

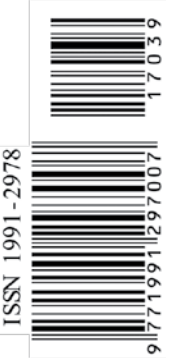
New starting point to strengthen movement



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INTERNATIONAL

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She managed to achieve what she was aiming for

Alexandra Chichikova of Belarus becomes *Miss Wheelchair World-2017*

The finals of the pageant took place in Warsaw, featuring 24 entrants. A month ago, 23-year-old Alexandra admitted to never having previously taken part in a beauty pageant. Before misfortune struck during

her first year of institute, she'd enjoyed ballroom dancing. Today, she successfully combines work at a call centre with her desire to be a psychologist, continuing her studies. Alexandra is active in public life and

is involved in amateur dramatics. Her friends advised her to create a portfolio to participate in the event. Another representative of Belarus, Angelina Waleskaya, also became a finalist in *Miss Wheelchair World-2017*.

Road improvement in focus

By Alexey Zhemchuzhnikov

Belarus seriously developing transport connections in readiness for 2019 European Games, with two more passenger aircraft being purchased next year, while journey between Minsk and Vilnius enhanced using electric trains

The Government hopes

to receive EU funding to help realise its trans-boundary projects, notes Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Kalinin. He confirms that negotiations are currently underway with Brussels, telling us, "Trans-boundary collaboration is gaining momentum. We've launched electrification to Vilnius, and are constructing the M-6 highway to reach Poland. We're also

implementing a joint project with Ukraine and Poland for water transport along the E-40. Decisions relating to the latter have been adopted at the level of heads of state and we need to implement these as soon as possible."

He explains that the country is working to expand its geography of aviation, reducing the cost of tickets and enhancing the comfort for passengers.

"Next year, we plan to acquire two modern aircraft and, in time for the 2nd European Games, in 2019, should have a stable transport connection between Minsk and Vilnius, using electric trains."

The Ministry of Transport and Communications plans to finish construction of several large infrastructure projects in readiness for the European Games. In



particular, the Minister for Transport and Communications, Anatoly Sivak, tells us that, by the launch of the Games, the reconstruction of the M-6 (Minsk-Grodno) and P-23 (Minsk-Mikashевичi) motorways should be complete, alongside the construction of the second take-off runway at Minsk-2 National Airport.

Transport workers are preparing for another international tournament: the 2021 IIHF World Championships, being held in Minsk and Riga. According to Mr. Sivak, funds are being invested into road infrastructure near Polotsk, to ensure that main roads rival those of the most modern parameters.

Obviously, great start for Chinese tourists

Not a single popular tourist destination could now be imagined without Chinese tourists. Last year, the number of tourists from China exceeded 135 million and the figure is growing annually. They generously spend money on excursions, souvenirs and other items (in 2016 alone, they spent \$261bn in foreign trips). With this in mind, the tourist industry in any corner of the world — from St. Petersburg to Rio de Janeiro — is happy to welcome them. Belarus is no exception.



Tourists from Heavenly Empire at Nesvizh Castle



During excursion in Minsk



Photos made with telephone

By Olga Pasiyak

2018 is to become the Year of Tourism in Belarusian-Chinese relations. It's relatively recently that the first commercial tour groups from China came to the Republic. The youngest of them was a woman aged 60 and the oldest was an 80-year-old man; they bought a six-day tour to get to know our country. During their stay, the Chinese visited Mir and Nesvizh castles, Dudutki, Brest and the Be-

lovezhskaya Pushcha. Their experience of Minsk began with a tour around the city and our MT reporters were happy to join.

The first words which our foreign guests learnt were 'thank you', 'very good' and 'beautiful girl' and they tried to use them almost every time — accompanying them with a smile. The Belarusian capital appeared far different from what they had thought it would be: they were impressed with the architec-

ture and the many parks. Moreover, they say Belarusians are friendly and have great cuisine.

A representative of the Chinese Tourism Group Corporation — Liu Yang — was among the visitors. He was delighted with the capital and took endless photos of Nezavisimosti Avenue (where the city excursion began). "At present, Chinese people in the middle and high age group are expressing a particular interest in Belarus and Russia.

They have even introduced a 'red tourism' idea: travelling through the post-Soviet countries. Moscow and Russia are better known to our countrymen, he says, while your country seems more mystical — which makes it even more attractive. Interest in health tourism is now also growing — including in Belarus and neighbouring countries."

Chinese tourists of any age are take pictures of everything they see — such as the Red Roman Catholic

Church, a monument to Lenin, university buildings, their own guide and even journalists... "Why do you need so many shots?" the reporters asked one of the tourists. Lina explained, "I have many friends. None of them has ever visited Belarus. They would like to receive a detailed photo report. They'll see the pictures and all the local beauty and will surely come here themselves." No doubt, if they do they won't regret it.

Welcome to Belarus

By Alexey Fedosov

Visa-free regime could be increased to ten days throughout Belarus

The opportunity of spreading the visa-free regime for the 2019 European Games in Minsk is being discussed. This would allow entry through the national airport and other border checkpoints. The Sports and Tourism Ministry are working on the issues involved and by the beginning of the sporting event, it is expected that the measure will be in place. The Deputy Minister for Sports and Tourism, Mikhail Portnoy, notes, "For the IIHF World Championships, people didn't only arrive through the airports. Visa-free entrance increased by 90 percent. We're not satisfied with five days; especially as far as medical and sport tourism is concerned. When the security system has been trialled, we're planning to increase the number of days to ten."

