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Deserved recognition eventually given to outstanding painter

Minsk's Artel Gallery hosts Alexander Isachev's
By Forgotten Altars exhibition with success

Sincere conversation

The Belarusian Television and Radio Company (Belteleradio-company) hosted the President's meeting with journalists, detailing news broadcasting development and reporting on technical re-equipment and HD broadcasting in Belarus. Taking part in the meeting with the Belarusian Head of State were more than 130 journalists, representing Belteleradiocompany, the Second National TV Channel, Stolichnoye Television, BelTA News Agency, *SB. Belarus Segodnya* newspaper, and Zvyazda Publishing House, as well as the national subsidiary of the Interstate TV and Radio Company MIR.

"I feel nostalgic. I haven't visited you for a while. I used to come over often. It's a good feeling. Let's agree that this meeting won't be a press conference but a chance for honest and straightforward talking," said the President. "We all work for one and the same goal. I value frank conversation. You aren't just journalists, but citizens: conscious, educated, informed citizens of Belarus."

"We should bring to the forefront the things that mobilise and consolidate us, making the country even more independent, peaceful and focused on the future," the President stressed, noting his preference for evolutionary processes. "Revolutions cost too much and bring drastic consequences. We've witnessed enough revolutions and don't need them. We need to evolve. As the saying goes, we must stand on the shoulders of previous generations and learn the best from them."

According to the President, quality journalism — featuring authorial comment, reliable facts and deep analytics — is in high demand. He's keen to see the media set priorities and offer thematic, genre diversity, via TV and newspapers, engaging people of all ages and outlooks. Alexander Lukashenko kicked off the conversation by answering questions from online, which was followed by a live and interested dialogue on various topics.

Media has duty to help public form constructive opinions, via timely and objective presentation of facts, as well as engaging in sincere and thoughtful dialogue with audiences, underlines President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, meeting heads of country's largest media organisations, and members of their teams



The media's role

"Information wars have become the defining feature of the 21st century, with the media being turned into a weapon. In fact, this weapon is more powerful than a nuclear bomb since a single piece of news can sweep the whole world. It's far from certain that the destructive power of nuclear weapons is greater," stressed the President.

The key task is to fight for the hearts and minds of the people. He added. "If we don't win over the hearts and minds of Belarusians, we'll fail to build an independent country in its classical form," he underlined.

Mr. Lukashenko views Belarus as an exceptionally peaceful country. "Our land will never be a source of aggression," he asserted. "However, we must be able to stand up for ourselves in military terms and in terms of information. Therefore, you come to the fore as journalists. Your task is to form constructive public opinion through timely and unbiased coverage of facts, engaging in honest and meaningful dialogue with your audience," said the President.

"The media is sacred. If the state can offer support, including financial support,

it should do so. Meanwhile, privately-owned media companies should observe certain agreements."

Television

"I urge you to improve TV, in terms of picture quality and media coverage. With just a few phrases, a journalist can say so much! I want to be able to watch only our TV channels, being a great nationalist in this regard."

The Head of State praised Belarusian journalists for managing to remain sensible during tough years. "I think you're the best in the world. Keep it up," he noted. "You could have brought chaos to the country but you kept your backbones straight. This is the way it should be. Your older colleagues definitely understand this. You didn't lie. I didn't make you sell yourself."

Speaking to representatives of TV channels, the Head of State called for further improvements, noting, "I watch lots of TV channels and compare everything. I used to be keen on photography and even headed a photo laboratory as a student. I'm used to watching the world."

He suggested constructing a contemporary media centre in Belarus, although

there may be some time to wait, since Belarus is currently preparing for the 2nd European Games. Construction needs to be completed on various social and sports facilities.

Changes to legislation governing the media

Speaking about the main tasks of media outlets, the Head of State noted that some are outlined in new legislation relating to the media. In particular, this refers to the development of domestic TV content. Mr. Lukashenko underlined that the new law aims to 'protect our people from a flow of unverified, false, destructive information'.

The President noted that he'd approved the discussion of amendments to the law on media in Parliament, together with media representatives. "You should make this law for yourselves. I want you to be pleased with this law. It will be great if they, who are asking me this question, are happy with the law, too. It doesn't matter that they didn't vote for me. I'm the President of the Belarusian people and I'm ready to take all interests into account."

According to the Head of State, the proposed changes

should be discussed. "The main thing is that everyone should work in equal conditions and compete. Some speak openly and honestly on TV. Everyone sees this. Some may like what they say, others not... Some love to remain anonymous. Why won't they openly write on the Internet, under their own name? What are they afraid of?" Mr. Lukashenko asked.

The President urged all to openly voice their position and discuss the draft amendments to the law. However, the Government will keep control over the spread of information relating to terrorism, child abuse and other negative and illegal processes.

Interaction between officials and journalists

The Head of State noted that, sometimes, due to the inability of civil servants to comment on a problematic situation, he has to step in to 'clear up the mess'. "If you're a minister, deputy minister, or head of an enterprise, be so kind as to talk to reporters, however difficult and complicated it may be," stressed Mr. Lukashenko. Meanwhile, in his words, reporters should be more persistent in gaining comments from civil servants.

During the conversation with the President, the role

brings benefit to all

of press services was remarked upon, stressing that they should respond quickly, to bring acute and important information to the public.

Training journalists

The President urged that the problem of understaffing be solved, supporting a pro-

Stimulating employment

The Head of State noted that all countries wish to stimulate employment and stressed that about half a million working-age Belarusians are currently unemployed. Of these, some have legally registered problems, and the Government takes full responsibility for paying for edu-

who violate safety regulations in crowded places. He also desires an investigation into the accident at Soligorsk hospital.

Belarusian People's Republic

The Head of State noted that he trained as an historian and has studied the issue. He believes that Belarusians have

“You’ve dragged out the submission of a design for this site; put the documents on my table for approval and we’ll create a place for the soul. It’s necessary to complete this more promptly, to bring this forest into order, and to build an ordinary monument or a chapel or something else — we’ll make the decision, enabling people to visit, taking flowers,

want this? Are you ready for this? Will you be able to implement this?” asked the Belarusian Head of State. “Reality has shown that private ownership and changes to our system of modernisation need an evolutionary approach. No revolutions. Otherwise, this can be very painful. It isn’t certain that we’ll benefit from this.”

PR and self-irony

Regarding PR, the President noted that he’s ‘not a big supporter of PR campaigns’ believing that they are ‘overrated, and akin to lying’. “It’s always better to tell the truth or say nothing at all. That’s why I tend not to bother with them.”

He believes that PR is part of modern living but would like to see campaigns ‘real and sincere, without exaggeration or lies’.

Mr. Lukashenko also talked about his attitude towards irony and his ability to laugh at himself. He admits that he sometimes hears jokes about himself when he meets with his closest friends and that he ‘has a laugh as well’. The Head of State admitted that, during his first years of presidency, he paid close attention to news about himself in the media, especially if it was negative. “I was affected by such news,” he recollected. “I always felt like I needed to provide explanations.”

Over the years, Mr. Lukashenko has learned how to take such things calmly, although he remains rather self-critical. “I haven’t left behind this trait completely. When you have to say something that you know will offend someone or need to fire someone, it’s always a very difficult thing.” As for being able to laugh at yourself, he notes that he has little time for it but, in general, it’s a normal part of life.

Belarusian goods and healthy nutrition

The President revealed that he has three eggs for breakfast, meat for lunch, and fish, in any amount, for dinner. “It’s a strict diet, based on proteins,” he explained. The Head of State said he does snack between meals but also tries to set aside two hours a day for exercise. He eats the same foods as all Belarusians, ‘just in very small amounts’.

