be a completely new enterprise. We'd like to finish modernising it, making products that will surely sell. Our rivals don't sleep. Whoever offers these products first, will reap certain dividends. This is why we've decided to speed things up and complete the projects by November 7th, 2020.*

### Prospects for relations with Turkey

*Recep Tayyip Erdogan made his first official visit to Belarus and brought 250 heads of major companies with him. What else do we need? It was a perfect occasion for striking a deal. Meetings were held, arrangements were made, and some work has begun. It was a very positive meeting. The Turkish President told me that his visit to Belarus was unparalleled. Negotiations are in progress to establish co-operation*

*by Turkish companies with Minsk Tractor Works and BelAZ. We discussed everything and have opened these gates, so that you can enter this market. The process will move faster if we remain active.*

### Assessment of US presidential elections

*Donald Trump will make history if he shakes up America during his presidency. The working people voted for him, despite his wealth, showing that there are very serious*

*problems within the United States. The main challenge for him will be to address these internal problems, and not just by printing dollars (since this would have a negative impact).*

*We've been dealing well with the Americans of late. We're in contact with them and are conducting dialogue, while completely preserving our sovereignty and independence. They understand that there can be no ultimatums of 'either with Russia or with the West'.*

# Life definitely goes on despite everything

Belarusian doctors perform simultaneous heart and lung transplant for first time

By Olga Savitskaya

Our Belarusian transplantologists can rightly say that nothing is beyond their skill. Truly, Belarus leads in the field of transplantology in the CIS: in just eleven years, the number of annual operations has risen 55-fold. Our doctors are real teachers; even personnel in the regions can conduct such operations. Recently, they completed their first 'heart — lung' transplant, for Alexey, aged 32, who is making a good recovery.

Belarus' best surgeons, from the Cardiology Republican Scientific-Practical Centre, led by Mr. Ostrovsky, and including Sergey Spiridonov and Vladimir Andrushchuk, were involved in the nine-hour operation, which they admit was a technical challenge. They are relieved that the outcome is perfect.

"We've been technically preparing for a long time, learning from foreign colleagues," Mr. Spiridonov comments. "It was very important to find a proper donor, to coincide with the recipient across such pa-

rameters as height, weight, and state of organs. It's been a long process."

Alexey is now undergoing rehabilitation. On the waiting list since March, his congenital heart disease led to pulmonary hypertension, with numerous related complications. Accordingly, only a double transplant would do.

Another fifteen patients are on the waiting list for similar surgeries. According to Mr. Andrushchuk, they are unlikely to live longer than a year without an operation.

In 2009, a team led by Profes-



At the surgery block

sor Yuri Ostrovsky conducted their first heart transplant; since then, over 250 operations of the kind have been performed, and a team of strong cardio- surgeons has been trained.

Some patients, in need of a single organ, are obliged to wait for some time, since more complicated intervention is needed. No more

than a hundred such surgeries are registered annually, involving precise mastery and exceptional teamwork.

The surgical team includes specialists who have been nominated for the State Award, for their creation of the National Transplantology Service, which provides a step forward for our medicine.

# Meet your sponsor and make a million

An 'Electronic Cactus' air ioniser, a mobile robot for monitoring reservoirs, unique nano-composite dressing and wind pumps for pumping water from a well while repelling moles and birds are among the bright new ideas presented at the annual national start-up competition *100 Ideas for Belarus*. The event has been organised since 2014 and has seen over 2,000 projects proposed.



100 Ideas for Belarus exhibition sees presentation of projects

By Kristina Khilko

## Grants to the best

Over 7,500 talented young men and women have used the event to showcase their ideas, including Belarusians living in Russia, Moldova, the Republic of Bashkortostan, Canada and, even, Argentina.

The Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM), which acts as the organiser of the event, selects and evaluates the best projects. This year, 116 were chosen, covering such diverse spheres as medicine and space technology.

The winners are chosen by the advisory council, which includes representatives of the State Committee for Science and Technology, the Economy Ministry, the

Presidential Administration and the Academy of Sciences. The top dozen projects receive grants from the Belarusian Innovation Fund, worth up to Br12,000.

## A hundred ideas

*100 Ideas for Belarus* is one of many forums encouraging innovation. Startup Weekend has been held regularly since 2009, at the initiative of the business community, rather than state officials. Developers establish contacts with private investors, with around 10 percent of projects receiving financial support. The number of such events is annually growing in Belarus, including those organised by the High-Tech Park and major universities. Since 2014, the Belarusian

National Technical University has run its own Start-up Centre.

## Desk jobs

Experts agree that ideas are plentiful. However, those ready for investment are few and far between. Special start-up schools opening across Belarus aim to remedy this, helping with training and experience. Six establishments opened in Belarus in September: three in Minsk and one each in Grodno, Vitebsk and Brest. Each student will gain the chance to launch their own business (this will be a focus of regional start-up schools). Meanwhile, Minsk's educational programme is to focus on the development of production and student research projects.