The proposal by the Sports and Tourism Ministry was supported by the Interior Ministry and the Economy Ministry, as the economic feasibility of such a measure is not in doubt. "Over the first six months of 2017, 52,000 tourists used the visa-free regime. Belarus was most often visited by Germans (around 8,000), Poles (more than 6,000) and Spaniards (around 3,000). They bring foreign currency into the country and the export of tourist services has increased by 20 percent, exceeding \$80m," added Mr. Portnoy. An increase in tourists to Belarus means more foreign currency in the budget, a trend to be encouraged. Work on the country's brand will help promote the opportunities Belarus has to offer visitors. Mr. Portnoy promised that, by the end of the year, several variants of Belarus' brands will be submitted for consideration to the public.

New starting point to strengthen movement

President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, arrived in Minsk on an official visit

By Vasily Kharitonov

Belarus and Venezuela plan to build co-operation over coming years, Alexander Lukashenko has told journalists, having spent time with President of Venezuela Nicolas Maduro.

“Unfortunately, current export-import ties between Belarus and Venezuela are not at the high level they once were, for various reasons beyond the control of Venezuela or Belarus. However, the potential of our two countries should allow us to considerably expand our relations, including in economy and trade. You know my character and the character of Nicolas Maduro. The first results will be seen within two years, and, within five, we’ll try to solve existing problems,” emphasises the President of Belarus.

Mr. Lukashenko paid special attention to the necessity of developing co-operation in educational and sci-tech spheres, saying, “We can build factories, promoting various sectors of the economy. However, if Venezuela lacks qualified specialists, who will work at these facilities? There will be no success. In developing the real production sector in Venezuela, we need to step up efforts to train specialists,” notes the Belarusian Head of State.

During the negotiations, the two sides also discussed a number of promising joint projects to secure Belarus’ participation in the development of construction, agriculture, machine building, the oil and gas industry and other sectors of the Venezuelan economy.

The President notes that Nicolas Maduro is keen to see collaboration between Belarus and Venezuela. “He understands the processes and problems which, of course, exist in the relations of any states. These aren’t problems which may impede our co-operation or development,” the Belarusian leader is convinced.

In November, Belarus and Venezuela will hold a session of a joint commission, to work out a roadmap of joint activities. “We’ll



Nicolas Maduro and Alexander Lukashenko see good prospects

find our place in this new development of Venezuela’s industry and will be able to play a significant role in helping Venezuela overcome current difficulties,” notes Mr. Lukashenko.

The Head of State added that every country has difficulties, but that a government’s commitment can help find solutions. Nicolas Maduro has the necessary character, he underlined. “We’ll stand together with you on this. I’m convinced that Belarusian-Venezuelan relations have great prospects. Together, we’ll solve problems, knowing how to do it and in what direction to move,” asserted the President of Belarus.

The President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, hopes to restart Belarusian-Venezuela agreements across various spheres, as he noted during an expanded-participation meeting with President Lukashenko. The Venezuelan leader stressed that he and his delegation feel at home in Belarus, as if visiting old friends. “We embarked on this path together with our Comandante Hugo Chávez. He called it a path to a new world, a path for those who want peace and co-operation, and where the values of a civilised world dominate,” he noted.

The Venezuelan leader admitted that his country has been through a difficult period but that the nation is ready for recovery and economic growth. “The key moment has come for us to launch our projects and efforts, includ-



Diplomatic relations between Belarus and Venezuela were established in 1997. Our countries have exchanged many top-level visits and have signed twenty-one inter-state and inter-governmental treaties and eleven international treaties of inter-departmental character, within a framework of bilateral collaboration.

ing in the spheres of politics and diplomacy, economics, and industry: especially the petroleum industry. We need to renew our power engineering agreements in the spheres of industry and agriculture. This visit should add impetus to a new stage, developing the private sector in Belarus and Venezuela.”

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, asserted that Venezuela is under strong pressure from abroad. “It has even come to explicit threats of

Several years ago, four joint enterprises opened in Venezuela, to assemble MAZ cargo machinery, BELARUS tractors, Belarusian road machinery and ceramic blocks. The latter is the largest factory in Latin America in its sphere of production. Since 2007, Belzarubezhstroy JSC has been taking part in housing construction in Venezuela.

military interference in this sovereign country. I want to reiterate that we’re totally against all forms of aggression, chaos and disarray. We’re against interference in the internal affairs of Venezuela, or any other state,” Mr. Lukashenko underlined.

The President stresses that Venezuela has previously offered a helping hand to Belarus in the energy sector. “We remember this well. Let’s now think how we can solve problems Venezuela is facing,” suggests Mr. Lukashenko.

“We can address them within the next five years. Venezuela is going through difficult times but we’ve had worse. We also had a shortage of food products, after the Soviet Union collapsed, and set a goal to provide our people with food, even launching food exports within 8-10 years. We achieved this. Venezuela, with its cast-iron will and discipline, will need five years to solve this matter.” The Belarusian leader is convinced that no obstacle is too great to overcome.

President Lukashenko is ready to visit Venezuela in order to give an impulse to the advancement of bilateral co-operation. The Belarusian Head of State made the statement during expanded-participation negotiations with Venezuela President Nicolas Maduro.

“Three Belarusian-Venezuelan commissions have already been established. They have not convened to resolve problems for several years. I and the President have agreed that a Belarusian-Venezuelan commission will convene in Minsk in November. I will get involved in the resolution of these problems. In November we will sketch out a concrete action plan to resolve the problems in our relations. I am ready to fly to Venezuela. I and the President will once again discuss this plan and approve it,” notes Mr. Lukashenko. The Belarusian Head of State underlined that the development of this plan should in no way stop work in other areas.”

