

International
venue
strengthens
its status



Guests
are always
welcome
in Belarus



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 26 (792) ● THURSDAY, JULY 11, 2019 ● WWW.SB.BY



Alexandria Gathers Friends — not just a festival

Thousands of guests of Alexandria — in the Shklov District of Mogilev Region — spent a night without sleep. The search for the mythical ‘fern flower’ is not only a tradition, but a reminder of our national roots. → **3**



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Extract from statement made by President Aleksandr Lukashenko during the military parade held in honour of the Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus (Day of the Republic) and the 75th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from the Nazi occupation:



Year after year, on July 3rd, we feel keenly the heroic events of the Great Patriotic War. We live through every fact anew as if we had been the ones to shed the last drop of blood in defence of Brest Fortress and the Buinichi Field, as if we had been

the ones to die in Trostenets death camp and the Krasny Bereg children's concentration camp, as if we had died in the fire in Khatyn and crossed the Dnieper Line.

In the remote past of 1941, Belarus was the first to take the brunt of the invaders and became a human shield in their path. Not a single inch of our native land was given to the enemy without a fight. Resistance began in the first minutes of enemy invasion. Moreover, even though it was almost destroyed, oc-

cupied Belarus remained unconquered.

We have lived for 75 years under a peaceful sky. In the name of the sacred memory of the heroes of the Great Patriotic War, we are obliged to preserve the peace and independence of our land and to pass this greatest value of our lives to future generations.

To fulfil this important mission we must resist the challenge of new global conflicts: military, informational and economic — those that cover all spheres

of life, destroy the state from the inside and throw it back a decade in development. Sometimes this happens without a single shot but — more and more often — results in a bloody scenario.

We intend to use all our reserves to restore stability and calm in the region. Putting forward peace-loving initiatives, we are striving for the main goal: to find new ways and methods of building relationships between various geopolitical forces.

Congratulations coming from all over the world

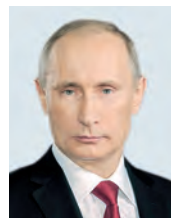
By Olga Korneeva

Congratulations on Belarus' Independence Day have been sent to Aleksandr Lukashenko and the Belarusian people by the leaders of foreign countries, foreign political and public figures and the leadership of the integration associations

Congratulatory messages came from Pope Francis, the Queen of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the kings of Belgium and Thailand.

The heads of the People's Republic of China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Azerbaijan, Serbia, Ukraine, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan, Turkey, Venezuela, France, Germany, the Republic of Korea, Austria, Latvia, Bulgaria, Hungary, the UAE, Turkmenistan, Vietnam, South Africa, Singapore, the State of Palestine, the Chairman of the State Council and the Council of Ministers of the Republic of Cuba congratulated the Belarusian people and the Head of State on the national holiday.

'It is important that the bonds of fraternal friendship



and mutual assistance, bequeathed by fathers and grandfathers, are still the key to the strength of Russian-Belarusian relations', reads the congratulatory letter from **President of Russia Vladimir Putin.**

Chinese leader Xi Jinping sent congratulations on the occasion of Independence Day on behalf of the Chinese Government, the people of his country and on his own behalf: 'In recent years, thanks to your firm leadership, political stability, sustainable economic development and the welfare of the people have been preserved in Belarus'.



In his congratulations, **Pope Francis** conveyed the warmest words and wishes for prosperity to the President of the country and the nation.

Queen Elizabeth II of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland



also sent a message on the national holiday to Mr. Lukashenko and the Belarusian people, wishing everyone well-being and prosperity.

French President Emmanuel Macron noted in his congratulatory message to our President that 2019 is marked by the continuation of the intensification of bilateral relations between the two countries in the political, economic and parliamentary spheres.

German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier



noted that, in recent years, there has been a significant intensification in

relations between the two countries: 'I am glad that — through a joint ceremony in Maly Trostenets in June 2018 — we were able to give a historic moment for our joint memory. Preparations for the establishment of a bilateral historical commission are on the right track'.

President of Turkey Recep Tayyip Erdogan



congratulated Mr. Lukashenko and friendly Belarusian people: 'We attach importance to strengthening and bringing to a higher level all areas of our relations, which are based on mutual respect and common benefit'.

President of Ukraine Volodymyr Zelenskyy



congratulated the Head of State and the Belarusian people on the celebration. He noted that, during the years of independence, Belarus has

taken a worthy place among the countries of the region, demonstrating its commitment to peace and regional stability, as well as the confident promotion of the national economy.

Austrian President Alexander van der Bellen



also sent heartfelt congratulations on the occasion of the state holiday of Belarus: '2019 is a significant year in our bilateral relations. I look forward to welcoming you to Vienna in November'.

President of the Republic of Korea Moon Jae-in



also conveyed sincere congratulations to the Head of State and the Belarusian people on Independence Day: 'Friendly Korean-Belarusian relations have been developing steadily over the years due to close co-operation in various fields'.

No closed topics in relations observed

By Vasily Kharitonov

The idea was voiced by Aleksandr Lukashenko at the recent meeting with Armenian President Armen Sarkissian, in Minsk

Belarus' Head of State recalled that, when Armen Sarkissian came to the post of President of Armenia, an agreement was reached on his visit to Belarus — to attend the places that are significant in terms of development and the economy. This agreement is now being realised.

'I watched your meeting with our IT specialists on TV and I can tell that you are determined to stick to the issues that are necessary for the development of Armenia. In this regard, I want to assure you that there are no absolutely closed topics with Armenia for us. We are always ready to open the doors for any of your aspirations — if you see something ac-



ceptable for Armenia in Belarus,' Mr. Lukashenko emphasised.

He also reminded the Armenian President that co-operation between Belarus and Armenia started from

scratch. 'Although we do not have a huge turnover, \$50m per annum demonstrates a good dynamic compared with the previous 'zero' indicators,' he said. Close co-operation has been established with representatives of the business community. 'We have very warm relations with many representatives of Armenia, including private businesses. You know my friends in Armenia, who invest in Belarus. I am very grateful,' the President said. At the same time, he stressed a single requirement for all who intend to do business in the country: 'I have a single rule: friendship is friendship, but state issues should be set apart from business.'

Indeed, trade and economic co-operation between Belarus and Armenia has recently been characterised by positive dynamics. In January-April 2019, the growth of mutual trade reached 30 percent against the same

period of 2018. The basis of Belarusian exports is made up of mainly engineering products and medicines. Alcoholic beverages, specific goods and furniture have become the key import items from Armenia. During the first quarter of 2019, \$3.5m of direct Armenian investments were attracted to the Belarusian economy.

Meanwhile, Mr. Lukashenko noted the good relations established between the countries — both at a high political level and at the level of personal relations of our citizens. 'We have always had good relations with the Armenians, which we are trying to maintain,' he said.

Mr. Sarkissian thanked the Belarusian Head of State for the invitation to visit Belarus and attend the closing ceremony of the 2nd European Games. 'I'm so impressed with the scope, organisation and discipline,' he admitted.

Alexandria Gathers Friends — not just a festival

Thousands of guests of Alexandria — in the Shklov District of Mogilev Region — spent a night without sleep. The search for the mythical ‘fern flower’ is not only a tradition, but a reminder of our national roots.