The course offered is intensive, covering all aspects within just nine and a half weeks. Ten teams will compete for prizes in the finals, and enjoy financing, as well as media coverage, and participation in Investor Day.

"We hope that, by the end of the year, sixty business ideas will have been approved, each becoming a successful business," note staff at the Society for Promoting Innovative Businesses. It is their work that has made the start-up school project a reality.

Support for the start-up movement is vital to the development of entrepreneurship in Belarus, as formulated in the socio-economic development programme for the next five years.

In line with the 2016 plan approved by Economy Minister Vladimir Zinovsky, 174 start-up events are to be held countrywide, aiming to help small and medium-sized businesses flourish. This should, in turn, create new jobs. The Economy Ministry is collating details, for further distribution to regional and city executive committees.

## Joining CIS space

This April, the National Library of Belarus hosted the *100 Ideas for the CIS* contest for the first time. Young innovators from six CIS states presented their unique developments in the fields of industry, science, education, culture, medicine and IT. The contest — organised by the Belarusian

Republican Youth Union — received a great response. Now, it has been decided to hold the forum every two years, with guests of honour invited (investors from CIS countries).

"We'd like the initiative to be expanded. Young people from various countries could jointly create more interesting projects, also searching for solutions to global problems," Belarus' Education Minister, Mikhail Zhuravkov, underlines.

One good example should be mentioned. After the competition, the Belarusian Medical Academy of Postgraduate Education, which won the project, launched its 'Clinics of Belarus' website to promote medical tourism.

## Image is important, including for investors

What should be done to make Belarus' investment attractiveness clearer? The Foreign Investments Advisory Council's Working Group for the promotion of a favourable investment climate in Belarus abroad has been discussing this very problem.

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The Foreign Investments Advisory Council, under the Council of Ministers, is a co-ordination body, developing and implement-

ing recommendations to optimise investment conditions in the Republic of Belarus. Its working group elaborates proposals to optimise these conditions.

The current session of the

working group tackled measures to be taken to shape perceptions abroad of the favourable investment climate in the Republic of Belarus. Various proposals were made, including to present a

more active presence at international forums and other influential venues, and interacting with foreign media (particularly with the BBC).

The working group also dis-

cussed the concept for the National Exposition of the Republic of Belarus at World Expo-2020, being held in Dubai. A whole range of proposals was voiced, for discussion very soon.

# Belarus and Muslim world

## New Cathedral Mosque in Minsk gathers Muslim faithful and academics for communal prayer

By Marina Veselukha

Academics have joined heads of Muslim communities from Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan for a round table discussion entitled *Dialogue of Religions and Cultures in the Context of Modern Trends in the Development of Islam and Contemporary Challenges*.

The meeting included the screening of a documentary, *Islam — A Peace-loving*

*Religion*, while researcher and collector Vladimir Lihodedov presented an exhibition of old photos and his book, entitled *Belarus and the Muslim World*.

“100,000-120,000 Muslims currently reside in Belarus,” notes the Mufti of Belarus, Abu-Bekir Shabanovich. “Vladimir Lihodedov’s *Belarus and the Muslim World* is a wonderful gift, often presented to top officials of Arab states

during official visits by the President. It has been presented to the US Congress Library and praised highly. The edition, in Russian, English and Turkish, tells the history of Tatar settlements in Belarus in the 14th and 15th centuries, through until the present day.”

Mr. Lihodedov comments, “Our lands have always been known for their tolerance towards various beliefs. My book displays



Vladimir Lihodedov with his book

unique photos, collected from various countries. Each picture is more than a hundred years old. I was lucky to find a true rarity — a photo depicting the only Muslim who lived in Polotsk in the early 20th century.”

Mr. Lihodedov notes that ties have existed between Belarus and the Muslim world for many centuries, as is proven by the discovery of Arab coins dating to the 7th and 8th century. However, there is

much to be revealed, including the nature of trade along the River Dnieper to the Volga River, as used by our ancestors to trade with the Muslim world. Research continues, and new findings await.



Begun family begin round-the-world trip

# Around the world in seven months

By Alexey Fedosov

**Three Minsk launch 40,000km journey around the world, visiting thirty countries over seven months, to tell world about Belarus**

The Begun family — mother Yekaterina and her two daughters, Alisa and Elizabeth — are the first women’s team in the world daring to realise such an adventure. “We want as many people in the world as possible to become aware of Belarus,” Yekaterina explains. “We’ll meet Belarusian diasporas and journalists, representatives of Belarusian companies, and foreigners, to distribute videos about Belarus, giving away souvenirs and inviting them to visit us.”

The women’s around-the-world trip will follow all international rules. For example, they can use a plane only if it’s necessary to move

to another continent, and they must cross the equator twice, as well as visiting two opposite points on the planet.