The visit by the President of Venezuela, Nicolas Maduro, to Belarus is significant for this South American country, asserts the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Venezuela to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Jose Joaquin Boggiano Pericchi. Speaking to journalists, he stressed, “This visit is important to us, as we hope it will confirm mutual support and that Belarus and Venezuela will move together, along a shared path, to build a better world.” He views relations between our two states as being of strategic importance, especially at a political level. He noted that Belarus is helping promote the development of Venezuela, especially regarding industry and construction.

Nicolas Maduro’s visit also envisaged participation in the unveiling of a monument to the national hero of Venezuela, Simón Bolívar, in Minsk. “It’s a symbolic event, testifying to the huge sympathy of the Belarusian nation towards this figure. For us, it’s very important,” noted Mr. Boggiano Pericchi.

Big steps for small businesses

Opening a business is becoming easier as the result of a long process of reform. Following the President's order, a package of documents for business liberalisation is about to be implemented. A decree was signed extending the list of activities that can be practiced without registering individual entrepreneur status. Among others, these include web site development, interior design, dressmaking and hairdressing services; only a single fixed tax will now be paid to run these companies. This is only one step on the long road to change. The main goal of the innovative measures is to lift unnecessary barriers and promote business initiative. What is needed to achieve this?

Climate for growth

In recent years, the state has made serious efforts to liberalise the business climate and Belarus' position in the *Doing Business* international ranking is improving. Most importantly, the number of small and medium-sized enterprises and their contribution to the economy are growing: at present, they generate around 20 percent of GDP (against 60 percent in the European Union).

In Belarus, entrepreneurship development has previously been hindered by many barriers and few supportive measures. Cultural barriers are also a serious obstacle. For many years, it's been considered that money making is somehow indecent. At present, the state needs to combat such stereotypes — showing positive examples of business management. Problems are also created by bureaucratic constraints. The legislative system has some conflicting requirements; these vary periodically and it's a challenge for owners of a small company without its own lawyers to follow them. On starting a business, nobody knows whether they'll earn money or lose it. Regulatory difficulties intensify the natural risks and make people sometimes too cautious.

Much work is currently being done to improve tax legislation and the practice of its application. However, entrepreneurs often complain about excessive control on the part of the sanitary-epidemiological and fire safety services. An important issue is that inspectors seem to be aiming to collect as many fines as possible, rather than helping businesses comply with legislation. Most regulatory authorities do not consider it neces-



sary to advise businessmen. The experience of neighbouring countries demonstrates that companies need support even if no serious barriers are in place. In Russia, for example, many programmes are being realised along the two avenues of informing (envisaging the opening of consulting centres) and microfinance development (realised through banks and special funds). Microfinance is now developing in Belarus but its scale is still insufficient.

In Poland, entrepreneurs enjoy infrastructure support through business hubs. Companies there are provided with offices with good communication networks at low rent; this is convenient for the start of a production enterprise. These business start-up centres also provide consulting services. For example, a small company of 10-15 people cannot afford to hire a full-time marketing manager or lawyer; meanwhile, the centre offers the opportunity to use their advice as and when it is needed. If we manage to remove barriers to business devel-

opment and realise measures for its support, then economic growth and an improvement in the employment sphere will be seen in the coming years.

By Katerina Bornukova,
an expert at the Belarusian
Economic Research and Outreach
Centre (BEROC)

Road map

Before you reach any measurable results, you must create and implement certain priorities, plans and road maps. This idea is topical for individuals, companies and whole nations. At present, our country is mostly focused on short-term planning.

People at many different levels now understand that the development of small and medium-sized businesses is promising for the country. If this is a priority for Belarus, then we should promptly adopt a package of documents for the accelerated development of this sector of

the economy, while allocating certain resources for its support.

The market can sometimes adapt to conditions independently, but this trend most often negatively affects the development of certain industries and even countries. It is obvious that every field of activity has its own balance of interests. Nothing good will come of it if the whole country is engaged in growing potatoes. With this in mind, it's unacceptable that all citizens rely on programming and high technologies, as a new issue will soon arise: who will treat, teach, feed and dress us.

This year, much work is being done to liberalise businesses but more serious steps are needed. Otherwise, we'll miss a good opportunity for a qualitative breakthrough. Therefore, representatives of the business community plan to address the Government with an initiative: to sign a letter of intent (memorandum) on joint actions that would contribute to the accelerated development of entrepreneurship in the country. It will

envisage all the basic issues of strategic partnership between the state and businesses.

The high risks of doing business are another issue for consideration. In particular, the protection of property rights is not sufficient. Other pressure points are evident. It is therefore essential to ensure the basic conditions of work in the business sphere in the near future (according to experts' opinion, for a period of up to three years). In parallel, it's necessary to form and implement strategic regional and branch plans for the development of business activity. Of course, businesses must also be ready for responsibility. On condition of such an approach, our country has the potential for the rapid growth of small and medium-sized entrepreneurship by 2020 — which will contribute to the full disclosure of the creative potential of our economy.

By Victor Margelov,
a Co-chairman of the Republican
Confederation of Entrepreneurship

Digital key for tomorrow

By Maxim Osipov

By 2020, our country should have built a digital economy

The price is around \$1.35bn (\$280-300m of annual investments). The areas of medicine, taxation, education and the work of the customs services have been already digitised. The plans for the future include the modernisation of the information delivery system to state structures.

Many elements of the digital economy have already

entered our lives. We conduct electronic correspondence with the state authorities. Moreover, we book tickets, goods, products and taxis via the Internet, while also paying for utility bills. We take part in public discussions on the most important topics and finally can be involved in charity events.

By the end of the year, all district centres in the country will have LTE telecommunication. This is the standard of the fourth generation, enabling us to increase opportu-

nities for high-speed systems of mobile communication and reduce the cost of data transfer and the mobile Internet. LTE also expands opportunities for presenting multimedia services, for example, qualitative mobile television.