By Vladimir Mikhailov

For many years, the legend of the magic flower of happiness has been passed from mouth to mouth, from family to family, and everyone dreams of witnessing the wonders of Kupala: for this night, the only one in the year, guests from all over Belarus and from neighbouring countries come to Shklov. This year, the organisers claim, almost 100,000 people attended.

The President of Belarus always celebrates the midsummer holiday in his home village and this year was no exception: The Head of State found time to personally open the 10th anniversary *Alexandria Gathers Friends* festival.

“Dear friends! This important word — which I’ve now spoken in three languages — reflects the depth of the idea of our festival in Alexandria: a celebration which, for the last ten years, has become a symbol of the fraternal friendship of the peoples of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The holiday has rightfully acquired the status of a national brand and annually attracts tens of thousands of guests. However, the President reminded those listening of what the festival looked like a decade ago, “It was small and modest — like this land. Though even then, it was beautiful in its originality. The festival has quickly grown to the status of a regional event. I believe that such extraordinary interest in it has arisen as, in this hospitable land, the force of attraction of the small homeland and Eastern Slavic kinship is particularly evident. The three nations are interconnected with historical, familial and spiritual roots — like three mighty oaks on the bank of the deep and generous Dnieper.”

The Dnieper has been an important shipping artery of Belarus since ancient times and part of the route ‘from the Varangians to the Greeks’. Its waters wash the banks of Alexandria — a venue where the festival of peace, friendship and good neighbourliness is organised.

The Head of State reminded the audience that, “The origins of this great river begin in Russia, then it carries its waters through Belarus and completes the path in Ukraine. Like the circulatory system, it binds us with the strongest ties of good neighbourliness, trust and openness. This unity given to us from above has been preserved by our peoples. Century after century, year after



year, they have been turning to their roots — making friends and creating families. Therefore, we invite everyone to our festivities not only as dear guests, but as close friends.”

The festival continued with a great gala-concert: *Made in Belarus*. 3,500 people came to the Alexandria open air concert hall. Pop stars are always pleased to attend. Exciting musical performances are shown, and touching debuts held.

The President noted that, coming to Alexandria — which is his small homeland, he expe-



riences special feelings. “There is a feeling of great excitement. When you reach certain heights — sorry for boasting — and become a famous person, then coming home where you were born and grew up, meeting people who know you better than anyone in the world face to face is always terribly exciting,” Mr. Lukashenko said. He expressed the belief that it is extremely im-

ferred, inviting everyone to come to Alexandria for the celebration. “Today’s original festival helps us realise ourselves as one of the important links of the continuous chain of generations of Belarusians, pass on to our children the heritage left by our parents, preserve national identity, traditions, culture and, therefore, our native land,” he emphasised.

“You see how the native land is becoming prettier, while the cities and towns are becoming



greener and more comfortable. Everything has been done by your hands. You do this primarily for yourself, your children and grandchildren. Together we are creating our Belarus for life,” the President said. “It is not surprising that many tourists note not only the beauty and purity of Belarus but even find something of their own here — something that reminds them of their beloved homes.”

The *Made in Belarus* ga-

la-concert — featuring stars of both Belarusian and foreign music — attracted thousands of spectators. The show was accompanied by a finely and tastefully chosen visual range: colourful landscapes of Belarus were featured one after another and scenes from the lives of ordinary people and workers were staged. This touched all those present and many even had tears in their eyes. Songs about feelings for the native land, first steps,

friends, school, first love and the family were performed. The concert programme was based on the *Belarusian Corner* album by the laureates of the Belarusian President’s ‘For Spiritual Revival’ award — Yulia Bykova and Yevgeny Oleinik.

After the concert, the main Kupala fire was kindled on the left bank of the Dnieper, while the sky over Alexandria was lit with colourful fireworks and a pyrotechnic show.



**Belt & Road Forum
for Regional Cooperation
and Development**

Great Stone Industrial Park —
Global Opportunities

International venue strengthens its status

Forum for Regional Co-operation and Development takes place in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park as part of the *Belt and Road* initiative

BUSINESS



By Oleg Bogomazov

The main theme of the forum was *Open Park Great Stone — an Example of Global Opportunities*. The event brought together about 500 participants: government representatives, leaders of business associations, investment funds, banks and major companies from European and Asian countries. It should be mentioned that this is the first large-scale event at the Park.

The forum aimed to build on the results of the 2nd *Belt and Road* Forum for International Co-operation that took place in Beijing this April.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, sent his greetings to the participants of the current forum.

The programme of the forum was packed with events. The key theme of the plenary session was the participation of the states in the *Belt and Road* global initiative. The

four breakout sessions highlighted innovative developments and new technologies, transport and logistics, collaboration with financial institutions, as well as the development of the Great Stone Park as a smart eco-city. The forum also saw bilateral documents signed, and new residents of the Park registered.

An exhibition of Belarusian and Chinese goods and services also opened at the Industrial Park, featuring pro-



duce by almost 200 Belarusian and Chinese companies in such industries as machine building and industrial equipment, energy, transportation and logistics, construction and woodworking, science and technology, IT and telecommunications, pharmaceuticals, agriculture and food, services.

The organisers of the current forum are the Economy Ministry of Belarus and the Ministry of Commerce of the People's Republic of China. Co-organisers are the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the Council for the Promotion of International Trade at the Ministry

of Commerce of China, the Great Stone Industrial Park Administration, the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation and the Industrial Park Development Company.

It should be noted that the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Great Stone Park is an international platform for high-technology production in leading fields of activity. The Park offers unprecedented preferences and is home to 44 resident companies from China, Belarus, Austria, Germany, Russia, Lithuania, the United States and Israel, while the estimated investment in projects there exceeds \$1bn.

Expanding the portfolio of orders

Geely Atlas was highly praised by the Head of State, who called it a 'good vehicle' during his recent inspection of the Minsk ring road

By Vladislav Sychevich

The Belarusian-Chinese enterprise needed less than a year to produce a truly exceptional and, what is more important, people's vehicle.

Since its launch, more than 15,000 vehicles have been manufactured at the factory near Borisov, which has almost reached capacity. The enterprise is working profitably: over the first three months of 2019 alone, net profit exceeded Br12 million. At present, the factory employs 1,200 workers and, in April, 1,719 vehicles were produced, while the target for June was 2,000 vehicles, according to Gennady Svidersky, First Deputy Industry Minister and Acting Director General of BelGeely Plant.

"Orders for the third quarter of this year stand at 3,000 cars per month. Considering the growth in sales, we should be able to improve our performance indicators. I don't exclude the possibility that the production targets for the year could be exceeded, but this would require corresponding changes in production and technological cycles. Since demand is strong both on the Be-



larusian and Russian market, we're going to start hiring and training workers in order to work two shifts. We're also switching to a six-day week and plan to completely move to a two-shift working day by 2020," added Mr. Svidersky.

The range of manufactured products is growing larger, with the company working hard to penetrate new

target markets. At present, about half the output is exported, mainly to Russia. Negotiations are also in progress with partners from Ukraine, Lithuania, Serbia, and Moldova.