The President likes to compare products made by different domestic companies and buys food from ordinary stores. “I’m happy that food products are absolutely safe in Belarus,” he said. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that safety of Belarus-made food products is his toughest requirement. The Belarusian food is of high quality, as evidenced by growing exports, including to China and EU states.

By Vasily Kharitonov



posal by TV journalists that they might go into schools to encourage students towards journalism.

Mr. Lukashenko compared journalism with the IT industry, which is focusing on attracting new talent. He especially stressed his desire to see youngsters from rural areas enter these spheres.

Representatives of other media and from within the Presidential Administration expressed opinions, as did students from the BSU Journalism Institute.

Constitution

Speaking about possible changes to the Fundamental Law of the country, Alexander Lukashenko believes that some functions could be transferred from the president to other branches of power, with executive power having a more prominent role.”

He believes the time has not yet come to amend the Constitution, but that the media can play a vital role in determining when that time comes. The President is convinced that, in the course of amending the country’s Constitution, it will be important to preserve the legacy of what has worked well. “We should pass it on to our children and grandchildren,” he stated.

cational, medical, housing and utility services.

The President noted that Decree No. 1 is designed to encourage people to work, making a contribution to the financing of services provided by the Government, as is the norm globally. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that the main point of the document is to promote employment.

“This was my idea; no one gave it to me,” added the President, speaking about the initiation of this document, which is primarily aimed at activating the work of public authorities, to promote citizens’ employment, including self-employment.

Provision of public security

During the meeting the President tackled the topic of providing security in crowded places. Mr. Lukashenko mentioned a recent accident in Soligorsk when lots of people were evacuated because of fire in the hospital basement. The Head of State attributed the rapid response to the emergency partially to the recent deadly fire in the Zimnyaya Vishnya shopping mall in the Russian city of Kemerovo. “The Kemerovo disaster gave us a jolt,” noted Mr. Lukashenko. “Three hundred people were evacuated in the blink of an eye.”

The President noted that tough punishments await those

yet to understand the role of the Belarusian People’s Republic (BNR) and feels certain that some elements remain mysterious. On the one hand, BNR founders desired a united country; on the other, they asked the German emperor for assistance. In response to a question submitted by the online community, the Head of State said it’s too early to talk about declaring March 25th a state holiday. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that it won’t happen as long as he is president of the country.

The Head of State commented, “We already have our Independence Day. If we hadn’t won back then, there truly would be no independence; 75 percent of our population would have been killed, while 25 percent would have been rendered submissive. We know this for sure and many still remember this. We chose July 3rd as our Independence Day, it being more significant to us.”

Creation of memorials in Kuropaty

The question about Kuropaty was received by the Head of State from citizens on the eve of the meeting. Mr. Lukashenko noted that, 12 or 18 months ago, he instructed the Presidential Administration to settle this issue.

if they wish to go in sympathy or mourning,” said Mr. Lukashenko. “We must do this.”

The President noted that issue of Kuropaty was politicised from the very beginning and remains so. “This was unacceptable for me then and remains so today,” he asserted. “People died there.” He emphasised that several versions of the story exist, regarding the tragic events that took place. It’s thought that perhaps Soviet authorities shot Belarusian former political prisoners in Kuropaty; others say that Germans executed people there during the Great Patriotic War. Regardless of who was guilty, people died and their bones should rest in peace.

Private property and systematic changes

“Once, people reproached me that I wasn’t market-driven and that I didn’t support private ownership. This isn’t true. I worked in material production and lived among rural residents. I know what private ownership means. It’s always more efficient than collective ownership,” asserted the President.

“I’m asked to change things, here and there... but decisions aren’t just about me. If you want a decision made, I can do so within a day. Do you

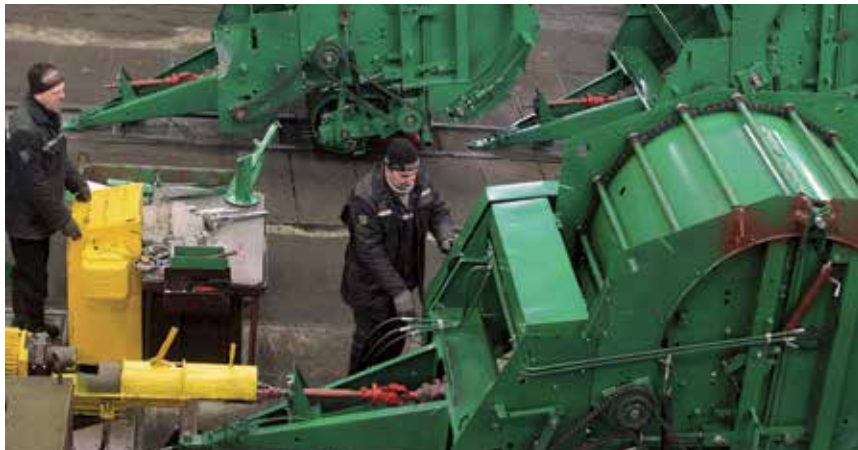
Enough points of coincidence

Belarus keen to help Russia's Yaroslavl Region with infrastructure and state programmes

By Vladimir Khromov

On meeting the Governor of the Yaroslavl Region, Dmitry Mironov, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, stated, "Your region is similar to Belarus in terms of structure of economy. It has always been an important trading partner, with Belarusian machine building companies maintaining business contacts with Yaroslavl engine manufacturers. We've created technological chains in machine building, petrochemicals and other industries, as industrial co-operation between our enterprises is mutually beneficial."

Following world trends, the Yaroslavl Region plans to convert its public trans-



Bobruiskagromash production in Yaroslavl Region

port to the use of gas fuel. Belarus' experience may be useful, as Mr. Lukashenko explained, speaking of Belarus' manufacture of trucks, road, passenger and utility vehicles, and construction equipment.

Belarus is also ready to join agricultural development programmes in the Yaroslavl Region, with Mr. Lukashenko mentioning plans to set up a cheese cluster, for which Belarusian experience may prove pertinent. "Belarusian products are very popular among Russian consumers," added the Head of State.

He emphasised that Belarus and the

Yaroslavl Region have a long history of relations, with many Belarusians evacuated there during WWI. People's Poet of Belarus Maxim Bogdanovich spent many years living in Yaroslavl, where he is still well remembered. A sports centre opened not long ago in the town of Nekrasovsky, to commemorate the ice hockey players and coaching staff of HC Lokomotiv Yaroslavl, who died in the terrible air crash that also claimed Belarusian lives.

In 2017, trade turnover between Belarus and the Yaroslavl Region totalled \$356.3 million, while reaching \$60.5

million in January and February of 2018 alone (up 35.7 percent on the same period of last year). The majority of Belarusian exports comprised wire from ferrous metal without electric insulation, wire made from alloy-free steel, ethylene polymers, insulated wires, cables and composite synthetic yarns, as well as cheeses and cottage cheese.

Belarus mostly imports oil products, reciprocating internal combustion engines, metal constructions from ferrous metal, tyres, insulated wire, cables, and components for automobiles and tractors from the Yaroslavl Region. Bobruiskagromash JSC is operating assembly production in this Russian region and there's a direct commodity distribution network for Vitebsk Carpets JSC. Moreover, a wide leadership network has been set up for Belarusian manufacturers selling machine building goods.

Dmitry Mironov agreed that bilateral economic ties could be closer and more active. He noted that, since Soviet times, the Yaroslavl Region has been a partner for Belarus in realising various important projects. Moreover, Yaroslavl and Minsk have close contacts in the sphere of higher education and culture.