Interestingly, the Belarusians have set off with only one visa, for China; all others they’ll obtain as they go. In November, they’ll visit Tibet and, before the New Year, will have seen Nepal, India, Vietnam, Laos and Cambodia. They shall then move to Thailand, Malaysia, Indonesia, Australia, South and North America. The Minskers will travel from the USA to Spain, to continue their tour of Europe, returning to Belarus in early summer.

Anyone interested can follow their journey online, via their personal pages on social networks. “We’ll create a channel on YouTube, to upload our videos,” says Alice, “And each of us will keep a personal blog, sharing experiences and emotions.”

# Three stars above the town of Ostrovets

By Gennady Gil

**New three star hotel, built with Turkish capital, opens in Ostrovets**

Realised by Sednat JSC foreign company, around \$12 million has been invested in the hotel, located in the city centre. Boasting six floors, it has fifty comfortable rooms, as well as a restaurant.

The Deputy Chairman of the Ostrovets District Executive Committee, Pavel Milesenko, notes that the city has long needed another hotel, due to the construction of the nuclear power station. He notes, “Ostrovets is developing rapidly, hosting various forums and seminars, and being visited by numerous delegations. Our cultural life is intensive. The recent International Festival of Organ Music, hosted by



Sun Hotel opens in Ostrovets

Gervyaty Roman Catholic Church, attracted about a thousand guests. Our old hotel lacks enough rooms, so the new one will help solve the accommodation problem.”

Turkish investors are realising

other promising projects in the area, including building roadside services of a motel, a shop, a café and a petrol station, not far from Kotlovka checkpoint, on the Belarusian-Lithuanian border.

# Everything in chocolate

By Olga Korneeva

**Silver from World Culinary Olympics won by young chocolatier from Grodno, Zlata Shpak**

Zlata’s chocolate composition, under the ‘Confectionery Art’ nomination, has been awarded silver by the international professional jury. She tells us, “I named my work ‘Shchodryk’, and made it in the image of a sweet-natured old man, attempting to express Belarusians’ warmth and welcoming attitude.”

Zlata has had a good year, having won the Confectionery Art Competition at the *Modern Bakery*

International Exhibition of Bakery and Confectionery, in spring. In the ‘Best Chocolate Product’ nomination among juniors, she received a certificate for a free confectionery skills training course, hosted by the Swiss Chocolate Academy. In addition, the future pastry chef won gold at the Republican Competition of Professional Skills, *WorldSkills*, in the ‘Confectionery’ nomination. Zlata is now preparing to represent the country at the World Championship, to be hosted by the United Arab Emirates, in 2017.

The Director of Grodno State Professional Technological College, Leonid Beley, is rightfully



Zlata Shpak’s creation

proud, saying, “Zlata is in demand among Grodno restaurants. Meanwhile, her achievements are the best inspiration for other students, encouraging them to study and be creative.”

# Our flag in space

Pilot-cosmonaut Oleg Novitsky has carried the state flag of Belarus to the International Space Station. The spacecraft, under the command of Mr. Novitsky, born in the Minsk Region's Cherven, has launched from Baikonur cosmodrome, and includes cosmonauts from the USA and France.

This will be Mr. Novitsky's second flight into space, his first having lasted from October 23rd, 2012, to March 16th, 2013. He took the flag with him then also, but unofficially.

Cosmonauts are allowed to take only 1kg of personal belongings

on board. Oleg Novitsky admitted that the flag of Belarus was the first item he decided to obligatorily carry with him. "It's a very strong moral support, because one wants to take what is especially dear to them," he explains.

The solemn ceremony of transfer of the Belarusian flag took place on October 22nd, at the Belarusian Embassy to the Russian Federation.

Before the launch into space, the state symbol was thoroughly checked to ensure that it contains



**Oleg Novitsky (C) and his crew**

nothing harmful. It was then placed into a special bag. Oleg Novitsky has promised to donate the flag to the Embassy museum after returning

from orbit, with it bearing official dates of docking and undocking of the Soyuz MS-03 spacecraft with the International Space Station.

# Making the circle wider

A non-standard house in the shape of a dome is being constructed in Mogilev Region's Gorki. Though it's still some time before it's completion, the building already lays claim to the title of local landmark. Local residents and guests are extremely interested in this miracle and suggest various options for its use. Some think that it will be a circus arena while others expect it will be a dance theatre or an indoor motorcycling circuit. However, it will actually be the home of the Bazylevy family. Moreover, Alexander and Natalia are already thinking of building a bath house nearby, in the same shape — circular...

By Olga Kislyak

Alexander is 37 years old, an economist by education. He has long dreamt of owning his own house. He married Natalia in 2006 and they already have two children, Edik, who is 9 years old, while the younger Vadim will soon be 5. At present, they all live in the flat owned by Natalia's father. However, they decided at a family meeting that they needed to build their own house. Alexander began to study projects in newspapers and specialised magazines. At first, he decided on a typical cottage, but later thought that it would be dull to build the usual 'box-shaped' house.