"There is interest in our cars and we're working on diversifying sales. This year, we plan to produce 22,000 vehicles, with 15,000 of these for ex-

port to Russia. The manufacturing division keeps in mind the portfolio of orders compiled by dealers based on consumer preferences. While Geely cars were previously available in black, white, silver, and grey colours, they are now also produced in red, brown, and amber. Individuals buy most of the cars: up to 75 percent of the total volume of sales," noted Mr. Svidersky.

The enterprise has ambitious plans, a taxi manufacturing programme is currently being developed. Such practice exists in all countries where passenger cars are produced.

"We don't want to realise our goals via administrative resources but through the creation of special programmes. Those who are involved in this type of business will be interested in our vehicles. They will see economic profit while we, as a plant, will provide support from our side," explained Mr. Svidersky.

Guests at the major sporting event of this summer were able to assess all the advantages of the Belarusian-Chinese vehicles: 320 Geely Atlas cars were used as taxis during the recently held 2nd European Games.



Great Stone Park is now more attractive

By Vladimir Khromov

Geely Corporation likely to establish production of car components in the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park, while Weichai Corporation plans to implement a project for transmission production

"We have preliminary agreements on the arrival of two very large, significant investors in the Park. I hope this will be implemented and we will sign the relevant agreements. I'm primarily speaking of the Geely Corporation," said the Head of the Industrial Park's Administration, Alexander Yaroshenko. "Work is underway, and we expect to sign a preliminary agreement on the implementation of the project to produce automotive components in the Great Stone. Another planned agreement of intent is with the Chinese shipbuilding corporation. Together with the aerospace technology company, which is one of our anchor investors, we are focused on the creation of the so-called sub-park in the Great Stone."

The governments of Belarus and China see the possibility of attracting serious transnational corporations as one of the sources of investment growth. There is already an example of this in the Industrial Park in China's Weichai Corporation, one of the leaders in the field of mechanical engineering, who have built a plant and carried out trial production of diesel units for the Minsk Automobile Plant. It is planned to use these engines at other plants: Amkodor and Gomselmash. "We hope that, during the Forum on Regional Co-operation and Development, within the framework of the *Belt and Road* initiative, another project by this Corporation — transmission production — will be launched," Mr. Yaroshenko said.

Meanwhile, the two 'flagships' of Belarus and China — Minsk Automobile Plant and



Weichai Corporation — have established a joint company. MAZ-Weichai JSC became a resident of the Great Stone in October 2017 and, in April 2018, the construction of a motor plant began. Last November, a trial launch of the production of internal combustion engines was held, to produce engines for trucks, special vehicles and buses.

The Great Stone's Administration also intends to sign agreements with several Swiss companies. "I hope we will sign a residency agreement with a company in R&D related to the storage and processing of large amounts of data in the field of unmanned technologies: vehicle control using augmented reality. The second project is related to mechanical engineering. The

Deputy Prime Minister, Alexander Turchin, has already met with a representative of the company in Switzerland and we held talks. In the future, we also see the possibility of implementing two projects relating to pharmaceuticals," Mr. Yaroshenko added.

In addition, it is planned that two Belarusian enterprises will become residents of the Park. The first is related to 3D-technologies, and the other to computer technologies. "We offer domestic investors the chance to consider the Great Stone as a global opportunity not only for foreign investments, but primarily for Belarusian ones. We provide an opportunity to expand businesses and actively promote products — including to foreign markets," he said.

New priorities become apparent

Belarus and China are considering the possibility of increasing the number of flights on the Minsk-Beijing route, as well as creating joint companies for freight air transportation

By Vladimir Velikhov

Modern business requires high speeds. "Therefore, we consider it important to establish contacts between the partners of Belarus and China to increase the number of flights on the Minsk-Beijing route and improve the organisation of joint companies for air cargo transportation," Belarus' Minister of Transport and Communications — Alexey Avramenko — said at the Forum on Regional Co-operation and Development held as part of the *Belt and Road* initiative at the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park.

Considering the proximity of Minsk National Airport to the Park, the Minister considers the creation of an international hub at the airport, which would allow for the processing and delivery of cargo by air, an important direction for the development of civil aviation.

Mr. Avramenko pointed

out that in 2018, Minsk National Airport won The Best CIS Airport of the year award, and in addition, the second runway has been put into operation at the airport. "We are ready to receive aircraft of any class and increase our cargo handling capacity," said the official.

At present, over 90 percent of goods from China to Europe are delivered by the Southern sea route and only about 6 percent by land. "Belarus is interested in increasing the competitive advantages of the land route and attracting additional volumes of traffic," Mr. Avramenko said. "As one of our priorities, we envisage an increase in the volume of accelerated container rail freight."

Last year, 18 specialised container express trains transported 325,000 containers through Belarus via the China-Europe-China route. By 2025, it is planned to increase this figure to 1 million.

Situation looks favourable

Demand for Belarusian agricultural equipment in Kenya on the rise — explained by the Counselor for Trade and Economic Co-operation of the Belarusian Embassy in Kenya, Roman Kozyr, at *Road Show* seminar ahead of *FoodAgro*

By Olga Korneeva

"Agriculture is the main sector of the country's economy, as in many other African countries. Moreover, in December 2017, Kenya launched a new programme of planned economic development through to 2022. It focuses on developing national industry,

providing universal health insurance and affordable housing and ensuring food safety. In this light, Belarus can expect an increase in demand for agricultural equipment, fertilisers, and plant protection agents," Mr. Kozyr said.

Kenya is also an assembly site for many manufacturers. It assembles tractor units, trac-

tors, and passenger cars. "An official dealer of Volkswagen and Chevrolet in Kenya assembles three Volkswagen car models and is seeking to add Belarusian tractors to its portfolio," the official noted.

Another promising area is the development of the meat and dairy industry in Kenya. According to Mr. Kozyr, the

range of these products is not diverse; therefore, Kenya is interested in setting up meat, dairy, and poultry farms, meat processing and cheese production plants. "In this regard, the upcoming *FoodAgro* may be a starting point in this co-operation and help promote Belarusian products in Kenya," he said.

Africa's Prime Food, Hospitality & Agriculture Expo *FoodAgro* will take place in Nairobi, Kenya on August 1st-3rd. It's part of the Kenya International Trade Exhibition (KITE), the biggest exhibition event in East Africa. This year, the exhibition will be held for the 22nd time and Belarus will debut.



INVESTMENTS

The Minsk Times
Thursday
July 11
2019

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A contrast to alien and distorted ideas of the past

Belarusian scientists are preparing to publish the fifth and sixth volumes of the *History of Philosophical and Socio-Political Thought of Belarus*



By Vladislav Khoroshilov

A wealth of ideas and personalities has inspired the scientists of the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences to proceed with the publication of this work, and four volumes have already been published (out of six planned). They cover the development of the intellectual culture of Belarus in the Middle Ages during the years of the Renaissance, Reformation, Baroque and Enlightenment. The fifth and sixth volumes are now being prepared to reflect the development of the 19th-early 20th century national philosophy.

The scale and breadth of the project's chronological and personal coverage is unparalleled in the academic science of neighbouring countries. The Belarusian reader will, for the first time, receive a unique collection (which comprises over 1,000 pages) of philosophical texts published in Belarusian — unprecedented in national printing history.



“This is no accident, since philosophy reflects the nation's soul. A state could hardly exist without its philosophy and ideology,” said the Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Vladimir Gusakov.