No delay on agreed plans

By Vladimir Velikhov

Incumbent President of Azerbaijan, the candidate from the ruling New Azerbaijan Party, Ilham Aliyev, wins 86 percent of vote in snap presidential elections

During a recent telephone conversation, Ilham Aliyev invited Alexander Lukashenko to visit Azerbaijan at any time, receiving a similar invitation from the Belarusian leader. The President of Belarus has visited Azerbaijan four times, while Mr. Aliyev has been to Belarus with the same frequency. Warm, sincere and friendly relations have been established between the heads of state.

Trustworthy relations between our presidents positively influence the dynamics of economic co-operation, with joint assembly production currently established for Minsk Tractor Works, Minsk Automobile Works and Minsk Wheeled Tractor Plant, on the premises

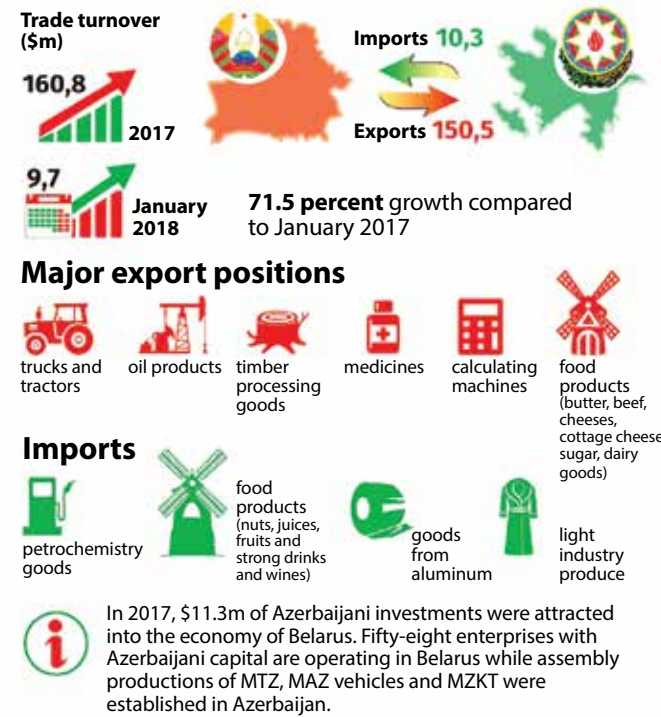
of Ganja Automobile Works. In early April, the 10,000th tractor was manufactured there, and more than 3,800 MAZ vehicles and buses have been assembled, demonstrating that collaboration is profitable, and should be expanded to increase trade turnover.

During the recent visit to Azerbaijan by the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Semashko, Mr. Aliyev discussed the development of the agro-sector and the restoration of industrial enterprises (for which Azerbaijan was once famous). MTZ and MAZ signed treaties with Ganja Automobile Works on the supply of 500 tractors and fifty other related machines, worth around \$10.5 million.

Azerbaijani farmers trust Belarusian tractors, giving Gomselmash a good opportunity to enter the Caspian market, setting up assembly production at Ganja or Sumgait. Electric buses could be sup-

Trade-economic co-operation between Belarus and Azerbaijan

Diplomatic relations between Belarus and Azerbaijan were established on June 11th, 1993. Since 1994, an agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone has been operating between the countries.



plied, and assembly production of MAZ passenger buses, Belarusian lifts and diesel generators could be established. This would create new jobs in Azerbaijan and allow Belarus entry to markets of third states, with jointly produced goods.

New projects are to be elaborated in detail during the next meeting of the Intergovernmental Commission on Trade-Economic Co-operation, in late May or early June, on the eve of Ilham Aliyev's visit to Belarus.

Peaceful solution of conflict

By Alexey Fedosov

Belarus strongly condemns strikes launched on Syrian Arab Republic, on April 14th, 2018, reads statement by Foreign Ministry of Belarus

'The situation in Syria is essentially an interstate armed conflict with the risk of further uncontrolled escalation, threatening to reach beyond the continent,' notes the statement.

Belarus calls upon all parties involved to refrain from the use of military force against other states, and to seek ways of settling the conflict through peaceful means, via the negotiating table.

'The use of prohibited weapons of mass destruction should not be without consequence. However, counter measures should be based on unequivocal and verified facts and should be made in strict compliance with international law. None of these criteria were observed by those who launched a strike on Syria,' notes the Foreign Ministry.

The Organisation for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons should be able to check all use of chemical weapons in Syria and report on their investigation to the UN Security Council.

'We believe that all members of the UN Security Council need to make best efforts to fulfil the task with which they were entrusted by the international community: to restore and maintain international peace and security,' states the Foreign Ministry of Belarus.

The matter must be investigated thoroughly

Belarus convinced that Salisbury situation should be tackled via authoritative and open investigation, involving all parties concerned, in strict compliance with the Chemical Weapons Prohibition Convention

"Our Minister has already made a clear statement on this issue. Any deterioration of the situation in the region will not benefit Belarus," noted Dmitry Mironchik, the Head of the Information and Digital Diplomacy Department and Press Secretary of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, at the briefing. "We're extremely concerned about the possible application of a nerve agent in Salisbury. Belarus has been and remains absolutely against the use of chemical weapons. Parties guilty of such crimes must take responsibility." He added that the guilt of such parties must first be unambiguously and reliably ascertained.

Our man in Hokkaido

Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, receives portrait of first Russian Consul to Japan, Iosif Goshkevich, born in Minsk Province

The Russian Ambassador to Japan, Mikhail Galuzin, has gifted the portrait to Belarusian Ambassador Ruslan Yesin, during a ceremony in Tokyo, on behalf of Russia's Foreign Minister, Sergey Lavrov. Speaking at the ceremony, Mr. Galuzin noted that Iosif Goshkevich 'made a great contribution to relations between Russia and Japan, laying foundations for relations between Belarus and Japan'.

Mr. Goshkevich authored the first Russian-Japanese dictionary and worked as a diplomat of the Russian Empire, under Admiral Putyatin, in the mid-1850s. He helped in the signing of the Treaty of Shimoda, which established formal diplomatic relations between Russia and Japan. To mark Mr. Goshkevich's achievement in opening a consulate of the Russian Empire in Hakodate, Hokkaido, in 1858, a bust to the diplomat is soon to be unveiled in Hakodate.



Yevgeny Litovchik of Brest opens a driving school, with support from employment centre

Relaunching businesses

Decree on the Development of Entrepreneurship radically changes rules of business game

By Yevgeny Kononov

I recently decided to conduct a small experiment — addressing the tax office with the intention of opening a computer repair shop at home, requesting information on whom I should contact to prepare all documents. I took paper and pen, ready to write down step-by-step instructions, having had difficulty in visiting all the necessary agencies, to collect required certification and permits. However, a friendly tax officer immediately reassured me that there was nothing to worry about. I need only submit my application, paying a single tax (in my case, to a value of Br97), then begin work the next day.

Around twenty activities no longer require state registration, when operating as individual entrepreneurs. Among them are baking and selling confectionery, interior design, shoe repair, tailoring, wall cladding, plastering and painting, making masonry stoves and fireplaces, hairdressing and cosmetic services. Decree No. 7 minimises the requirements for fire safety and sanitary standards, and bureaucratic formalities and barriers are significantly reduced.