He saw the project of a round house in one of the magazines. "Maxim Savchenko from the Vitebsk Region had begun to build it. I was greatly impressed and decided that I wanted something like this. I showed the project to my wife," he remembers. At first, Natalia was curious as to how to build it, how to heat and how to 'fit' furniture in it. However, her husband's arguments persuaded her, such a house is unusual, as well as comfortable and cost-effective.

Alexander describes the project, "The house will have two storeys and will be around 8m high. It will have a dining-room, a kitchen, bathrooms and a garden, as my wife is keen on flowers, on the first floor, occupying around 80m<sup>2</sup> while the three bedrooms will be located on the second floor." The project has been



**The Bazylevy family are convinced they will be in paradise in such a home**

designed by Alexander himself. He is no novice to construction: there was time when he worked as a bricklayer and a roofer in Russia. A Minsk company helped him with the estimates and documentation, "The specialists in Gorki had never worked on such a building, so couldn't calculate all the nuances. Together with my wife and children we went to the Vitebsk Region, to visit the owner of Belarus' first circular house. We were astonished at it and all my ideas turned out to be correct. It's much cheaper to construct such a house compared to a usual house made from bricks or blocks.

Moreover, it's easier to heat it and it will be much more cost-efficient in future from an economic point of view."

The house's frame, made from sawn timber, was assembled by Alexander and Natalia themselves in just 4 days. Alexander had previously spent almost six months making a frame from metal to ensure the additional strength and reliability of the construction. Meanwhile, the house won't have walls as the head of the family explains, "The whole house is a complete roof, made from waterproof OSB-plates, with a special layer above of bitumen and rolled roofing

material. The windows are also of a different shape. The biggest one will be located directly under the dome, enabling us to admire the stars at night from the bedroom." Of course, romanticism is good but the couple have a very serious and practical attitude towards the construction.

"In normal houses, the air flows upwards and it's often stuffy on the second floor. However, the air will be circulating around in a circle in this house, i.e. it will go down along the dome's sides, thus creating a natural effect of ventilation and heating. I've already decided that heat-in-

sulated floors will be installed on the first floor, while just 2-3 heat radiators will be enough for the second floor," Alexander explains. He hasn't decided yet how to heat the house. "I will probably connect a gas supply and will also make another, alternative source of heating, enabling me to burn wood for heating"

Alexander hopes that his family will move to their house this year. "This year we're celebrating our 10th wedding anniversary and it will be a perfect gift to organise a housewarming. Our relatives haven't completely understood yet what it will

look like. When my parents first saw the project they even frightened us by saying 'what a hut it will be!'"

Chief architect of Mogilevgrazhdanproekt Institute, Sergey Belyaev, has a positive attitude to the idea, "We haven't constructed round houses yet. However, if a person wants something unusual and creative, why not? A Mogilev resident, living in the Podnikolie, has built an arbour and a fence from bottles. His fellow countrymen and tourists come to see him as if for a day out. Belarusian architects also have non-standard projects, e.g., the National Library in Minsk or an office of Belaruskali (the shape of a potassium crystal is the basis for the project). Several years ago, Mogilev residents developed the idea for a house in the shape of a book and suggested building it for the Day of Written Language in Bykhov. Unfortunately, the idea wasn't realised, however, someone has already seen the shape of a truck in the new building of the Belarusian-Russian University. According to the design, the assembly hall 'hangs' over a major part of the building, and this resembles the bonnet of a vehicle. People often call this building the 'car'. Another idea is to construct rows of shopping stalls in Mogilev's railway station square so that they resemble an electric train. We always encourage unusual projects. The most important thing is that they fit the architectural image of the city while adding additional charm."

# Prospect of 'President Trump' casts cloud over Climate Conference

Demonstrators have been out in force at the COP 22 climate conference to urge the world leaders in Marrakesh to pull their fingers out and do something meaningful



Hundreds protest against climate change and urge world leaders to take actions

But hanging over everything like a cloud is the doubt about America's commitment once Donald Trump sits in the White House.

Trump's election win has sent a shiver through the environmental movement, and the 2015 Paris agreement, so hard-won, looks in mortal danger.

In his campaign Trump promised to get America's coalminers digging again, and increase fossil fuel pro-

duction. So what if that sends CO2 levels through the roof?

Because for him, global warming is just a big con, a Chinese trick to raise costs in America and cripple its economy.

China, currently the world's biggest polluter, sees American disengagement as the chance for it to spearhead the fight against climate change.

"China will take the lead, espe-

cially actively participating in all kinds of activities in drastic climate change. And also I think that China will totally, totally deal with climate change seriously," says the Director of the Chinese National Centre for Climate Change Strategy and International Cooperation, Liu Qiang.

China's reduction in coal use is mainly responsible for the stabilisation in global CO2 levels for the third successive year, from 2014. This

good news, announced in Marrakesh, is encouraging.