The first two volumes of the *History of Belarusian Statehood* were recently presented, and the remaining volumes will be released by late 2019. The five-volume *History of Belarusian Statehood* clearly shows the process of evolution

of the Belarusian lands in the form of historical and national examples.

Historical forms of statehood have developed as multi-ethnic formations, so they belong not only to the Belarusian people but also to other ethnic groups. Kievan Rus, Polotsk and the Turov Principality, the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Russian and Zhemoyt, Rzech Pospolita and the Russian Empire are historical forms of the statehood which gradually formed the Belarusian people.

“In the past, it was embodied in such national forms as the Belarusian People's Republic, the Socialist Soviet Republic of Belarus, the Lithuanian-Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic and the Republic of Belarus”, Mr. Gusakov adds.

In all eras, the idea of statehood has been the subject of ideological confrontation. This problem has not lost its relevance now. Various political subjects within society,

as well as external political forces, have always sought to introduce ideas into the public consciousness that meet their interests and aspirations. Therefore, studies of the history of the nation and its statehood have an important ideological aspect.

“In today's geopolitical conditions, our country needs its own objective understanding of its history, which will allow us to resist the imposition of distorted and alien ideas about our past,” said the official.

Work on the *Republic of Belarus — 25 Years of Creation and Achievements* multi-volume collection continues. “The first experience of building a sovereign, independent social state in the history of the Belarusian people deserves to be recorded in a popular scientific publication,” Mr. Gusakov said. “It will reflect the real essence of the complex and difficult Belarusian path — both in structure and content.”



Lake Naroch among top three

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

TourStat analytical agency presents ranking of CIS popular resorts for Russian holidaymakers in summer

Burabay resort in Kazakhstan, Issyk-Kul Lake in Kyrgyzstan, Lake Naroch in Belarus, Absheron resorts in Baku on the Caspian Sea and Lake Sevan in Armenia are the top five summer resorts for Russians in the CIS countries.

The agency notes that visa-free entry, knowledge of the Russian language

and the hospitality of the locals, as well as inexpensive rest and tasty local food are the main advantages of summer holidays in the CIS states.

According to TourStat data, Russian tourists spend one or two weeks in summer in the CIS resorts, and their tourist budget ranges from \$50 to \$110 per day. The cheapest stay is at Issyk-Kul Lake, while the most expensive is at resorts in Baku.

The ranking is compiled using the results of analysis of attendance of resorts by tourists and the development of infrastructure at the locations.

Nostalgia as an engine of tourism

By Oleg Bogomazov

Grodno Region could become a popular tourist destination for Americans

The flow of tourists from the USA to Belarus is growing, and the opportunity to enter the country without a visa has affected this trend. One of the visa-free regions is Grodno. “In the USA, there are many descendants of immigrants from these places. We have preserved many objects associated with different historical stages and different nationalities, which would be interesting for guests from abroad to visit. The region has the potential to become an interesting destination for nostalgic tourism,” says the Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Kravtsov.

True, the Grodno Region could be a popular destination for Americans as part of ecological and nostalgic tourism. Co-operation in this area was one of the topics of the meeting between Mr. Kravtsov and the US Chargé d'Affaires in Belarus, Jenifer Moore.

Ms. Moore recalled that a long-term project for the development of agro-ecotourism is being implemented in Belarus. “It was nice to read in an authoritative magazine that the country is in first place in the ranking of countries for ecotourism,” she said.

Another potentially lucrative area for co-operation is IT. “Americans



know there are many well-educated young people in Belarus who are competitive in the world market. American business is interested in investing in Belarusian IT companies,” the diplomat said, adding that America is also implementing programmes to support start-ups.

In the Grodno Region, there are several enterprises using American capital. For example, the production of optical sights is in operation in Lida and there are also several new and interesting projects currently under discussion.

Work is underway to promote products from the Grodno Region to the American market. There is potential for growth in trade with the United States. Co-operation in the humanitarian sphere and education was also discussed during the meeting.

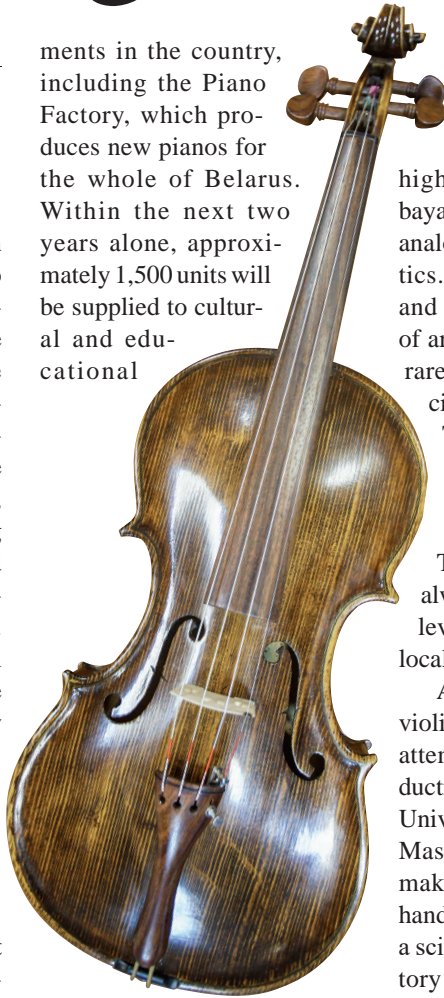
Nothing will be sold for scrap

By Olga Korneeva

A core of master craftsmen producing musical instruments to be established in the country

It's important to establish a core of master craftsmen to manufacture musical instruments, said Belarus' Culture Minister, Yuri Bondar, at the fringe of the 19th National Festival of Belarusian Song and Poetry, *Molodechno-2019*. These are not simply people who, for example, were producing garden benches yesterday and today have shifted to the manufacture of musical instruments. It's a lifetime of technological knowledge which can only be transferred to someone deeply devoted to the occupation and who sincerely and passionately would like to produce musical instruments and dedicate their lives to it," noted Mr. Bondar.

Today there are significant producers of musical instru-



ments in the country, including the Piano Factory, which produces new pianos for the whole of Belarus. Within the next two years alone, approximately 1,500 units will be supplied to cultural and educational

institutions around the country. Zonta JSC operates in Molodechno and manufactures high-quality accordions and bayans — outstripping famous analogues in their characteristics. They produce cembalos and guitars which are works of art. Instruments made from rare timber are highly appreciated among professionals.

There are also individual entrepreneurs and private craftsmen who produce domras and balalaikas. These manufactures are always supported both at the level of state run public and local authorities.

As far as the production of violins is concerned, there is an attempt to establish their production at the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts. Master Alexander Surba — a maker of the first Belarusian hand-made violin — has set up a scientific and creative laboratory to produce single pieces.



Furthermore, his first musical instrument is currently being played in the Presidential Orchestra of Belarus.

In general, the *Culture of Belarus* programme envisages a whole range of events aimed at providing all cultural institutions and educational establishments with modern musical instruments. "We don't

only produce new musical instruments but also have a very attentive approach to the existing fund of instruments which should be brought in order," notes Mr. Bondar. "We can't write everything off and sell it for scrap. A great many instruments can serve for many years if there's good quality repairs and servicing available."