Until recently, there were over 900 administrative procedures, and over 6,500 technical acts; around six months were needed to open a café. Moreover, some requirements were so costly that they became absurd, exceeding the likely revenue of the business. Happily, the situation is now improved, with the number of procedures and mandatory standards reduced as much as 15-fold. The Ministry of Economy tells us that a draft decree on improving licensing has been prepared, alongside that for a Unified List of Administrative Procedures: both substantially simpler in terms of content and perception. Of course, many laws will need to be corrected but the adoption of the decree (and other documents relating to business liberalisation) will not be long in coming.

The Deputy Economy Minister, Dmitri

Piotr ARUSHANYANTS, Director of the Economy Ministry's Entrepreneurship Department:

Thanks to liberalisation of legislation, it's now easier and more convenient for entrepreneurs to work. They're no longer afraid to step out of the shadows. They can try bold ideas, which were previously impossible due to great volumes of unnecessary paperwork and approvals. This will help small businesses, which have most suffered from excessive demands. Entrepreneurs can focus on their business, rather than on overcoming administrative barriers. Decree No. 7 will undoubtedly attract new resources into business. It's an indicator of social well-being; if it's good for small businesses, then it's good for everyone.



Svetlana Annenko received a subsidy

ry Matusevich, underlines that the new rules, which came into force on January 1st, 2018, are already producing results. "About two thousand people have notified local authorities of their desire to launch a business, and have begun work. The decree contains norms for direct action affecting all business entities. This makes it possible to not only increase small and medium-sized businesses' share in generating GDP (to 40 percent by 2020 — up

from 30 percent at present) but to create new, innovative industries and organise effective employment."

At present, over 1.43 million Belarusians are employed in the work of small and medium-sized businesses, bringing in every third Rouble to the state budget, in the form of taxes. Such revenue is expected to grow, since the decree significantly reduces the risk of doing business. Not long ago, up to 450 inspections were

conducted countrywide, daily, with inspectors from various agencies sometimes visiting enterprises up to fifty times a year. From now on, the number of such 'visits' will fall, while supervisory authorities will need serious grounds to conduct an inspection.

The Deputy Minister for Taxes and Duties, Ella Selitskaya, promises that the tax sphere will be simplified. "Between now and 2020, there will be no raising of tax rates or introduction of new taxes, fees or duties. This moratorium provides guarantees to businesses, giving them the opportunity to calmly develop and plan their activities. Secondly, legal entities involved in Internet sales have the right to work under a simplified taxation system."

Vladimir KARYAGIN, Chairman of the Presidium of the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurship:

The past year has brought a turning point in the relationship between the Government and businesses. The nature of the business climate has radically changed. The decree is a kind of appeal to enterprising people, asking them to work and create, since the state is on their side. The decree should reduce various administrative procedures, which overestimate the cost of doing business. Good impetus has been given to agroecotourism and craftsmanship development. This sends a good signal to investors, foreign and domestic, who view such documents seriously.

Presenting investment opportunities

By Oleg Bogomazov

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Pakistan, Andrey Yermolovich, meets Naeem Zamindar, the Minister of State and Chairman of the Board of Investment of Pakistan

Discussions centred around the current state of Belarus-Pakistan investment co-operation, and its future prospects, including within the framework of a memorandum of understanding between the National Agency of Investment and Privatisation of Belarus and the Board of In-

vestment of Pakistan, signed in May 2015. A preliminary agreement has been signed to hold a forum on the investment potential of our two countries, in Pakistan, in 2018. Government bodies and businessmen from Belarus and Pakistan are to take part, with the focus on machine building,

agriculture, textiles, pharmaceuticals, and banking. Belarus and Pakistan closely co-operate within the international arena, solving topical issues relating to the international and regional agenda. The two countries' ministries of foreign affairs hold regular political consultations.

Space biography to be continued

Belarus hopes for successful launch of its second space satellite, notes Prime Minister of Belarus, Andrei Kobyakov, meeting members of Executive Committee of Association of Space Explorers (ASE)



Flight Control Centre, of Geoinformation Systems enterprise

By Oleg Bogomazov

“Belarus has been working on a new Earth remote sensing satellite, together with Russian partners. We expect it to be complete soon, sending the second Belarusian satellite into orbit,” noted Mr. Kobyakov.

Belarus launched its first satellite in 2012, with the PM underlining that it uses pur-

pose-designed equipment made in Belarus. Involved in space exploration for many years, in November 2013, Belarus was elected to the UN Committee on the Peaceful Use of Outer Space. In January 2016, Belarus set up a national satellite communication and broadcasting system and its first communications satellite went into orbit via a Chinese rocket.

The country trains specialists for the space industry and related sectors, with Belarusian universities offering aerospace-related degrees. Belarusian scientists participate in space congresses under the aegis of the UN, and work for the space agencies of Russia, the USA, China, Japan, and European countries.

Andrei Kobyakov thanked

the ASE Executive Committee for deciding to hold the 31st Planetary Congress of the ASE in Minsk in September 2018. He is eager to discuss organisational issues and preparations for the major event, saying, “We hope that the Planetary Congress in Minsk will promote space exploration and step up co-operation in this field.”



Train travel with Wi-Fi

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Business class passengers travelling by train between Minsk and Lida, and Minsk and Polotsk, as well as to and from Vilnius, to soon gain free Wi-Fi access

Free Wi-Fi is to launch this month. Already available on the Minsk-Gomel route, about half of all passengers are making use of the technology. A spokesperson for Belarusian Railways tells us, “You just need to register and then enter the access code sent directly via SMS. All Belarusian mobile operator subscribers will be able to access the Wi-Fi, but only while on Belarusian territory, rather than all the way to Vilnius.”

All Stadler trains are to gain Wi-Fi in time for the 2nd European Games, and mobile coverage is being improved along all major roads: from Orsha to Brest and from Gomel to Gudogai. Several dozen base stations are being installed.

Belarusian Railways hopes that, by 2019, at least 80 percent of the route between Brest and Minsk will have good mobile coverage.

Do you wish to change the world? Do not get upset if you fail.

At various times, we face conflict, meeting obstacles as we pursue our goals. It's easy to feel that we fail at such times, and the temptation is to blame others: whether they be those we work with, family or friends. Misunderstanding can become resentment, bringing an atmosphere of tension and conflict.

That is why it is so important to be able to prevent any emergence of unwanted conflicts. The ability to avoid conflicts is based on the culture of communication, self-control and respect for others' autonomy. Nothing contributes to the elimination of misunderstanding as much as a civilised dialogue — including the knowledge and skills of etiquette, establishment and maintenance of contact, development of the style of relations. On appearing in a situation of complicated contradictions, it is important to behave socially competently. Based on experience, a conflict situation retains unpleasant impressions for a long time. Do not forget that anger is primarily the result of inability to cope with oneself, feelings and emotions. The world around us and people do not



always meet our expectations and we are trying to change this. If we fail, we get angry. However, anger does not get us what we want; it only makes us feel more miserable.

Here are some recommendations for resolving conflict situations:

- Calmly step aside from the impact on you. In this situation, it's important to get rid of the conflict's foundation. If the reason of an acute situation is within you, then this is your own contradictory perception

of the circumstances.

- Do not respond to attacks of scandal-maker. Do not repeat their behaviour patterns. Sadly, there is a category of people who like to extend their controversial conflict world to others. They are noticeable in the society. These people love to teach and give advice, etc.
- Do not be drawn into arguments initiated by others. They do not accept the objective reality and have their own view of the world. They assign certain roles to each person. In an attempt to lead everywhere, such people often try to involve others into a conflict. If you feel your temper rising, try to relax, close your eyes and concentrate on retaining self-control. It can help to create a mantra for such occasions, to reinforce your state of calm.
- People often try to impose their worldview, constantly provoking conflicts in all spheres of life. Making their conflicts your own can only bring unhappiness.
- Do not make excuses to conflicting

people. Your silence would become the best way out if you fail to immediately find a convincing laconic argument. Deprive others of your response and they will soon move on.