On July 1st, 2018, the Belarusian integrated service and payment system will become operational, enabling us to replace our domestic passport with an ID-card. This card will become a fully-fledged means of identification of citizens and, moreover, an access

key for a citizen to receive various types of electronic administrative services. Moreover, by the end of the next year, all multi-family houses will be connected to GPON technology. "This will give us the opportunity to fully satisfy all inquiries for services of telephony and digital television, as well as data transfer," summarised the Minister of Communications and Informatisation, Sergey Popkov.

Of course, communication lines acquire great importance, alongside their

Broadband connection worldwide

per 100 of the population ranking

Monaco	47.47	1
USA	31.53	22
Belarus	31.35	23
Lithuania	27.79	34
Latvia	25.09	42
Poland	19.47	54
Russia	18.77	55
Kazakhstan	13.05	72
Ukraine	11.81	77
Malaysia	8.95	88
India	1.34	132
Madagascar	0.07	174

network capacity. Today 70 percent of houses use a stationary broadband Internet access, with the average traffic speed increasing from 5.7 to 8.8 Mbit/s over the last year while the total capacity of the

exterior channel has increased more than 16-fold over five years. Within seven years, the number of subscribers to the mobile Internet has increased 7-fold and stands at 6.4 million users.

Continue trend of stability

When asked whether someone needs long-term plans, economists answer: if you do not know where you are going, then any road leads there. They love to add: past and present are our method, while future is our goal. An efficient society at all levels — from the family to the state — is able to determine its long-term prospects. It is therefore no surprise that, next year, the National Strategy for Sustainable Development (NSDS) to 2035 will be launched.

By Ulyana Bushuy

Recently, representatives of civil society and state agencies met at the Scientific-Research Economic Institute of the Economy Ministry as part of the first session of the public council for the monitoring and evaluation of sustainable development. This agency will work on the objectives and priorities which will form the basis of NSDS-2035. Opening the meeting, the Minister of the Economy — Vladimir Zinovsky — recalled that the authors of the existing strategy of sustainable development widely employed channels of public discussion. At present, civil society, businesses and science are dem-

onstrating major interest in the issue. The implementation of global objectives and purposes of the UN in the field of sustainable development is being launched; there are 17 points in total. To realise them, the country has established a national



Trend of sustainability can be easily projected at particular enterprise, e.g., at BelAZ

system of indicators. This large-scale work has been conducted by the Sustainable Development Council led by Marianna Shchetkina.

“Our goal is to continue the trend of stability,” Mr. Zinovsky noted, commenting on the NSDS-2035 ide-

ology, “State policy will continue to be focused on improving the well-being of each person, creating a comfortable environment for their lives and, of course, the economic ase. This involves new production and jobs, as well as decent salaries.”

As regards the public council’s work, it now faces three challenges. Firstly, it will assess existing strategies for sustainable development. This is done to allow for mistakes and gaps, to avoid distortions and use untapped potential. Secondly,

it will be necessary to develop national priorities and development goals by 2035, while determining relevant indicators for the country. Thirdly, actual development of NSDS-2035 will begin. As expected this will begin to take place next year.

OPINION

Pavel DANEYKO, CEO of IPM Business School, an economist:

Speaking of the business environment, when I hear that no reforms are being realised, I don’t understand how this can be the case. Look, for example at how we’ve progressed in the *Doing Business* ranking. At present, the environment for private business is quite attractive — although, of course, there are sectors where the climate is more severe. For example, in the insurance sector and medical services, high overregulation is still present. At the same time, I’m surprised to hear entrepreneurs complaining about state agencies. I wish to ask them: ‘Why do you want officials

to understand what should be done instead of you? Why don’t you unite in business communities and associations, instead of building up a dialogue with the state?’ Much has been done by the state to form the private business climate. It was 1990 when our officials were ‘closed’ and entrepreneurs had no chance of reaching them. The present situation is different: doors to officials are open but few enter them. We must settle many issues. To analyse the results of polls conducted among businessmen, we can see that 4 out of 5 of the most common barriers are associated with the

macroeconomic situation in the country. This means we need a more stable economy. It appears that issues of privatisation and restructuring of state-owned companies have an entirely different meaning. We must understand that to support inefficient enterprises much money is spent; this all hampers the development of private businesses. We have begun out of economic necessity to get rid of loss-making companies, but the process will take many years. We also proposed some time ago to use privatisation revenues for the formation of the national pension fund.

Programme of hospitality under development

By Olga Zhdanovich

Tourism comprises up to ten percent of world GDP. The UN General Assembly names tourism a tool for sustainable development and 2017 has been acknowledged the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development.

This year has become one of the most fruitful for Belarusian tourism. A visa-free regime has been introduced

for citizens of 80 countries: on coming to Belarus via the National Airport, foreign guests can spend five days in the country. In six months of the year, over 52 thousand travellers have taken advantage of this opportunity.

The Deputy Minister of Sports and Tourism — Mikhail Portnoy — informed us of plans to increase this period of visa-free stay. “We are pleased with the limitation of five days, but this is not enough for foreigners —

especially in cases of health and sports tourism. The introduction of the visa-free regime is a pilot project. We focused on issues of security which are very important in tourism, now, we’ve worked out the security and are now planning to increase the term to 10 days. We hope the decision will be made by the time the European Games begin,” he says.

Foreign tourists have been able to visit the area of the Avustovskaya Canal and



Tourists familiarising with Belarus

the city of Grodno without visas for a year and the list of places for such visa-free visits is expected to be increased in the future: part of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha

and other border areas are likely to be added. Brest also wants to be included.