Not only beautiful but also useful

Chinese company studies possibility of producing cosmetics based on Belarusian birch juice



By Natalia Yemelianova

One of the largest Chinese companies — Nongfu Spring — is studying the possibility of producing cosmetic products using birch juice collected in Belarus, as noted by the Forestry Ministry after a meeting with the Head of the company's procurement department — Zheng Xiaohong.

According to the Chinese guests, such cosmetics are in demand not only in China but also in Japan. The manufacturer plans to expand production capacity and open a new plant which requires large volumes of birch juice.

As the Head of the Forestry Ministry's Production and Sales Department — Andrey Matskevich — informed the Chinese businessmen, the forestry has prepared more than 17 thousand tonnes of useful drink this season, which is sold domestically and abroad,

mainly in neighbouring countries. "Birch juice rapidly loses its useful properties, and it is necessary to consider how to best preserve it and transport it over long distances. Fresh birch juice is stored no longer than two days, as a rule. At the same time, we are certainly interested in the Chinese market," said Andrey Matskevich, adding that the forestry enterprises are able to increase the volume of drink procurement and are always open to new proposals — especially from foreign companies.

Nongfu Spring is a subsidiary of the Chinese YANG SHENG TANG GROUP Corporation which occupies a leading position in the top 500 private companies in the country. Nongfu Spring focuses on sales of natural drinking water, fruit and vegetable juices, special drinks and tea-based beverages.

ADVICE FROM DR. ZHUKOVA

Not to cure but to prevent

What are the methods for the treatment and prevention of osteochondrosis?

L. Nikonova, city of Loev, Gomel Region

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

Treatment of osteochondrosis

Since osteochondrosis is the destruction of spinal structures, complete cure — even at our present level of medicine development — is almost impossible. The theoretical possibility of restoration of the damaged intervertebral disc can be considered only in the light of developing new technologies, for example, cell therapy. However, stem cell therapy is still only in an experimental phase.

Although it is impossible to completely get rid of osteochondrosis, it is possible to prevent its progression and the development of severe complications that lead to disability. To do this, you need to adhere to a healthy lifestyle and treat osteochondrosis carefully. The treatment of osteochondrosis is always complex and combines several methods that affect different mechanisms of the disease.

Medicines include anti-inflammatory drugs in the form of tablets, ointments, injections, chondroprotectors, muscle relaxants, vitamin and general strengthening agents. The use of muscle relaxants pursues the important goal of removing the muscle block: local tension of the muscles of the spine, squeezing the vessels and nerves and becoming a source of pain. The effectiveness of chondroprotectors is currently in doubt, but they can be used as auxiliary

drugs for supportive treatment.

Manual therapy can relieve muscle spasm and correct the position of the vertebra and intervertebral disc. Therapeutic gymnastics strengthens the muscular frame of the back, reduces muscle spasms, improves blood circulation in the spine and produces healthy movements. Massage relieves pain and muscle tension, increases blood circulation, increasing the speed of recovery. Acupuncture affects special active points, regulates blood circulation and the passage of nerve impulses in the spine, while removing the 'muscle block'.

How to prevent osteochondrosis?

Osteochondrosis cannot be completely cured but it can be prevented. To do this, you do not need much time and money: but simply need to develop the right motor stereotypes and lead a healthy lifestyle.

These recommendations are pertinent to healthy people and for patients with osteochondrosis who want to avoid exacerbation of the disease and the development of complications.

Reducing the load on the spine is the most important task. Sitting and walking should only be done with a straight back — stooping is not only

squat down a little, take the load, then straighten your legs. Do not carry anything heavy in one hand or on one shoulder: distribute the load in two bags — to avoid injury. Do not make sudden movements in the spine or jump from a great height. Try to change your body position during the day. If you sit or stand all day, you need to periodically walk about and do a little warm-up. When using the computer, place the screen at eye level so you don't have to tilt your head. Sleep on a semi-firm mattress. If there is a need to lift and carry heavy loads (for example, moving furniture), use a special corset that will give your back extra strength.

If you already suffer from osteochondrosis, remember that even 10kg in your hands create a critical load. Do exercises that strengthen the back muscles. Give up bad habits and eat healthy food. Never slouch and keep your head held high!

ugly but also harmful to the health of the intervertebral discs and blood circulation in the spine. When lifting weights, try to bend as little as possible. To lift something heavy from the floor,



INSIDE

The Minsk Times Thursday July 11 2019

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Change of power in the European Union

Successors of Juncker, Tusk and Draghi selected after a three-day squabble

The EU was able to settle the disagreements that threatened to paralyse power in the largest economic and political union of the planet. After three days of fierce disputes, the leaders of 28 EU countries distributed key posts in the leadership of the bloc.

In autumn, Luxembourg's Jean-Claude Juncker will give

up the seat of the Head of the European Commission to German Ursula von der Leyen, 60, a long-time loyal confidante of Chancellor Angela Merkel and Germany's first female Defence Minister.

The post of Chairman of the European Central Bank will shift to the second largest country of the bloc — France. Italian Mario Draghi will hand it over to the Head of the International Monetary Fund, Chris-

tine Lagarde, 63. Meanwhile, Pole Donald Tusk as the Head of the European Council will be replaced by the Belgian Prime Minister, Charles Michel, 43, while the Spanish Foreign Minister, Josep Borrell, 72, will be in charge of the EU's foreign policy instead of Italian Federica Mogherini.

The EU is experiencing a five-year rotation of bosses after the European Parliament elections in May, in which the

centrists lost a confident majority, reviving the boring European policy and shifting the balance of power from conservatives to liberals.

The election of successors exposed several splits in the EU at once and called into question the unity and efficiency of the bloc, which was already going through difficult times in the light of Brexit, the rise of nationalism and sluggish economic growth.

Boeing gives \$100m to help 737 Max crash families

Boeing is giving \$100m to help families affected by the two crashes of the company's 737 Max planes in Indonesia and Ethiopia

The payment, stretching over several years, is independent of lawsuits filed in the wake of the disasters, which together killed 346 people.

Lawyers for victims' families dismissed the move.

The loss of Ethiopian Airlines' flight ET302 in March was the second fatal accident involving a 737 Max in the space of five months.

A near identical aircraft, owned by the Indonesian carrier Lion Air, went down in the sea off Jakarta in October 2018.

Crash investigators have focused on the aircraft's control system and Boeing has been working with regulators to roll out a software upgrade.

The top-selling 737 Max has been grounded worldwide since March, with no date when the aircraft might be cleared to fly again.

Boeing said in a statement that the 'funds will support education, hardship and living expenses for impacted families, community programmes, and economic development in impacted communities. Boeing will partner with local governments and non-profit organisations to address these needs. This initial investment will be made over multiple years'.

Volcano erupts on Italian island of Stromboli, killing one person



A volcano on the Italian island of Stromboli erupted recently, releasing hot trapped magma in a powerful explosion, killing one person and enveloping the popular tourist destination in ash, witnesses and local officials said

The one fatality, believed to be a tourist, was killed by falling stones during a hike, a rescue service official said. A second person was injured.

The unexpected eruption

started fires on the western side of the small Mediterranean island, which lies north of Sicily, off the toe of Italy. Fire crews were being called in from nearby locations and a Canadair plane was already in action.