- Be wary of answering questions posed in anger, since this can lead to a quarrel. If you receive a personal attack, immediately change the topic.
- Keep yourself cool and calm when dealing with such people. Think of something pleasant. Remember that — on starting communication with them — you are at a risk of personal experience of all their contradictions. To pass their conflict to you, they need your negative reaction.
- Work on yourself. If you find yourself regularly involved in conflict situations, it may be necessary to look at your own behaviour. Are you provoking intense responses in others? Take a look at your own actions.

By Tatiana Zhukova, doctor of highest category, Candidate of Medical Sciences

City of ‘red gold’, or five reasons to go to Luninets

By Anna Kurak

1. Visit the Grand Canyon

There's no need to fly over half the world to see the Grand Canyon, as you'll find it in Mikashevichi, 20km from Luninets. The quarry is Europe's largest granite mining company, with a depth of about 140 metres and a perimeter of over 3km. The landscape looks rather like a moon-scape, with heaps of rock, of all sizes and shades — from gentle pink to black. There are sharp rocks and mountain waterfalls, giant BelAZ trucks moving among them, looking like toys from the observation platform above.

The ‘canyon’ receives visits not only from tourists but from filmmakers. *Black Dog* was filmed there, as was the television series *Major of the Winds*. The mountain views truly make you think you're in the Caucasus. It's an amazing location for taking a ‘selfie’ (just don't go on Fridays, as this is when explosive works are conducted).

2. The ‘sweet life’

The city is the unofficial strawberry capital of the country. In the ‘red gold’ season, tonnes of berries are picked and transported, to all corners of Belarus and Russia. The village of Dvoretz is the production centre: here, in late June through to early July, they host a grand strawberry festival, gathering berry connoisseurs from all over the country. You can imagine the feast: of cakes and pastries, pies and patties, jams, jelly and fruit drinks... even salads!

Huge strawberry plantations were planted in the mid-20th century. However, even the first mention of Luninets, in 1449, is in association with something sweet, as residents paid a tribute in honey!

3. Learn the secret of the ‘red’ church

Visiting the city's Cross Exaltation Church, you may notice sea anchors painted on its domes, in the lower part of crosses. It seems odd, since Luninets has never been a port! Holy righteous John of

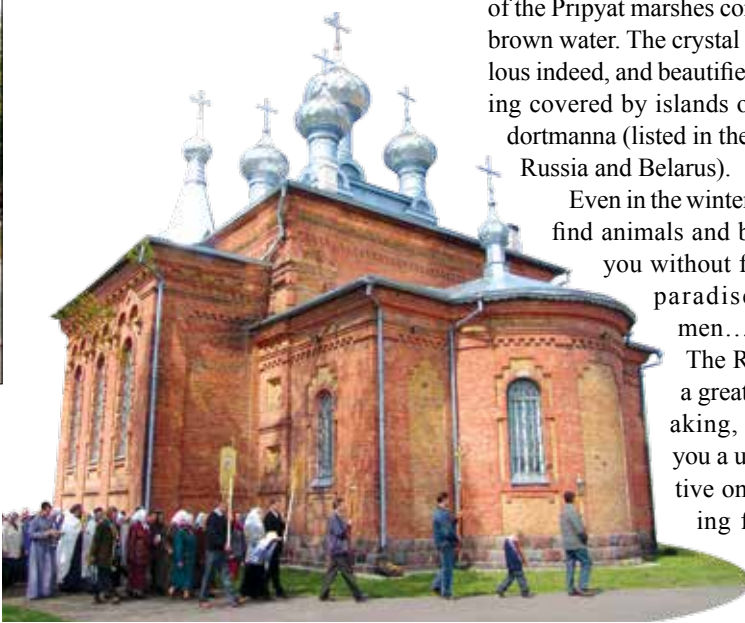


Holiday of strawberry in Luninets District



Monument to famous aircraft designer Pavel Sukhoi in Luninets

Cross Exaltation Church



Kronstadt helped pay to erect the church, donating two hundred Roubles, having driven through in 1897. Built from rare red bricks, it looks just as it did a hundred years ago. Its amazing durability is thought to stem from the grout cementing the bricks being made with eggs rather than water!

4. Hear the Polesie dialect

Ethnographers identify Polesie residents as a separate nationality, saying that their culture and customs are unique, including an original language. Just visit the village of Lobcha, and you'll understand everything. Anastasia Yakovets heads *Lobchanka* folk choir, singing authentic Polesie songs, sung in the hard-to-understand Polesie dialect. Anastasia uses Lobcha language to compose songs and invent sayings, and loves to speak in humorous rhyme. At one *Slavianski Bazaar*, her choir had the audience laughing hysterically.

Luninets is a land of creativity, being the place where Belarusian literary giant Yakub Kolas began writing one of his most famous works: *Symon the Musician*.

5. Find mysterious Lobelia dortmanna

There are too many natural beauties in the Luninets area to list but one of the most unique is Lake Beloe, with its oval shape and crystal water. Such a phenomenon is incredibly rare, and especially in Polesie, where the rivers and reservoirs of the Pripyat marshes contain muddied, brown water. The crystal lake is miraculous indeed, and beautified further in being covered by islands of rare Lobelia dortmanna (listed in the Red Books of Russia and Belarus).

Even in the winter season, you'll find animals and birds approach you without fear; it's a true paradise for fishermen... and hunters!

The River Pripyat is a great place for kayaking, too, allowing you a unique perspective on the surrounding forests, which remain almost untouched.

Traditional folk-embroidered woven linens are passed down through the generations

By Olga Korneeva

Traditional white-quilted weaving from the Nieman area recognised as historical and cultural treasure

Traditional white-quilted weaving was widespread among peasants in the Nieman area through the 19th and most of the 20th century. This is confirmed by the presence of a large number of white-quilted towels and tablecloths in Belarusian museums' folk collections. In the late 20th century, white ornamental

cloths were widely used by villagers in the Grodno Region. Although the practice of weaving almost ceased, the Nieman area continued to develop techniques of white-quilted weaving; it became a distinctive regional phenomenon.

White-quilted weaving unites various techniques of hand weaving, creating a beautiful white fabric with a complex, finely-speckled surface, and a delicate texture



Weaving from Nieman area

(formed by interweaving warp and weft threads in a particular way). Such cloth is used primarily for making towels,

tablecloths and napkins, but fabric can vary in delicacy, since skill is required at all stages, from choosing yarn and preparing looms, to weaving and decorating. White-quilted fabrics are usually made from white linen and cotton yarns, although silken threads and grey palettes may be used.

Towels are especially popular, being of high quality, using shading on a fine-quilted white

surface, with a coloured pattern — woven or embroidered — sometimes decorating the edges. Crocheted lace is also common.

Yevgeny Markevich, from Lida, has woven all his life, having been taught by his grandmother. Despite being busy in his occupation as a doctor, he continues the tradition, sharing knowledge and skills with others, at Lida District Centre of Culture and Folk Arts' Department of Crafts and Traditional Culture.