An information campaign plays a major role in the promotion of tourist

services and — to ensure Belarus is recognised and foreigners want to visit the country — it’s necessary to develop national and regional branding.

Let's sew clothes together

Fashionable designers and small business: Economy Ministry knows how to double exports of clothes

By Polina Konoga

Haute couture for most buyers is like an expensive picture in a museum: it's possible to look at it but just a few can buy it. The goals which are to be brought to life soon by designers and state authorities include: to make fashion affordable, to dress the country's population in Belarusian brands and to increase the manufacture of fashionable clothes and make them cheaper. This year, specialists of the Economy Ministry have shown great interest in designer outfits and sewing businesses. Together with the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs, the Ministry has decided to support the event which is the major point in the country's fashion life — Belarus Fashion Week (BFW). They have pledged a programme of long-term co-operation.

Why was fashion chosen? The sewing trade and economic calculations are from different spheres but they are closely linked. Director of the Economy Ministry's Entrepreneurship Department, Piotr Arushanyants, cites the following figures: today, more than 1,800 small and medium-sized organisations trade in



Economy Ministry taking big interest in designer outfits and sewing business

the country, manufacturing clothing and items from leather and fur. Almost 67 percent of these are directly involved in sewing. "At present, small and medium enterprises in this segment offer the widest range of clothes to suit any taste and purse. These producers can provide the country's population with fashionable quality clothing, as well as exporting considerable amounts. Many companies export up to 80 percent of their produce. We expect that we'll be able to give new impetus to the development of this sector of the economy. Moreover, we also aim to 'give a push' to this business in the regions," noted Mr. Arushanyants.

The Entrepreneurship Department describes how clothing manufacturing is one of 23 types of activities for which optimum trading conditions will be created. After accepting a package of documents on the simplification of bureaucracy, entrepreneurs will only need to inform



the local executive authority at the start of their activity. Excessive requirements and inspections will be removed. Mr. Arushanyants has no doubt that the simplification of business conditions will enable a reduction in the cost of designer clothes and make them more affordable. The Economy Ministry has also

calculated the return from the sector according to an optimistic scenario: the production and export of clothes with the 'Made in Belarus' label is to be doubled in future.

Alongside these theoretical plans, officials have also actioned concrete measures. For example, master classes will be conducted for BFW

participants by international experts in the sphere of clothes production and round table discussions will take place tackling the development of the industry. Thanks to these networking sessions, organisers of the BFW will be able to bring together manufacturers of materials accessories, as well as large importers.

The Minsk show will be also attended by buyers from Russia, Kazakhstan, France, Italy, Germany and Canada. This is a chance for new and experienced designers to make a name for themselves on external markets. BFW organisers hope for a fruitful result from interaction with state authorities. Co-operation with the Foreign Ministry has helped abolish visas for all foreigners who arrive for Belarus Fashion Week. This rule was in force long before the introduction of the five-day visa-free regime and was a perfect compliment for guests. Collaboration with the Economy Ministry and the Belarusian Fund for Financial Support to Entrepreneurs will also bring benefits: for example, designers will be able to receive business loans at affordable rates.

"We are making big, rather than small, steps on the way to make our fashion affordable to any customer," summarised Mr. Arushanyants.

Good recipe of availability

By Sergey Muravsky

In the autumn, when we traditionally see an increase in the number of health issues, prices in our pharmacies will be significantly reduced for all essential drugs, announced the Health Minister Valery Malashko. This concerns both the network of state pharmacies as well as those privately owned. The decision was made at the recent session of the Health Ministry.

In particular, RUE Belmedpreparaty, along with representations

of the Astellas Pharma Europe B.V. (Netherlands) were asked to consider the issue of reducing the price for tacrolimus — a vitally important medication for patients who have had transplant surgery.

"Following protracted negotiations, the supplier has announced the reduction of contract prices depending on dose by 37-55.5 percent. The total sum of the reduction amounted to \$1.9m," notes Lyudmila Reutskaya, the Head of the Department for Pharmaceutical Inspection and Organisation of Medicines Provision.

Talks with other pharmaceutical companies have also shown some

success. A representation of the Takeda Osteuropa Holding GmbH (Austria) declared the reduction of contract prices for separate medications to the level seen in Russia. The Belarusian-Dutch JV Pharmland LLC is ready to drop prices for metformin pills while Novartis Pharma Services AG from Switzerland will do the same for everolimus tablets.

Previously, some domestic manufacturers had announced the reduction of prices for amoxicillin-FT and lipromac. For example, the Borisov Medical Preparation Plant will reduce the cost for euphyllin, Academpharm — for cinnarizine-



Valery MALASHKO,
Health Minister:

The Belarusian medicine market is substantial, currently costing almost \$600m. Our enterprises produce medications worth \$300m, while the rest is spent on imported materials. We have worked with medical exporters; around 15 large players in our market, to reduce purchase prices by 10 to 60 percent for major items.

NAN and Farmtechnology for corvalol-pharma. Moreover, during the recent President's visit to India, contracts were signed for the transfer of medical technologies and the supply of substances for domestic pharma-

ceutical enterprises. The launch of the Indian producer to our market promises to considerably reduce the price of original medications (currently supplied by European pharmaceutical companies).

Feel like first book printer

16th century printing press restored in Belarus

By Dmitry Umpirovich

It's now possible to study the history of book printing using a restored 16th century machine (similar to that worked upon by Francysk Skaryna and Ivan Fiodorov five hundred years ago). You can feel just like the first book printer!

The reproduction is now touring major book fairs abroad, and in Belarus, such as at celebrations for the annual Day of Belarusian Written Language and at the 30th International Book Fair in Moscow.