"We saw the explosion from the hotel. There was a loud roar," said Michela Favorito, who works in a hotel near Fico Grande, on the east side of the island. "We plugged our ears and after this a cloud of ash swept over us. The whole sky is full

of ash, a fairly large cloud," she added.

Fiona Carter, a British tourist on the island of Panarea, some 17 miles from Stromboli, heard the blast. "We turned around to see a mushroom cloud coming from Stromboli. Everyone was in shock. Then red hot lava started running down the mountain towards the little village of Ginostra," she noted. "The cloud got bigger, white and gray. It enveloped Ginostra and now the cloud has covered Stromboli entirely. Several boats set off for Stromboli," she added.

Stefano Branca, an expert with the National Institute of Geophysics and Vulcanology (INGV), said there had been a 'paroxysmal eruption' on the island, when high-pressure magma explodes from a shallow, underground reservoir. "These are events of great intensity and quite rare," he said.

Tourists often climb to the 3,000-foot summit of the volcano and peer into its crater, with small puffs of molten rock regularly blasted into the sky.



Nestlé reveals unique bio-degradable snack packaging

Nestlé has unveiled recyclable, bio-degradable paper wrapping on its Yes! snack bars — in a move it claims is a world first

The announcement came as a major step forward in its drive to make all its packaging reusable or recyclable by 2025. Nestlé's CEO for the UK and Ireland, Stefano Agostini, said the move 'represents exactly what more and more people are demanding from manufacturers like Nestlé now and for the future'.

Its 'flow wrap cold seal' paper wrapping system uses the same technology which was previously only suitable for plastics and laminates. The paper itself comes from sustainable sources, certified by the Forest Stewardship Council (FSC).

UK based experts, working

at Nestlé's confectionery R&D centre in York, have coated the paper in a polymer to ensure it remains intact on shelf. But it would bio-degrade within six months if it ended up in the sea.

However, activism group Greenpeace, which has been highly critical of Nestlé's record on plastic use, said the change didn't go far enough.

The Yes! bars featuring the paper packaging make up a small part of Nestlé's product portfolio, which also contains KitKat, Aero, Milkybar, Nescafe, Nespresso and a host of water brands including Vittel, Pure Life and Perrier — all of which have come under fire for the amount of plastic waste they produce.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Always open to friends

Guests are always welcome in Belarus. The rapidly developing hospitality industry and the expansion of visa-free entry are the best evidence of this. It was only five years ago, that tourists from dozens of countries wishing to come to Belarus had to pay a not inconsiderable sum, even for a short-term visa, which took time to be issued.

By Alexander Nesterov

1:0 in favour of the tourists

The first truly large-scale benefit for foreign visitors crossing our border was taken in 2014, when the World Ice Hockey Championship was held in Minsk. Visa-free entry to Belarus was given to the official participants of the event with accreditation, and to tourists who could produce an original or electronic ticket for the event. President Aleksandr Lukashenko explained the reasons for the decision, “This is the moment when we will show our country to the whole world. People will come not only to see how their favourite teams play but they’ll ask themselves: ‘What kind of a country is this?’ We must show the world that we are indeed a central European civilised state — so that people leaving say: ‘This is a completely normal country and a European city, with none of the negatives we may have read about in the media’.”

The tournament was a success and the attendance reached 643,435, which placed the event in third place in the history of world championships. That was greatly owing to the visa-free regime!

In a Westerly direction

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park was another breakthrough for visa-free travel. It’s common knowledge that the famous transborder UNESCO World Heritage site is divided in two by the Belarusian-Polish border. Of the 150,000 tourists who annually visit the Polish part of the forest, many

are keen to visit the Belarusian region. The Bialowieza-Pererov checkpoint was chosen as a visa-free crossing site, where foreign visitors were given the right to stay in the National Park for up to 3 days.

Later, Brest recreational zone, including the regional centre, as well as the Kamenets, Zhabinka and Pruzhany districts in the Brest Region and the Grodno Region’s Svisloch District — became visa-free. At present, on entering as a tourist through certain checkpoints, guests can stay here for up to 10 days. Similarly, measures were developed in the Grodno Region, where the areas of Grodno and the Avgustovsky Canal Tourist-Recreational Park are now available to foreigners without a visa. Last year, over 92,000 people came to Grodno without visas and about 18,500 visited Brest.

“This year, we will prepare a draft decree on the unification of visa-free zones in the Brest and Grodno regions,” the Deputy Minister of Sports and Tourism — Mikhail Portnoy — has recently said. “The document is soon to be completed.”

From heaven to earth

Many people remember the exact date of the introduction of the ‘air visa-free’ regime: February 12th, 2017. The first passenger to cross the border at Minsk National Airport was a guest from Finland.

In line with Presidential Decree No. 8, as of January 9th, 2017, citizens of 80 countries received the right to ‘air visa-free’ movement for up to 5 days.



The number of tourists coming to Belarus through Minsk National Airport increased by almost 27 percent in 2018; since the visa-free period was extended to 30 days, this number has risen by 43 percent.

“This is a breakthrough step, it is a gesture of goodwill: the country is open,” Mr. Portnoy celebrated with journalists on meeting the first visa-free guests at the airport. “Clearly, in the first two or three months, we do not expect a huge increase in tourists, but a 15-20 percent rise is likely.”

His predictions have come true and, and at the same time, there has been a move for the extension of the visa-free period. Belarusian health resorts are now ready to receive guests from abroad, but few come for just 3-4 days as the facilities are some distance from the National Airport and a full course of treatment takes no less than 12-14 days.

“We are in 160km from Minsk. If we count the day of arrival and the day of departure, there are only three days left for recuperation,” commented the Director of Priozerny sanatorium located on Lake Naroch, Alexey Shapetko. “If visa-free entry was permitted at all border checkpoints, then the situation would have been different: Vilnius is just 100km away from us and the Naroch area would see an influx of tourists.”

These ideas have not been ignored and, since July 2018, the visa-free regime

for foreigners arriving in our country and departing through Minsk National Airport has been extended to 30 days (Brest and Grodno are still an exception: in these regions, the visa-free regime lasts for 10 days). As a result, in 2017-2018, the Belarusian capital was visited by about 197,000 tourists through Minsk airport, in line with the visa-free regime. This year, the number is likely to be much greater. Firstly, the 2nd European Games have taken place and, secondly, the Belavia airline is making efforts to attract transit passengers and, since January 2018, offers flights with a free stopover in Minsk for 24-72 hours. In addition, information about the tourism potential of our country is available abroad through television commercials and other marketing activities. Moreover, changes in the order of visa-free entry to Belarus

are being worked on. One of the proposals is to allow foreigners visa-free visits through the airports of Brest and Grodno, as well as through Russia. Indeed, hospitality knows no bounds.



CHRONICLE OF VISA-FREE ENTRY

January 16th, 2012. President Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 28 ‘On Issues Holding 2014 Ice Hockey World Championship in Minsk’. From April 25th to May 31st, 2014, official participants of the hockey forum and foreign tourists enjoyed visa-free entry to Belarus.

July 12th, 2015. Visa-free entry for foreign tourists through the Bialowieza-Pererov border checkpoint was introduced, in the region of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha.