However, scientists warn that this does not mean the worst is over. Peak emissions are likely yet to come, and the global warming process continues. Like a supertanker, it is hard to stop. NASA data shows that atmospheric CO2 levels went above 400 ppm for the first time in recorded history in 2013. In 1950 the then-historic level of 300 ppm was breached.

## Nicolas Sarkozy, in upset, knocked out of race for French presidency

According to partial results, former Prime Ministers Alain Juppe and Francois Fillon will contest the second round of the French Republican primaries following a well-attended national vote, while ex-President Nicolas Sarkozy has been eliminated

According to results based on 2,912 polling stations out of a total

10,228, Fillon was seen gathering 42.8 percent of the votes, Juppe 26 percent and Sarkozy 24.4 percent.

Organisers of the contest for the Les Republicains party and its centre-right allies had warned ahead of the vote that partial results may not be representative of final results, with votes in rural areas being counted first.



Sarkozy at his campaign headquarters after the first round

"I want to say that these are very provisional results," the election's organiser Thierry Solere noted. Pollsters suggest that the chosen centre-right nominee is likely to make the Elysee Palace in 2017's presidential election.

Unless one of the candidates gets 50 percent of votes in the final count of Sunday's first round, there will be a head-to-head runoff vote between the top two candidates next Sunday on November 27th.

## Oil bounces back on OPEC deal hopes

Oil prices jumped recently on expectations that top producers from the Organisation of the Petroleum Exporting Countries (OPEC) may be able to reach an agreement to pump less crude

They need to do that to reduce a huge supply glut.

News of an attack on a major oil pipeline in Nigeria gave an additional push to prices, but at the same time production is rising in Libya.

OPEC members are due to meet on November 30th to talk about limiting output.

An outline deal was reached in September, but negotiations on the details are proving difficult, according to officials.

Reportedly the Saudi Energy Minister Khalid al-Falih will travel to the Qatari capital, Doha, for meetings with oil-producing countries on the sidelines of an energy forum.

## Egypt gets massive IMF loan to help revive economy

Struggling to stay afloat, Egypt is getting a massive cash injection from the International Monetary Fund

A phased, \$12bn loan has been approved — to support Cairo's economic reform programme.

Egypt has been finding it tough to attract dollars and revive its economy since the uprising back in 2011.

"It (the assistance from IMF) will bring an agreed framework for the direction of public policy, and I think that it will enable the Central Bank and the Government to effect the resolution of the currency issue within, say, three to six months," said Richard Bank, from Euromoney.

The IMF loan is also seen as a positive move in terms of pulling back private investors who have turned their backs on Egypt.

"They see the IMF, they say: right, these guys, they've looked at the way the economy is going, they have listened to what the Egyptian government says, together (and it is together, it's a partnership), they have put together a reform agenda, that will enable there to be stability and progress within government finances. Now, that is what private capital wants to see," commented Bank.

Egypt agreed the loan in August, but had to secure bilateral financing to seal the deal.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies





Exhibition of Georgy Skripnichenko's works is landmark event at National Art Museum

# Metamorphoses from author of mysteries and paradoxes

National Art Museum hosts *Metamorphoses* exhibition, in memory of Georgy Skripnichenko



By Veniamin Mikheev

The current exhibition includes more than fifty canvases and graphic works from the private family collection, dating from various periods of the master's creativity: from his early period, through to his mature years.

Georgy Skripnichenko holds a place in the history of Belarusian fine arts as an artist of mysteries and paradoxes. He is the foremost of our surreal artists, using originality and figurative language to engage us in free interpretation.

"Allegory and metaphor, improvisation and unrestrained imagination were everything to him," states Yekaterina Izofatova, who heads the Department of Modern Belarusian Art at the National Art Museum. Mr. Skripnichenko embraced the fantastic and unreal, creating his own interpretation of classical themes, as well as Biblical and mythological characters, well-known historical personages and contemporaries. He painted the full kaleidoscope of human states, from suffering and consolation, to anxiety and hope.

His allegorical representations of time and the Universe are unmatched and unique, although many attempt to categorise them, and make comparisons. As our 'Belarusian Salvador Dalí', Georgy Skripnichenko holds his place in the avant-garde movement of the 20th century, being closer to surrealism than to any other category. His allegories and paradoxes,



as well as his style of composition, all point towards surrealistic, figurative thinking.

The development of this style was all the more fascinating considering the restrictions of Soviet society, and the extremely negative attitude towards modernist art, with its balance between the real and unreal, connecting the fantastic and the naturalistic, corporal and material. Truly, Georgy's work belongs to the Surrealist camp!

Georgy Skripnichenko was born in the city of Nikolaev in Ukraine, and received a classical education at the Belarusian Theatre and Art Institute. He purchased a book on Salvador Dalí only in the late 1980s, after creating many of his own works.