To master the ancient art of printing, our reporters travelled to Vileika, a district centre 100km from Minsk, where the machine is on show as part of the *Looking for Lost Values* collection, gathered by historian Vladimir Lihodedov, at his studio.

Vladimir Lihodedov is a well-known personality in Belarus, being a filokartist and a collector, as well as a laureate of the President's 'For Spiritual Revival' Award. He has created hundreds of publications and dozens of books, including one about Alexander Nevsky and another on Prince Vladimir, Holy Equal-to-the-Apostles. Mr. Lihodedov initiated the installation of monuments to those killed in the 1812 War, not far from Vileika, and to Orthodox priest Fiodor Yuzefovich who died during the uprising of 1863.

"I've always been interested in history," he explains. "My collection of old photographs and postcards devoted to Belarus is the largest in the world. Skaryna is my countryman, born in Polotsk, as I was. It was there that I first tried to organise my exhibition, even finding a site, but it fell through. I succeeded in Vileika which is, some say, the birthplace of the first Russian book printer, Ivan Fiodorov."

Mr. Lihodedov's studio is now undergoing repair so it's too early to speak about receiving visitors. However, the future museum of all things relating to printing and writing, including a unique collection of writing instruments, is sure to be popular. It is called *Looking for Lost Values*.

Its location is symbolic since, in Soviet times, the building housed a printing house; Vileika District newspaper journalists worked there. Mr. Lihodedov received some funding to purchase the building, to house his cumbersome stopping machine, his set of lead linotype lines, various typographic tools and colourful campaign posters.

The 16th century printing press is placed in the centre of the hall and can hardly be confused with anything else. It's large (taller than a person) and heavy, made from pure oak. Since the 500th anniversary of the birth of Belarusian and Eastern Slavic printing, it has received much attention. Not long ago, film makers



Vladimir Lihodedov close to his brainchild

visited Vileika to shoot it.

According to Mr. Lihodedov's plans, the machine will have its own room, styled to appear as it would have done in the 'Skaryna era', without electric lighting. There will be a mill to produce paper, in keeping with the age of the printing press, but funding is needed, either by the state or from a serious patron.

It took around six months to recreate the press, with a 'prototype' made initially; it now resides at Poland's Orthodox Suprasl Monastery.

"Handmade!" Mr. Lihodedov proclaims, adding, "No, I didn't make it myself. I don't know how to do that. Everyone must do their own job. I was assisted by my long-time friend Gennady Katlinsky. The major difficulty was to make a wooden screw and a nut. It's almost impossible to find master carpenters

MT REFERENCE:

Vladimir Lihodedov's exhibition in Vileika shows how presses from the 16th-19th century would have worked. His plan is to allow all visitors to try for themselves, making a sheet of paper and printing not only pages, but creating etchings and engravings, and printing a leaflet or a newspaper. He'd like people to try embossing on a gold-printing press like a real bookbinder. Every visitor can then feel the same thrill as the first book printer.

although, in the past, each village would have had several. Look at old carved houses! Truly, people knew their craft."

He adds, "The only task I set for myself was to make the machine collapsible, so that I could transport it from one place to another. It's painstaking to disassemble and assemble the press, taking at least a day. We

transport it by mini-bus. It used to be tricky to load it onto the vehicle but we've perfected our technique now, with over twenty parts slotting together."

Attempts to create something similar continue, with proclamations regarding exact copies being made, but the historian believes these only slightly resemble the original since

no wooden press remains from that time. We are obliged to rely on medieval engravings and descriptions from old books.

Mr. Lihodedov studied the craft of old printing at workshops in Leipzig, Mainz and Basel, as well as from Polish and Czech restorers. "Try it yourself," the historian suggests and we pull the lever. He does this several times, fixing the pre-cast and inked metal matrix to paper. The bottles of ink might be mistaken for bottles of beverages, while the paper is truly authentic, being handmade. His master class in making it created a stir at the Moscow Book Fair.

"You can now speak of medieval book printing not only as a theorist but from first-hand experience. This allows us to prove, or deny, many historical facts in a practical way," Mr. Lihodedov smiles. "For example, I believe I can assert that Skaryna didn't personally print all his works, despite knowing how to perform each task. Let's imagine: one of his Bibles has 192 pages and 96 spreads (books were printed in this format). According to researchers, at least a thousand copies were circulated. Printing a single book requires almost 100,000 impressions and he created over twenty books. Skaryna would never have had enough time to do everything personally. Meanwhile, some impressions are uneven, made with greater or lesser force, indicating that various people were involved. No page is identical in these old books: some are bright and some are dull. A book was later laced by hand, and it's not uncommon to find errors, with pages placed upside down."

The historian knows his subject well, having personally reconstructed a Bible, following Skaryna's technology. Initially, he made 192 matrices, producing a separate board with letters for each page and making paper from linen. He was assisted by his son, Dmitry, who looks rather like Skaryna.

At first glance, a problem is evident: the restored Bible looks new, without the fading or yellowing of pages we're used to. "An authoritative Russian professor came to one of my presentations and asked me about this. Of course, when printed in the 16th century, the book looked new. Accordingly, there's no 'need' to make our book look old. We want to see it through the eyes of the first book printer. We made twelve copies and my friend, artist Boris Tsitovich, illustrated one, using Skaryna's motifs. We aren't sure whether the first book printer used pictures in his books, mind you. I've also experimented with bindings, travelling to Estonia to see the traditions of red leather and wood, which remain alive. One of the Bibles is now kept at the National Library of Belarus.

Uncertainty is growing over Catalonia's future

Catalonia's future becomes more uncertain by the hour after thousands filled the streets of the region's capital Barcelona to protest against independence from Spain

After months of looking as if separatist forces were dominating the public debate... the so-called 'silent majority' of Catalans have found their voices.