October 26th, 2016. A short-term visa-free entry for foreigners through certain checkpoints in the area of the Avgustovsky Canal and the city of Grodno became available to ensure ease of visiting the special Avgustovsky Canal Tourist-Recreational Park.

February 12th, 2017. A five-day visa-free regime for citizens of 80 countries came into force when entering through Minsk National Airport.

January 1st, 2018. A visa-free stay for tourist purposes was increased to 10 days for foreigners in certain areas of the Brest and Grodno regions.

July 27th, 2018. Presidential Decree No. 295 as of July 24th, 2018 came into force, according to which, citizens of 74 countries can enter and leave Belarus without a visa for up to 30 days, through the checkpoint at Minsk National Airport.





Beauty of nature gives strength and inspiration

Vladimir Tkachenko's personal painting exhibition, *From Sixty to Seventy*, takes place at the Republican Art Gallery, displaying dozens of works created by the author over the last decade

By Veniamin Mikheev

The limitations of the exhibition venue demanded strict selection of the last decade of this artist's creative output. Consequently, only just over fifty canvases were on show. These are mainly the series of landscape works connected with Polesie and the area around the Braslav District.

"For many years, I have admired the surroundings of the River Pripyat, as well as Polesie's open spaces and its oak woods," noted Vladimir Tkachenko. "I've also fallen in love with the Braslav lakes since I took part in the insti-

tute's plein-air workshops. Most of the landscapes presented at the exhibition have been drawn from nature."

The painter's creative credo is aspiration to stop the transient state of nature, to turn the surface of a canvas into a window and open up his feelings and emotions. Being a type of painting, a sketch is, probably, the most sincere, the most exact and the most faithful medium to reflect feelings. Vladimir Tkachenko's works are like an endless string of images — changeable like flowing water and spent like dried grass yet returning to childhood recollections again

and again. "It's not easy to both observe and preserve a moment," says Mr. Tkachenko. "It's important to be able to keep a precious image for oneself, for those close to you and for everyone who would like to see, feel and empathise with a painter while opening a window onto the world with him. Everything we know about things in nature brings omnipresent light for us, leaving a sensual impression about a short-lived moment, which has already passed."

Vladimir Tkachenko's language of painting relies on diverse and vibrant colours, while his only law is harmony.

"Painting is a mystery of creation, as a painter emulates the Creator in their aspiration towards perfection while transforming an idea into a likeness of finished reality," muses the author of the current exhibition in Minsk. "Then the surface of a canvas turns into forests and fields while the paint mysteriously turns into light. Painting is eternal, like stones, yet fragile. Skin-deep impressions flow together into a single image, connecting the richness of nature and the movement of life felt in the captured moment. It seems that a dew drop might quiver any minute, shining in a fading rainbow..."

From Sixty to Seventy exposition is a summary of the works of a particular period and the painter's view of himself. Furthermore, it also sets creative tasks for the future. "A meditative state of mind, the search for colour and beauty of nature gives me strength and inspiration. I'm excited about the joys and troubles, the drama and quiet peace of our native landscapes which I later capture on my canvases. I'm grateful for the opportunity to be engaged in painting and to find joy in this art and then to share my joy with the audience," said the artist.



THE MT REFERENCE:

Vladimir Tkachenko graduated from the Belarusian Theatre and Art Institute and was taught by People's Artist of Belarus, Anatoly Baranovsky. Since 1976, he has constantly taken part in artistic exhibitions. He is a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists and works in monumental painting in the genres of landscape, still-life and portraits. He has headed the pictorial art studio at the Minsk Tractor Works' House of Culture for more than forty years. Hundreds of his pupils have become professional painters and the artist's works are held at the National Art Museum of Belarus and the collections of the Belarusian Union of Artists, as well as in private collections in Russia, Germany and Japan.

Creative Person is not merely an exhibition

By Alexander Pimenov

National Art Museum of Belarus was the first to begin work on such an important social issue as inclusion — the involvement of people with various physical capabilities into the museum space

Four years ago, the National Art Museum hosted the first inclusive project aimed at assisting people with disabilities via the means of art. During the last three years, inclusive programmes have become an annual event at the museum. As part of each project, an additional, more significant, inclusive event was held — artistic exhibitions by the so-called painting 'outsiders'.

In 2016, the *Drawings of*

the Soul exhibition showcased around forty pieces, created by patients of Minsk's Psychoneurologic Dispensary #2. A year later, an exhibition of works by the artists who live in Psychoneurologic Residential Care Facility #4 in Minsk took place, comprising more than twenty works.

These inclusive projects prove that people with psychic and physical disorders use art to reflect their world outlook in a very talented way.

Recently, during the *Creative Person* exhibition, those visiting again had the unique opportunity to experience the creative activity of painters who live at Psychoneurological Residential Care Facility #2. Of course, these people can't be called professional artists, but they are certainly cre-

ators in their souls. Their pieces seem naïve and sometimes strange yet, at the same time, are extremely interesting.

Some of them have lived a fully life, had jobs, families and children but as a result of trauma, genetic malfunction or infection, found themselves closed within the limits of their diseases. Others didn't even complete their basic schooling and can't read and write. Alongside major disease, two of them suffer from deafness, while one person has no speech. A further example would be the talented and courageous painter, Vladimir Martynov (who passed away two years ago), who was paralysed and had to use a wheelchair. He made strokes with a brush along the canvas and his hand constantly fell away due to his disa-

bility. Nonetheless, as a result of his painful work, light and shiny landscapes appeared.

We are used to admiring pictures by outstanding professional painters, often forgetting that close to us there are people who, despite their incurable diseases, try to create, to be important and interesting to society. Their works are worth attention simply because each of them originated from a special person who struggles in life for the right to deserve the title of a creative person who is worthy of more than just compassion.

Furthermore, in 2006, at Minsk's Psychoneurologic Residential Care Facility for Elderly and Disabled People #2, the *Outsider Art* programme was held — the first in Belarus — inspired by the painter, writer and



curator of more than eighty creative projects, Fiodor Yastreb. The exhibitions of works by the care facility's patients were held at the National Centre of Contemporary Arts of Belarus, the National Library, Gavriil Vashchenko Picture Gallery in Gomel and Grodno State University, as well as other cities around the country, as well as abroad: in Russia, Holland and Poland.

Fast water in Kazan

Belarusian Anastasia Shkur dai wins bronze in women's 200m backstroke at the LEN European Junior Swimming Championships

Arina Novikova

One of the leaders of Belarus' national team stopped the clock at 2:11.84. Gold went to Italy's Erika Francesca Gaetani (2:10.28) while Honey Osrin from the UK clinched silver with 2:10.30.

In Kazan, Belarusian Arseny Borzhakov renewed Belarus' national junior record in

the 50m butterfly twice (in the semi-final and final) at the LEN European Junior Swimming Championships. As a result, the country's new record now stands at 23.88 seconds. The result placed the Belarusian seventh in the final protocol in Kazan. The previous record was set by Pavel Sankovich in 2008.

At the LEN European Junior Swimming Championships



Anastasia Shkur dai

in Kazan, Belarus was represented by nine athletes. After the championships, Anastasia Shkur dai will go on to the FINA World Championships in Korean Gwangju.