The Minsk Times
Saturday
April 21
2018



People walk and sit on a crowded railway platform in Gare de Lyon railway station in Paris

Strike by French workers disrupted train service

French rail users faced a fourth two day-strike

The industrial action by union members is likely to cause major disruption and comes just hours after a parliamentary vote approved President Macron's controversial railway reforms. Only one in every three high speed TGVs is expected to be running. Re-

gional TER trains will also be hit although Eurostar will have a near-normal 4 out of 5 trains operating. The showdown between government and rail unions is scheduled to last for at least another month, and possibly until June.

The approval in France's National Assembly was a significant step towards President Emmanuel Macron's flagship reforms becoming law. The bill abolishes the SNCF's passenger rail monopoly and ends protective job-for-life contracts.

The confrontation is Macron's biggest test so far in his bid to see through a raft of economic forms. But its also a challenge for commuters as well as SNCF staff whose pay is cut each time they refuse to work. France is braced for more rail disruption.



257 people dead in Algerian plane crash

Officials in Algeria say 257 people were killed when a military aircraft crashed in the north of the country

The Ministry of Defence said most of the victims were military personnel and their families, as well as ten flight crew members. An investigation has been started and the president has declared three days of national mourning. The plane crashed shortly after taking off from Boufarik military airport, west of the capital Algiers on the northern coast. "We heard a loud explosion," said an eyewitness. "We saw that the area was covered in

dense fog. We knew that it was a plane crash and not a car accident. When we arrived at the scene of the crash we found bodies all over the place. It was a complete disaster." Passengers from Western Sahara, a disputed territory annexed by Morocco after Spain withdrew in 1975, were among the fatalities. The Polisario Front, which is seeking independence for the territory and is backed by Algeria, says 30 Western Saharans, including women and children, died. A senior member of Algeria's ruling FLN party said those killed included 26 Polisario members.

Uber has suffered another legal blow

It's another legal setback for the Silicon Valley start-up. The EU's top court has ruled that France has the right to bring proceedings against local managers of the ride-hailing app Uber for running an illegal taxi service.

It relates to the use of unlicensed drivers as part of the UberPOP service, which has been suspended in France and in several other places. Uber still runs its service with licensed drivers. Uber had argued that France should have got the European Commission's backing for a new taxi law, which included a measure saying only official taxis could use geolocation technology to show available cars. As this didn't happen, Uber argued that criminal charges brought against two of its French managers were not valid. The company was also hit



earlier this year, when the Court of Justice of the European Union, or ECJ, classified it as a transport service rather than a digital one, stripping it of protections against undue national regulation. There's a call for more coordination at an EU level. "The risk is that national regulators don't design the regulation by taking into account all the competition rules but rather resounding to some lobbying from incumbents," said Adina Claici, EU competition law expert at Copenhagen Economics. Since launching in Europe in 2011, Uber has rattled traditional taxis, sparking protests and spats with local authorities.

China to adopt system of punitive damages for IP rights infringements

China will introduce a system of punitive damages for intellectual property (IP) infringements in its effort to strengthen protection of such rights

Shen Changyu, Head of the State Intellectual Property Office, said China would hasten formation of an IP rights protection system for trademarks, patents and geographical indications and work with agencies overseas. "We are introducing a punitive damages system for intellectual property rights infringement to ensure offenders pay a big price," Shen said in an interview.

Emirates to exercise Airbus A380 options 'sooner rather than later'

Emirates will commit to purchasing options for 16 Airbus A380 jets from a previously announced \$16 billion order that handed a lifeline to the slow-selling jet

The Middle East airline placed a provisional order for 20 of the double-decker superjumbos in January, which it has since finalised, with an option for 16 more. "We will exercise them sooner rather than later," Emirates President Tim Clark said. The January order secured the future for world's biggest passenger jets for at least another decade, saving it from being scrapped.

Google poised to emerge unscathed from European antitrust crackdown

The EU's top antitrust regulator, Margrethe Vestager, has made it her mission to stem alleged anti-competitive abuses by big American tech companies, threatening as recently as last month to break up Alphabet Inc's Google

But a decision in the most important of three antitrust cases against Google — this one aimed at loosening its stranglehold over Android-powered smartphones — is likely to show just how difficult it's, even for a committed trust-buster like Vestager, to dent the power of the US giants. Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Alexander Isachev's exhibition features many thought-provoking canvases

Deserved recognition given to outstanding painter

By Veniamin Mikheev

Minsk's Artel Gallery hosts Alexander Isachev's *By Forgotten Altars* with success

The creativity of talented and original Belarusian artist Alexander Isachev was officially recognised only shortly before his death. Oleg Orlov, who collects his pictures, views the collection as a 'nugget from Rechitsa'. Isachev's works were owned by the former French and US presidents Jacques Chirac and Ronald Reagan, and have been on show many times. The current exhibition comprises about seventy paintings, drawings and watercolours drawn by Alexander Isachev during the last decade of his life, and is the seventeenth in a row on Belarusian territory. In fact, it's the thirtieth anniversary of Mr. Isachev's first exhibition in Minsk, in April 1988, when over 200,000 people visited.

Mr. Orlov tells us, "I came almost by accident: my friend virtually pulled me there. Aged 18, with no interest in painting, I was shocked by Mr. Isachev's original, religious, mystical, cosmic-scale paintings. I became seriously interested in his work. I began studying it and collecting pictures. However, it was only in 2005, when my wife introduced me to Alexander's widow, Natalia, that I first bought a picture."

Did Natalia sell it to you?

No. We went to Rechitsa to meet and chatted. She told us that her husband's pictures had been stolen from their apartment in 1996 but, happily, one of his friends had a canvas and would be ready to sell, needing the money. We bought the wonderful 'Driada' picture — one of Mr. Isachev's best works, I think. We now have a large collection, as has been covered by the media and mentioned in encyclopaedias. My wife and I have been spending almost all our earnings on these pictures, for almost fifteen years. We built our country house only recently and, until then, we rented flats and didn't buy anything extra. I've also managed to publish the most complete album-catalogue of Mr. Isachev's works. While collecting, we've been to St. Petersburg, Gomel, Mozyr and Rechitsa: anywhere where we were allowed to take photos.

Aren't you afraid to keep such treasures at home?

The collection is expensive but it would be like stealing from a museum: almost impossible to sell them afterwards.

According to Mr. Orlov, most of Mr. Isachev's works — including *Jesus Christ*, *Driada*, *Isida*, *Winter*, *Lilit* and the *Magic triptych* — use a complicated technique of glaze, applying many thin (nearly transparent) layers of paint, to create depth and richness.

The artist is still not recognised by some of his colleagues, who call his works kitsch, though they've been many times covered by newspapers and magazines. His name and works are mentioned in Belarusian history textbooks and in a multi-volume encyclopaedia. Radio programmes have been prepared and colourful albums published. In 1987, a documentary feature film — *Don't Cry For Me* — was

released by Belarusfilm Studio, directed by Anatoly Alai.

Alexander Isachev, born in 1955 in the village of Ozarichi, in the Gomel Region's Kalinkovich District, attended Mozyr boarding school, far from home. After his fifth year at school, he moved to Minsk Republican Boarding School of Music and Fine Arts, where his artistic capabilities became obvious. However, he was later expelled for putting henna in his hair and refusing to remove it. He began a period of wandering, lacking money or employment, and shunned by official circles. He found spiritual shelter among Leningrad's bohemian circle of unrecognised artists.

His widow, Natalia Isacheva, recalls, "Even as a girl, I realised that he couldn't help but paint; this was his breath. I simply loved him and knew that oxygen should be given to those whom we love, for them to live.