The final results from the referendum in the wealthy north-eastern region suggested 90 per cent of the 2.3 million people who voted backed independence. Turnout was 43 per cent.

There have been several claims of irregularities, and many ballot boxes were seized by Spanish police.

Nearly 900 people were injured as the police, trying to enforce a Spanish court ban on the vote, attempted to disperse voters. Thirty-three police officers were also hurt.

The political stand-off between unionists and separatists has already had economic repercussions with banks and companies moving their headquarters outside Catalonia. A major real estate firm is the latest to hold an emergency board meeting over



the situation.

Prime Minister Mariano Rajoy is standing firm refusing to say if he will trigger Article

155 of the constitution — the so-called 'nuclear option' which allows him to sack the regional government.

Thousands in Barcelona reject a split with Spain amid speculation a unilateral independence declaration could come soon.



Air Berlin company to cease operation

Flights operated by insolvent German carrier Air Berlin will end by 28th October at the latest, the carrier said as it works towards a carve-up of its assets

Air Berlin filed for insolvency in August and a government loan is currently keeping its planes in the air to give it time to negotiate with investors for parts of its business and it is currently in talks with Lufthansa and easyJet. Once a deal for parts of its operations has been agreed, Air Berlin will need to wait

for approval from competition authorities, which could take several months. "After purchase contracts have been agreed, the company must end its own operations step by step," Air Berlin said in a statement. That means that Air Berlin will fly for the successful bidders under wet leases, whereby the bidder rents the planes and crews for use on its own routes. Holiday airline Niki and regional airline LGW are not insolvent and those operations will continue to run, Air Berlin said.

Rohingya Muslim refugees flee ethnic cleansing in Myanmar

Hundreds of thousands of Muslim Rohingyas have fled a brutal government crackdown in Myanmar. Many have lost their lives trying to escape.

They are desperate to flee an offensive by Myanmar's all-powerful army, which wants to force the minority-Muslim group from the mainly Buddhist country. The United Nations calls the crackdown 'textbook ethnic cleansing'.

The lucky ones have made it to neighbouring Bangladesh to what is fast becoming one of the world's largest refugee camps. This humanitarian crisis of epic proportions can only deepen. Thousands more arrive every day. The camp's refugee population could hit one million.

Inside the camp, people are suffering: malnutrition, a lack of clean water, and poor sanitation make it vulnerable to disease. Doctors say the conditions provide the perfect storm for the development of a cholera epidemic.

Bangladeshi border guards



have been unable to stop the waves of refugees flooding the camp.

World leaders are still talking about how to punish Myanmar's army, and the country's de facto leader, Aung San Suu Kyi, who won a Nobel Peace Prize as a champion of democracy. Suu Kyi has faced scathing international criticism and dismay for not doing more to stop the violence, although she has no power over the security forces under a military-drafted constitution.

New Wall Street candidates emerge to test Trump-era appeal

With a businessman turned politician now in the Oval Office, a small but growing number of bankers and Wall Street financiers across the United States have set their sights on politics

In New Jersey, Connecticut and California, former bankers, hedge fund managers and private equity executives have either announced bids for legislative and gubernatorial seats, or they are considering running. Foreclosures, job losses and growing income inequality after the 2007-2009 financial crisis made anyone with Wall Street ties into a political pariah.

Total, Eni, Statoil seek buyers for North Sea Teesside terminal

Total, Eni and Statoil are seeking buyers for their stake in the Teesside oil terminal, which receives crude from the Norwegian Ekofisk fields, part of the global Brent benchmark, banking sources said

The sale is run jointly by investment bank Rothschild and may fetch as much as \$400m, according to the sources. Total holds a 32.9 per cent stake in the terminal, Statoil a 27.3 per cent stake and Eni a 10.3 per cent stake. Paris Orleans holds the remaining 0.2 per cent stake but it was unclear if they are taking part in the sale process. Total, Eni and Statoil declined to comment.

May and Israel's Netanyahu — need to be 'clear-eyed' on Iran threat

Britain and Israel agree on the need to be 'clear-eyed' about the threat Iran poses to the Middle East, a spokesman for British Prime Minister Theresa May said following a phone call with Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu

"They agreed that the international community needed to be clear-eyed about the threat that Iran poses to the Gulf and the wider Middle East, and that the international community should continue working together to push back against Iran's destabilising regional activity," the spokesman said in a statement.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Stormy whirlpool of fantasies surprisingly resembling reality

Palace of Arts Republican Art Gallery of Belarusian Union of Artists presents jubilee exhibition by graphic artist and master of book illustration, Valery Slauk

By Veniamin Mikheev

Valery Slauk's works are widely-known in Belarus and abroad, being absolutely unique as an artist, in his works of fantasy and phantasmagoria. His pictures are clearly drawn, with live and dynamic characters, creating their own worlds — full of allusions, allegories and paradoxes.

Among those attending the opening of Mr. Slauk's exhibition were the Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Artists — Rygor Sitnitsa, the Rector of the Academy of Arts — Mikhail Borozna, and People's Artist of Belarus Vladimir Tovstik. Each stressed that his talent is full of kindness and positive. His works portray both good and evil, arousing compassion. He invites us to enter his intellectual games, filled with humour, irony and beauty. There is nothing 'false' about his works, which are created using academic drawing techniques, to depict the reality of alternative worlds, borne from his rich imagination.

Throughout his long creative life, Mr. Slauk has illustrated many books — including Walter Scott's *Ivanhoe*, Yan Borshchevsky's *Nobleman Zavalnya*, and various fairy tales and fantasy stories. The two-volume *Belarusian Folklore Encyclopaedia* is the most popular of his books, filled with his enchanting forest and house spirits.