Meanwhile, Anastasia Shkur dai has also won a second gold medal at the LEN Europe-

an Junior Swimming Championships, held in Kazan. On the last day of the competitions, Anastasia covered the 50m butterfly distance in 26.23 seconds, followed by the record holder (set in the semi-final at 26.21 seconds) Naele Portecop of France, who, in the final

race, lost to the Belarusian by 0.06 of a second. Bronze went to the Italian athlete, Costanza Conconcelli, who posted 27.03 seconds.

Anastasia had previously also claimed 100m butterfly gold and 200m backstroke bronze at the championships.



Gaining good experience

Svetlana Yevgenieva

Belarusian baseball players victoriously finish their performance at European Championship (Division 2) in Slovakian Bratislava

In the match against Poland, the Belarusians were much stronger and confidently won with the score of 12:2, taking 5th final place in Group 1.

At the preliminary stage, Alexander Sechko's trainees defeated the Romanian team with a minimum advantage — 1:0 — and the Lithuanians with a score of 4:3. At the start, they lost to the Slovaks — 1:10. Later, in the play-off tournament for 5th-8th places, they defeated the Finnish baseball players — 14:4.

In the main tournament final, the Lithuanian team beat the Ukrainians — 7:5.

A similar tournament in Group 2 was held in Bulgarian Blagoevgrad. It was won by the Israelis, who defeated Russia with the score of 5:3 in the final.

In late July, the Lithuanian and Israeli teams will play a qualifier for the final stage of the elite division of the 2019 European Championship, which will be held in Germany in September.

Third year in North America

Belarusian defenceman Sergey Sapego signs contract with the Toronto Marlies — a feeder club of the Toronto Maple Leafs — playing in the American Ice Hockey League (AHL)



Sergey Sapego

Olga Korneeva

The Marlies are traditionally strong in their league. A year ago, the squad won the AHL's major trophy, the Calder Cup, while this season the team dropped out of the race during the finals of the conference. Last season, twelve hockey players of the feeder club were involved in the NHL.

According to the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, this year will be the third in North America for the pupil of the Vitebsk school. In 2017, Sergey Sapego was picked in the CHL Import Draft in the second round overall 96th, by the Tri-City Americans. In October 2017, the defenceman went on waivers and was claimed by the Prince Albert

Raiders, where the Belarusian player spent two seasons. Overall, in the WHL, Sapego has played 132 matches, scoring 78 (17+61) points with 64 penalty minutes and an indicator of utility '+63'.

Last season, the Prince Albert Raiders, with the direct participation of Sergey Sapego, became champions of the Western Hockey League. As well as his efficient hockey play, the defenceman demonstrated great reliance, finishing the play-offs in second place in the indicator of utility among all the participants of the tournament: '+17'.

In December, Sergey defended the colours of the Belarusian junior team at the World Championships in IA Division, scoring two goals across five matches.



General test before Dakar

MAZ-SPORTavto team wins first stage of Silk Way rally which passes through Russia, Mongolia and China

Natalia Yemelianova

The first stage was held on the Irkutsk — Baikalsk route. Among the front-wheel drive racing trucks, the best time was shown by the Belarusian MAZ-SPORTavto team led by captain Sergey Vyazovich. "Of course, it's a great distance but here, in the forest, it's very slippery: driving mainly relies on technique. It's extremely dangerous; we've met many buggies and SUVs with ripped off wheels and suspensions. The clay areas, especially on descents, were unrealistically slippery," Mr. Vyazovich said. "We tried to keep a high pace. In general, everything went well, and we enjoyed it."

On that stage, second place went to the driver of the KAMAZ-master team — Anton Shibalov; he lost 56 seconds to Sergey Vyazovich. Third place was taken by Belarusian Alexey Vishnevsky, who was two minutes behind the team leader on the track.

Alexander Vasilevsky's MAZ finished ninth, with a gap of almost 5 minutes.

The second stage will take place on the 409km Baikalsk — Ulan-Ude route. The MAZ-SPORTavto team went to the international Silk Way rally in late June. Before the start, the MAZ sports trucks participated in road shows in Russian cities.

The rally itself started in Irkutsk and the participants will finish in Chinese Dunhuang. The racers will drive along high-speed sections in Eastern Siberia, the Mongolian steppes, the Chinese plains and sand sections with dunes in the Gobi Desert. The route exceeds 5,000km, half of which include special stages.

Belarus is competing with three crews. The race will be a general test for Belarus before the Dakar rally: the crews' skills are expected to be improved and equipment is to be tested — as well as gaining much experience.

Catwalk of the week



An unusual fashion show — held at Minsk's largest landfill — attracts attention to the plastic waste problem

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 20th July. *We Were Bringing This Day Closer as Much as Possible*
Until 11th August. *Fantasy Land*

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

11 Sovetskaya Street
Until 2nd August. *Killed Strongmen of Belarusian Land*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 4th August. *Sport is High Art*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

47 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 1st September. *Kazimir Malevich and 21st Century*

MINSK CITY HALL

2A Svobody Square
Until 14th July. *Olympic Collection of Vladimir Potanin*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 31st July. *Sport in Writer's Life*

HIGH PLACE

2A Gertsen Street
Until 14th July. *Paper Dreams*

VILNIUS GALLERY

55 Kalinovsky Street
Until 10th August. *Yakub Kolas and Vilno*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 31st August. *Amy Winehouse: A Family Portrait*
Until 15th September. *European Martial Arts. From Volcano's Smithy to Mars' Arts*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 K. Marx Street
Until 1st September. *Dangerous Beauty*

TROITSKY SUBURBS

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 2nd August. *Live Singing Birds*

DREAMLAND

80 Orlovskaya Street
Until 15th September. *Festival of Sand Sculptures*

LOSHITSA ESTATE

8 Chizhevsky Lane
Until 27th October. *Belarusian Diamond in Crown of Palladium Orthodox Icons*

THEATRES

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
11.07. Bridal Shower
13.07. Husband Leaving Wife
16.07. Oscar and Pink Lady
17.07. Lady for a Day
18.07. Twelfth Night

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
11.07. Who Laughs Last
12.07. Unnamed Star
13.07. Even a Wise Man Stumbles
14.07. The Same Place Next Year
15.07. Wolves and Sheep
16.07. Abduction of Yelena
17.07. Night of Anton Chekhov's Miniatures
18.07. Midnight Robbery

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
11.07. Serezha
14.07. Everything is Fine

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
11.07. Playing Happy Family
15.07. The Fool
16.07. Love Until Loss of Memory

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
11.07. About Theatre with Smile

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
11.07. Tolerance
12.07. Prudok Homeland / Black Lady of Nesvzh
14.07. Kupala Night Dream
15.07. Elza's Land / Pinsk Gentry
16.07. Paulinka
17.07. School of Taxpayers
18.07. People on Marshes

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
11.07. Giselle
12.07. Mister X
14.07. Ball in Savoy
16.07. Hello, I'm Charlie's Aunt
17.07. Jane Eire
18.07. Cherry Orchid

CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street
11.07. Night at Hotel
16.07. Clinic
17.07. Veronica Decides to Die
18.07. Featherhead

TERRITORY OF MUSICAL

25 Nezavisimosti Avenue
15.07. World Hits: from 1970s to 2000s
16.07. Close to Normal

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
12.07. Serena and Victoria