He began with landscapes,



sketches and portraits but, during his studies in the 1960s, shifted from external realities to those of the inner world, creating fascinating cultural dialogue. He played a rich intellectual game without rules, improvising, with unpredictable yet greatly effective results.

He moved onto reflections on Old Testament themes, as well as those from classical mythology and world history, coloured with the poetics of 'subjective historicism'.

Skripnichenko defined his *Saint Sebastian*, *Abduction of Europe*,

**Georgy Skripnichenko was born on November 12th, 1940, in Nikolaev, Ukraine. He studied at Minsk Art College (1961-1966), under Joseph Eidelman. Georgy participated in exhibitions from 1965 onwards and was a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists from 1972. He lived in Slutsk (1942-1961) and then, from 1961, in Minsk.**

*Adam and Eve*, and *Don Quixote of the 20th Century* as modern interpretations of myths. According to his own principles and beliefs, he interpreted philosophical truths, seeking originality of embodiment, connecting the past and the present, and investigating contradictions and opposites.

He united recognisable characters from the Bible and from mythology and created innovative landscapes, breaking open the quiet, contemplative rhythm of nature with surreal visions, while adding figurative elements. In *Harmony of Centuries*, he shows his easel in the foreground, while also painting ladies in hoop skirts and portraits of his contemporaries soaring through the air, in the style of Chagall.

Women appeared often in his works, within surrealistic settings,

such as in *Victim* (1996), *Evening Rhapsody*, and *Once in Ratomka* (1979). With shades of phantasmagoria, and the transformation of reality into the Gothic, these works are parables and allegories.

Georgy Skripnichenko's outstanding and original artistic language, from such an early age, invites us into an associative game, yet one that is serious and frank, rather than wry. He invites us to gain understanding of ourselves through his work, presenting an identifiable history of mankind, with its cultural values and figurative possibilities.

As Salvador Dalí said, "... when the Renaissance wanted to imitate Immortal Greece, Raphael came of it. Ingres wanted to imitate Raphael, and Ingres came of it. Cézanne wanted to imitate Poussin, and Cézanne came of it. Dalí wanted to imitate Meissonier. Dalí CAME OF IT. Nothing comes of those who fail to imitate another."

Mr. Skripnichenko created his own, individual style and, surprisingly, became a national artist. He inherited what came before, and gave birth to something original, yet connected with centuries-old world art. Today's retrospective display of his creativity allows us to trace the development of his path, seeing his versatility.

The exhibition launch also saw the presentation of a new book, entitled *Georgy Skripnichenko. Graphics*, including about 200 works, covering forty years of his creativity.

# Audacity is vital to possessing delicate style

Belarus Fashion Week makes even sceptics believe in bright future of domestic brands

By Kristina Khilko

New York Fashion Week has been going for seventy-three years, that of Paris for forty-three and Milan's for thirty-seven, while Belarus Fashion Week has been held only six times. However, each year, it arouses incredible interest. Hosted by the BelExpo Exhibition Centre, named informally 'the daisy' owing to its bizarre roof, it attracts designers, journalists and fashion bloggers.

From noon till night, it houses shows to full auditoriums, while those unable to attend in person follow events online, via the BFW website.

"Our fashion is now going global, with Belarusian designers enjoying success in Russia, Kazakhstan, Serbia, Poland and Ukraine. Our fashion catwalks are broadcast by leading European fashion-related TV channels," notes the head of Belarus Fashion Week's organising committee, Yanina Goncharova.

Leading national brands — Candy Lady, NAVY, Evgeni Horkin, Davidova, and Alena Goretskaya — demonstrated 2017 spring-summer trends, with foreign guests including representatives of neighbouring Russia, Ukraine and Poland, as well as those from fashion-

setting Italy and France.

"Belarusian women lack audacity," says Ingrid Wondergeld, who believes they rely too much on jeans, which are 'convenient, but unfeminine'. Inga was born in Belarus but lives in Paris, where she studies design, making clothes mostly for young women. This was her first show for Belarus Fashion Week, presenting a collection inspired by time spent in the Mediterranean.

BFW opening day saw the finals of the *New Names in Belarusian Fashion* contest, with Anastasia Vasyuchenko and Maria Starikova named as winners (for their 'Krok' collection, using national motifs). Yekaterina Zanko's 'Earth 2100' collection, made from scrap fabrics and trims, also received praise.

# Ready to wear fashion collections

The first fashion week occurred in New York in 1943. Enterprising manufacturers invented it as a way of shifting the focus of fashion away from the French. This clever move helped to raise the American fashion industry to world class status and Fashion Week became an important annual event. In Russia, the event was first held in 1999 and in Belarus in 2007.

Moscow fashion week 2016 was held from October 18th to the 23rd. Belarus took up the torch in the central exhibition centre from November 3rd to 6th. The spring-summer collections for 2017 were on display at the events.

It is not only Belarusian brands that were seen on the catwalk. Fashion designers from Great Britain, Germany, Italy, Latvia, Poland and of course, Russia, have all contributed. The traditional fashion events are accompanied by a range of charitable activities, photo-exhibitions and film shows.