Inspiring contemplation

By that time, Alexander was well known in Leningrad, being among the beau monde, interested in avant-garde art. Natalia said, "We always hung out there, as they say today. We even tried to settle down but there was no accommodation provided by an employer for married couples. The atmosphere was amazing; we chatted with artists, serious people and scientists. I would never have learnt at any institute what I learnt about literature and art there. We rented an apartment for seven months and our son, Yaroslav, was born. I came back, as he began to fall ill, and I didn't want to distract Alexander from his work. We went back regularly, to chat with people and re-energise. We sold works, mostly to the Leningrad intelligentsia."

Alexander's artistic credo began shaping in the 1970s, after his return to his native Rechitsa. However, his work wasn't considered useful to the public and there were even attempts to punish him for parasitism.

Recognition did eventually come, in late 1987, when he received his first exhibition, in Rechitsa. Two days after its opening, Mr. Isachev



He was happy standing by his easel, with everything around sparkling."

It's probably easier to understand Mr. Isachev's unusual life by remembering how he lived in his teenage years. Expelled from school at the age of fifteen, he returned to Rechitsa from Minsk and must have been the only young man in that small town to have long hair and bell-bottoms. He was incredibly handsome, independent and, even, extravagant. He danced the 1970s shake beautifully. Seventh grade schoolgirl Natalia saw him and almost immediately fell in love. "I fell in love at second sight," she recalls. He read poetry by Blok and Akhmatova to her, and explained forbidden art. A month after Natasha graduated from school, they got married: Alexander was nineteen and she just seventeen.

died of a heart attack, while working in his studio; years of exhausting work, misunderstanding and indifference had taken their toll.

Mr. Isachev's legacy includes over five hundred pictures and thousands of graphic works. Most were taken abroad, failing to be appreciated at home, and are now housed by galleries in Western Europe and in private collections. Rechitsa's Museum of Local History has a permanent exhibition of his paintings and graphic works, local people being proud of their countryman. Moreover, Rechitsa's Holy Protection keeps about twenty icons painted by Mr. Isachev. His canvases portray religion and mythological stories from around the world, full of allegory and deep philosophical subtext, searching for the answer to eternal questions.

Motley Tulip brings together masters of art from five countries

3rd International Festival of Masters of Art, *Motley Tulip*, to take place in Brest on May 23rd-May 25th

By Tatiana Yeliseeva

Brest Academic Drama Theatre is hosting the event, which is, this year, dedicated to 20th century entertainment, gathering artistes from Belarus, Russia, Poland, France and Japan, who'll be pleasing audiences with music, plays and ballet.

The first day of the festival will feature works by Polish, French and Russian composers from the 20th century, performed by representatives of the Mariinsky Theatre and



Last year's *Motley Tulip* Festival brought together many popular performers

the Mikhailovsky Theatre of St. Petersburg, as well as by the State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Belarus. Maestro Igor Olovnikov and his student, Marina Kulov, will give a concert for two pianos with an orchestra.

The second day will offer a premiere of *Poplars and*

Wind, performed by the Russian Ballet Theatre. Audiences will also gather for Minsk trio *Show Drummers Stress*, and the play *Frida*, performed by the Fabrica de Tabaco Theatre from St. Petersburg (dedicated to famous Mexican painter Frida Kahlo).

The *Motley Tulip* forum

is taking place in Brest for the third time, expanding its content and geography of participants annually. Organised by the Brest Academic Drama Theatre and GoodPower Company, under the auspices of the Polish and French diplomatic missions in Brest, the event goes from strength to strength.

Oman's first foreign exhibition is exploring ties with Belarus

Belarus at Crossroads of Civilisations opens at National Museum of Oman

By Alexander Mitrofanov

Belarus' Culture Minister, Yuri Bondar, joined Sayyid Haitham bin Tariq Al Said, the Minister of Heritage and Culture of Oman, in opening the event, alongside Belarusian Ambassador to Egypt Sergey Rachkov, and Alexander Khromoy, the Deputy Director of the National History Museum of Belarus.

The Belarusian exhibition is the first foreign event hosted by the National Museum of Oman since its opening in 2016, promoting Belarusian culture and demonstrating the presence of Islam within the Belarusian cultural landscape over several centuries.

The idea is to demonstrate the historical ties between Belarus and the Islamic world and the conflict-free co-existence of Belarusians with representatives of various Muslim



During exhibition opening in Oman

nations, as well as traditional tolerance towards Islam in Belarus, which is vital in our modern age of turbulence. The world may be wracked by political and social conflicts but the exhibition reflects the cultural diversity of Belarus, thanks to its peaceful and mutually beneficial contacts with the Islamic world, as have been enjoyed for centuries.

The National History Museum of Belarus boasts various treasures connected with its relations with Muslim nations. Items on show in Oman demonstrate relations between Belarusian lands and countries of the Islamic East in antiquity (medieval Dirhams

and 'Vytautas' belt symbolise our ties with Tatars). We see the way of life of Belarusian Tatars through photos, postcards and documents from the late 19th and early 20th century, as well as the influence of Islamic art on that of Belarus (eastern jewellery and an original Slutsk sash).

The introductory part of the display reveals much about Belarus and familiarises the Omani audience with the roots of the country's spiritual culture, presented via traditional national costume, from the collection of the National History Museum. The event runs until early July.

Sardinia through artists' eyes

By Olga Korneeva

Vladislav Golubok Parlour, at National History Museum of Belarus, hosts artworks celebrating beauty of Sardinia

The idea of organising an exhibition on Sardinia, in Minsk, appeared last October, following an exhibition by Belarusian painters in Cagliari. During their stay on the island, painters were inspired by local landscapes, the colours of the sunrise, the emotions of the sea, and communication with people. All found reflection on canvases created during the trip.

Sardinia rose from the bottom of the sea 600 million years ago, now boasting snow-white beaches and turquoise sands, isolated bays which shield mysterious caves, and a wealth of granite rock, oak forest and salt lakes, where flocks of flamingos wade. The Minsk exhibition features all these beauties, with Italian and Russian artists also having contributed to the project.

Virtuoso performance conquers audience

By Olga Korneeva

Cello schools of Belarus and France celebrate 20th anniversary of co-operation with joint concert in Minsk

The French Embassy organised the concert, gathering French and Belarusian musicians for a press conference beforehand. Jerome Pernoo visited Minsk twenty years ago, which brought an exchange of talented French and Belarusian young musicians. Since then, many have achieved major success and become famous in their home countries, as well as across Europe.

French cellist and teacher Jerome Pernoo and French pianist and composer Jerome Ducros have become true friends with Belarusian counterparts. Professor of cello Vladimir Perlin, who is the artistic leader and chief conductor of the concert orchestra of the Republican Musical College (at the Belarusian Academy of Music), views these relations as a true bridge between Minsk and Paris.

The French cello school is well-known worldwide but collaboration with Belarusian specialists is useful, as Jerome Pernoo emphasises, stressing his belief that Belarus is home to many talented musicians and teachers.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Didier Canesse, views co-operation between the musicians of our two countries as unique.

Bright year ahead

2nd European Games — to be hosted by Minsk in 2019 — gathering 4,000 athletes from fifty European states, will have huge impact on Belarus, as announced by National Olympic Committee



By Oleg Samsonov

The Director of the Directorate of the 2nd European Games 2019, Georgy Katulin, said that much work lies ahead but that Belarus’ organisational efforts are already impressive. Post-

ers and banners bearing the Games’ symbols are on view across the capital and work is in full swing at sporting facilities, with Dinamo Stadium soon to reopen, following reconstruction. Mr. Katulin notes that over 150 buses and about 300 automobiles will

Buses with 2nd European Games symbols already seen on Minsk streets

be in service during the Games, next June, and any traffic delays should be avoided. Public transport will be decorated for the event, with even underground carriages painted with images and logos to celebrate the tournament.