Evgeni Horkin runway show (Minsk)

# Embroidered trends

Leading companies of the country demonstrate next year's surprises

Polesie Factory presented clothes with folk motifs, while legendary Kupalinka demonstrated its 'Cornflower Summer' collection, focusing on natural fabrics, embellishments and popular embroidery. Clothes with na-

tional colours were created with well-known Moscow designer Gleb Vinokurov.

"I drew inspiration from Belarusian folk songs," Gleb admits. He urges us to purchase vyshivankas (embroidered shirts), saying that

they'll be in style for some time to come.

Belarusian clothes are beautiful, practical and rival those from abroad in terms of quality, while manufacturers assure us that prices will remain reasonable.

# Solar children under camera flashes

Children with disabilities take to catwalk

An unusual fashion show was held on the last day of BFW, devoted to children's fashion, and featuring confident young models. Designer Tatiana Yefremova's child has Down's Syndrome. She laments, "We rarely see special children on the street, or in courtyards, or on the subway, in our kindergartens or schools."

Kids' Fashion Days' curator Oksana Kavetskaya says, "Here, they appeared on the catwalk, although most seldom leave their houses."

Funds generated from ticket sales to Children's Fashion Week are being sent to the Belarusian Association of Assistance to Disabled Children and Young People.



Elegant trends for 2017 spring-summer season



Minsk Half Marathon gathers record number of participants in 2016

# Fair and quite logical result

Minsk named among top 20 Global Sports Cities in Sportcal's cities ranking list, one of its main criteria being the number of sports events held annually

By Semen Bondarev

Belarus has long been hosting major international tournaments, European and World championships. Minsk-Arena seats are always sold out and Borisov-Arena has hosted football superstars.

Cycling, boxing, hockey, gymnastics, skating, biathlon, rowing

and canoeing, figure skating, and even chess championships have been hosted in Minsk, gathering athletes and fans from around the world — including from Brazil and Japan. The coming year will be no exception, with Belarus hosting the European Taekwondo Championship, the Muay Thai World Championship, and competitions in fencing,

sambo, judo and freestyle wrestling. Plans are tremendous, including hosting of the 2019 European Games: a unique event! It will feature the best athletes from fifty countries, competing not only for medals but for Olympic places, adding extra status and intrigue to the competition. Minsk deserves recognition as a sporting venue; there is no doubt.

Besides joining the top twenty sporting cities worldwide, Minsk holds the record for most rapid advancement in the ratings, moving upwards by thirty-two positions. Evidently, Belarus is no longer on the margins of the sporting world, but at its centre. The General Assembly of the European Olympic Committees met recently in Minsk,

providing further evidence.

Interestingly, among the cities seeking to host the 2024 Olympics, only Budapest is ranked above Minsk (in 7th place). Los Angeles is placed 34th and the eternal city of Rome only 42nd. Who knows, maybe, in two decades, the idea of a Minsk Olympics may become more than a fantasy...

# Young pilot and renewed heavy trucks presented

During press conference Belarusian MAZ-SPORTauto team presents its new pilot for international Dakar-2017 rally

By Igor Svitov

Joining MAZ team drivers Sergey Vyazovich and Alexander Vasilevsky, in the prestigious rally held across Argentina, Bolivia and Paraguay, is triple Belarusian drifting champion Alexey Vishnevsky. During the Silk Road race, in summer 2016, he proved his heavy truck skills.

MAZ-SPORTauto's experienced drivers have confidence in their young colleague, saying, "Of course, this year, the MAZ team will be trying to rehabilitate for Dakar-2016. Two trucks have been retired and we've slightly changed our tactics. All three crews aim to achieve high results. Pilots, as well as their assistants (navigators and mechanics) are well prepared. As far as the forthcoming start along South American roads is concerned, we aren't concerned for Alexey Vish-



Team ready for trials

nevsky's performance. I'm convinced that this young driver takes fewer risks than experienced Alexander Vasilevsky, who took part in MAZ's first race at Dakar six years ago. I think that Vishnevsky will surprise many, if everything goes well," notes the head of the squad, driver Sergey Vyazovich.

Two revamped MAZ-SPORTauto team vehicles are being entered for Da-



Alexey Vishnevsky

kar-2017, boasting 930HP engines, created by a Czech company, based on famous Caterpillar engines. Alexander Vasilevsky's truck is to be equipped with a Tu-

taev Motor Plant engine. He tells us, "This engine has been time-tested and I'm pleased. During the last race, in January 2016, we had some problems with it but this was an exception. Our technical partners have the opportunity to trial their contemporary lubricants on various types of engines. Moreover, the engine isn't afraid of the elevation differences that await us in South America."