The Athletes’ Village is undergoing refurbishment, as are canteens, with staff being planned well in advance. Some remaining issues are still to be settled but, as the NOC notes, Minsk would be ready to host the Games even next week.



At 2014 IIHF World Championship in Minsk

There will be much to see

Foreign tourists’ interest in Belarus growing annually, with increasing number of visitors expected in run-up to 2nd European Games, in 2019

By Yegor Vetrov

There’s some time ahead before we host the Games, but time should be used efficiently, notes Belarus’ Sports and Tourism Minister Sergey Kovalchuk. He believes the International Spring Fair of Tourist Services — *Leisure-2018* — will contribute to the promotion of Belarus’ tourist potential, explaining, “Guests of the 2nd European Games will not only attend sporting competitions but will want to see more of the country. We must do everything possible to demonstrate our culture, history and the beauty of Belarusian nature. Belarus has much room for tourism development and we’ll see results if we properly organise ourselves.” The Minister has visited four dozen countries and seen a great deal but remains con-

vinced that Belarus has something to surprise foreign tourists. However, he wishes to see investments made. The five-day visa-free regime for foreigners arriving via the National Airport has proven fully justified, with plans to extend the period to ten days. Interestingly, over the past year, visa-free entry through the National Airport has benefited about 100,000 citizens from sixty-eight countries, with those from Germany, Poland, Italy, the UK, the USA, France, Latvia and Lithuania topping the list. The opening ceremony of the 2nd European Games will be held on June 21st, 2019 at Minsk’s Dinamo Stadium. The mascot will be revealed in one month’s time, having been chosen by the jury to reflect the concept of the European Games and the Belarusian holiday of Kupalie.

Making a clever and bold move

Besides hosting the 2nd European Games in 2019, and the 2021 IIHF World Championships, our country may host another sporting event on grand scale: at a session of the FIDE (World Chess Federation) Presidential Board, Minsk applied to host the World Chess Olympiad in 2022, wishing to welcome more than 3,000 participants from 188 countries, and earning the attention of millions.

By Sergey Kruzhkov

For two days, Minsk became a centre of world chess, hosting FIDE’s Presidential Board, and discussing the most acute issues of chess, including the possible resignation of Kirsan Ilyumzhinov (whose US travel ban is causing the organisation serious financial difficulties), and Minsk’s suitability to host the 2022 World Chess Olympiad. Minsk Town Hall hosted a ceremony of presenting for our application, featuring Minister of Sports and Tourism Sergey Kovalchuk, the Chairman of Minsk City Executive Committee, Andrey Shorets, and FIDE Deputy President Georgios Makropoulos. The Chair of the Belarusian Chess Federation, Anastasia Sorokina, notes that Minsk-Arena skating stadium would host the event, adding, “China, the UAE and Tunisia are also bidding for the right to host the event: they are very serious rivals but Belarus has solicited support at top level. We hope that our application will be worthily assessed.”



Gelfand during simultaneous play

Georgios Makropoulos noted his pleasure in what he’d seen. The First Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Maxim Ryzhenkov, assured Mr. Makropoulos of Belarus’ eagerness to host the chess Olympiad in 2022. In turn, Mr. Makropoulos underlined that the World Chess Federation would provide every possible assistance if Minsk were chosen. The decision on the host country of

the World Chess Olympiad will be adopted at the FIDE Congress taking place in late September 2018. Meanwhile, Grandmaster Boris Gelfand arrived to conduct training with the national team of Belarus and played on twenty chess boards simultaneously, at the National Art Museum, giving talented youngsters the chance to pit their wits against the famous native Belarusian.



Around 15 clubs take part in Republican opening of motor season in Minsk

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS
20 Lenin Street
Until 22nd April. *Vladimir Khodorovich. Painting:* dedication to the artist's 70th birthday Until 12th May. *People of One Land* Until 15th May. *Serving to the Homeland* Until 27th May. *Territory of Earthly Hopes* Until 1st June. *Aivazovsky and Marine Painters*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM
12 Karl Marx Street
Until 30th April. *Warriors on One Field*
Until 1st May. Exhibition of Salvador Dali's graphics: *Divine Comedy*

EXHIBITION HALL OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM
9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 3rd July. *Song Birds and Pigeons*

MUSEUM OF MODERN BELARUSIAN STATEHOOD
38 K. Marx Street
Until 26th June. *Man. Cosmos. Belarus*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM
8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 25th May. *Red Banner Belarusian Military District: History in Faces*
Until 13th August. *Piotr Masherov: His Heart Beats for People*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS
116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 28th April. *Natalia Kaminskaya: Personal* Until 31st August. *Enlightenment. Experience. Progress*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY
15 Svobody Square
Until 22nd April. *Nikas Safronov: Spring of Impressions* Until 13th May. *Bronislav Pilsudsky (1866-1918). From Sakhalin to Zakopane: Ethnographic Travel*

VANKOVICH'S HOUSE
33a Internatsionalnaya
Until 27th May. Photo exhibition by Margarita Trenina: Fairies artistic cycle (as part of the *Close* exhibition)

MINSK GALLERY
9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 27th May. *World of the Future*
Until 31st May. *The Art of the Brick*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY
4 Sverdlov Street
Until 29th April. *Man: Without Borders*

BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS
32 Nezavisimosti Avenue
20-22 and 25.04. *Ice Fiery*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE
1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
19.04. *With Love to Opera* 25.04. *Bohemia* 26.04. *Love and Death*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE
44 Myasnikov Street
21 and 22.04. *Merry Widow* 23.04. *Dubrovsky* 24.04. *Blue Cameo* 26.04. *Jane Eyre*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE
5 Volodarsky Street
19.04. *Tricks of Khanuma* 20.04. *Yevgeny Grishkovets: Theatre of Despair* 21.04. *Miraculous Rings of Almanzor; Woe from Wit* 22.04. *Divers* 24.04. *Fourth Planet* 25.04. *Zoika's Flat* 26.04. *Circle of Love; Husband Leaves Wife*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA
44 Kropotkin Street
19.04. *Belarus. Didactics* 21.04. *This Is All She* 25.04. *Antigone in New York* 26.04. *Chernobyl's Prayer*

MINSK CONCERT HALL
5 Oktyabrskaya Street
21.04. *There Is No Such Country As Holland*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS
13 Pobediteley Avenue
19.04. *Aisedora. Dance of Love* 20.04. *Two Arrows* 21 and 22.04. *The Battlefield* 23.04. *Robbery at Midnight* 24.04. *A Very Simple Story* 25.04. *Anton Chekhov's Night of Miniatures* 26.04. *Wolves and Goats*

YOUTH THEATRE
17 Kozlov Street
19.04. *Dreamworks* 20.04. *Warsaw Melody* 21.04. *Scarlet Flower; Sanya, Vanya and Rimas* 24.04. *Caught By Love; Zhmurik* 25.04. *Love of Three* 26.04. *Man from Podolsk; Tectonics of Feelings*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE
20 Engels Street
19.04. *Silk* 20 and 21.04. *The Snow White* 22.04. *Adventure of Pin-Pin* 26.04. *Belvedere*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE
7 Engels Street
19.04. *School of Taxpayers; Elza's Land* 20.04. *Ursula Radziwill's Theatre* 21.04. *Love as Militarism; Local Cabaret* 22.04. *ART; Old-Fashioned Comedy*