# Truly great performance

Belarus clinches thirteen medals at 2016 World Sambo Championships, in Sofia

On the final day of the competition, Belarusian sambo wrestlers graced the podium three times. One of the team leaders, Yuri Rybak (+100kg), claimed silver after losing to world champion Artem Osipenko, of Russia. Silver went to Andrey Kazusenok, while Vae Tutkhalyan (under 62kg) and Timofey Yemelyanov (under 82kg) added two bronzes to Belarus' medal haul.

Belarusians Tatiana Matsko (64kg) and Marina Zharskaya (52kg) took the world champion titles. Meanwhile, silver medals went to Svetla-

na Timoshenko (80kg), who lost to Maria Oryashkova of Bulgaria, as well as to Leila Abbasova (48kg) and Olga Namazova (72kg).

In the team standings, the Belarusian women's team was placed second. Stepan Popov (74kg), Yekaterina Prokopenko (under 60kg), Ilya Khadkevich (74kg) and Yevgeny Aleksievich (82kg) finished third.

"We did well at the tournament. Representatives of the International Sambo Federation have expressed their hope that sambo will be part of the 2nd European Games in Belarus, in 2019, as in Baku," notes the head coach of the Belarusian national team, Vyacheslav Kot.

# Festival of the week



Logoisk hosts *Dazhynki-2016* regional trade fair of rural workers

## EXHIBITIONS

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street  
Until 30th January. *Celestial World on the Earth* Until 5th February. *Russian Pictorial Art of 19th-20th Century*

### NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street  
Until 15th December. *Time of Silent Stars: from Black-and-White to Red* Until 29th January. *Belarusian Trade in History* Until 28th February. *Time of Miracles: Winter Holidays and Entertainments* Until 1st June 2017. *From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble*

### HOUSE OF PICTURES

89/3 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 11th December. *Great Classics of 20th Century: Pablo Picasso, Huan Miro, Vasily Kandinsky*

### EXHIBITION HALL OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street  
Until 13th March. *Noisy Feathered Rainbow*

### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 Karl Marx Street  
Until 22nd January. *Exhibition of Carnivorous Plants*

### WING OF LOSHITSA PALACE-AND-PARK COMPLEX

Chizhevsky Street  
Until 9th December. *Speaking Machines: History of Sound Recording*

### LEONID SHCHEMELEV CITY ART GALLERY

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street  
Until 31st December. *Pictorial Art Opening*

### HOUSE-MUSEUM OF 1ST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 4th December. *World of Ancient People*

### CAT MUSEUM

11 Dzerzhinsky Avenue  
Until 30th November. *Cat in Leaves* Until 30th November. *Halloween Weeks in Cat Museum*

### MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane  
Until 30th November. *Inside* Until 10th December. *Family in Culture of Eurasian People: 20th Century*

### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street  
Until 11th December. *Jānis Streičs: Films, People, Epochs*

## THEATRES

### BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square  
24.11. *The Tsar's Bride* 25.11. *The Swan Lake* 26 and 27.11. *Strauss Invites* 29.11. *La Traviata* 30.11. *Admirers: theatrical humour concert of vocal and instrumental music* 30.11 and 01.12. *Sonnets. Small Death. Six Dances*

### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street  
24.11. *Modern View (Suchasny Poglyad)* State Dance Ensemble of Belarus  
25.11. *Wedding in Malinovka*  
26.11. *Tours of Lithuania's Russian Drama Theatre: Dreamworks*  
27.11. *Tours of Lithuania's Russian Drama Theatre: Cat's House; Dinner of Fools*  
28.11. *Dubrovsky* 29.11. *Women's Revolt* 30.11. *Ball in Savoy*

### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street  
24.11. *Oedipus* 25.11. *Esfir* 26.11. *Private Lives* 27.11. *Double Eternity* 30.11. *Caught in the Net*

### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
24.11. *Local Cabaret*  
25.11. *Kreutzer's Sonata; Pinsk Gentry*

26.11. *Pinsk Gentry; The Black Lady of Nesvich* 27.11. *Paulinka*  
29.11. *Abduction of Europa, or Ursula Radziwill's Theatre* 30.11. *Two Souls*

### THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue  
24 and 25.11. *The Mechanical Man*  
26 and 27.11. *Two Arrows*  
28.11. *Master and Margarita*  
29 and 30.11. *Forgetting Herostratos*  
01.12. *The Makropoulos Case*

### MODERN ARTS THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street  
25.11. *Figaro.tut* 26.11. *Crazy Money*  
27.11. *Simply Carlson*

### REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street  
24.11. *Eternal Song* 25.11. *Dumb Breath* 26.11. *Three Giselles*  
27.11. *A Two Dogs' Tale; Game without Rules and with Unknown Purpose*  
28.11. *Bidding Farewell*  
29.11. *Portrait*  
01.12. *White Angle with Black Wings*

### BELARUSIAN ARMY DRAMA THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street  
24.11. *The Dog in the Manger*  
26.11. *Soldiers*  
29.11. *Last Ardent Lover*