"Not long ago, I illustrated Prosper Merimee's *Lokis*," says Mr. Slauk. "If a subject doesn't interest me, I find it impossible to draw but I can work day and night if I love the theme. I'm my worst critic. It would be too simplistic to say that I love my work. I give my soul to it. I can't help it."

There's no doubt that Mr. Slauk is an unusual artist, inventing his own worlds, inhabited by hundreds



of characters — all seeming to come from dreams. Mr. Slauk's childhood was spent in the difficult post-war years, when books were rare in villages. His reverence for them has never been lost. Unsurprisingly, he's viewed as one of the most interesting book illustrators, drawing on his imagination, fiction, games and reincarnation.

On coming to the north of Belarus, where Valery Slauk was born, it's hard not to recollect the fantastic stories collected here by Yan Borshchevsky. It seems natural that their first Belarusian edition of *Nobleman Zavalnya* was illustrated by Mr. Slauk. He shows us a world fantastic and real, inhabited by creatures large and small, as surround us in dreams and in reality. We see them living in the rustle of swamp reeds and in the forest shadows.

The artist has illustrated Be-



Exhibition drawing eager response

larusian folk tales (*Widow's Son*, *Pilipka-Son*, and *Alyonka*), Vladimir Korotkevich's *Spring in Autumn*, the *Wonderful World* collection of fairy tales and many others beloved by Belarusians through the decades. His graphic works have many times become the topic of art history research, with his illustrations for fairy tales appearing in editions published in various languages worldwide.

Mr. Slauk developed his own style early on (being a student), using a monochrome, black-and-



white palette since the 1970s and 1980s, for individual images, and for those part of a series. His sheets are full of detail, as if he lacked enough paper to develop all his ideas. His *Aliens*, *Journeys*, *Ways of Survival* graphical series are acknowledged as a classic of Belarusian fine art.

Mr. Slauk experienced a difficult artistic evolution, with the mid-1980s leading him to grand 'cosmic' themes. He portrays terrible monsters of mechanical origin, fiercely fighting, like crea-

tures from barbarian tribes. Over time, this conscious 'barbarisation', rooted in super-sensitivity, gave way to irony. We see dishevelled, charming devilry: a magical kaleidoscope of demonic characters peering at us. His giant insects and thorny monsters mischievously scratch themselves, and claw a passage into our world, having enjoyed their own evolutionary metamorphosis.

We peer into this abyss, listening to the rustling, whispering and hissing: in the thorny grass and crunching underfoot, at dusk near our home, and right under the window. His phantasms creep up to live beside us.

Mr. Slauk creates a stormy whirlpool of fantasies, embodied in laborious filigree, where historical allusions, space fiction and Belarusian horror stories, set in night forests combine. The master endlessly demonstrates a strong connection with literature and folklore. Over the years, his self-limitation has grown and his irony strengthened. As a result, his later works are like parables, bringing him glory, alongside Europe's best book illustrators.

MT REFERENCE:

Valery Slauk was born in 1947, in the Vitebsk Region. He is a laureate of the State Award of the Republic of Belarus and was named 'Best Illustrator of the Year' in 2008. He took the 'Golden Folio' in the nomination of 'Best Master' in the National Art of Book competition in 2008, and was named 'Best Artist' at the Republican Artist and Book contest in 2009. He took the same title at the international Art of Book contest, in Moscow, in 2009. He has participated in many art exhibitions and has been awarded the Francysk Skaryna Medal. Mr. Slauk is a Professor of the Graphics Department at the Belarusian Academy of Arts.

Organising interesting and high-quality performances

Lida is a large city in the Grodno Region. Tourists come here to see its famous attractions: Lida Castle built in 1323 and several old Roman Catholic churches. As a rule, the district centre is quiet but, once a year, the *Lidbeer* Festival gathers thousands of people from different cities and even other countries.

By Yelizaveta Artsueva

While Bayern celebrates its regular Oktoberfest (running from September 16th to October 3rd), the Belarusian festival of hops, malt and water is gaining momentum. Three years ago, *Lidbeer* began modestly with a small programme; with the Belarusian *Bez Bileta* and *J:Mors* bands entertaining the audience. This year however, the scale has been strikingly different: the list of performers included the famous Ukrainian *Okean Elzy* band, while the number of visitors appears to be many more than at the usual Minsk festivals.

People flocked into Lida from early morning. The crowded railway station was noisy and buses were constantly arriving from Minsk, Gomel, Vitebsk and other cities. Many people arrived with their own tents and sleeping bags: camping was not far from the festival's venue.

"I've come from Minsk," said Kristina Shumay, a BSU student. "When I heard that *Okean Elzy* were performing, I thought I should definitely go. I've never been here before and this is a nice opportunity for me to see the city."

The festival programme was rich — featuring diverse activities, jousting tournaments in Lida Castle and flights over the city by helicopter. Excursions to the local Lida Brewery were also organised. The chance to learn how beer is produced was so tempting to visitors that places for those wanting to take a tour were quickly filled. Those who missed their chance could taste beer at the food courts — special areas with food and drink scattered throughout the city.

Two stages were installed in the city's central square. The small stage was open to anyone, while special fencing surrounded the large stage: it hosted a gala



Lida festival arouses interest

concert for those with tickets. The musical part of the festival began on the small stage; people were entertained by young Belarusian bands *Mutnaevoka*, *Kokteyl Shalyapina*, *Kitchen Stuff Only* and others.

The gala concert was the most anticipated event of the day. From early morning, *Lidbeer's* main stage buzzed with preparations. Technicians were busy all day long, while musicians were tuning their instruments and curious

passers-by peered over the fence. The stage came alive at 6pm when the *Petlya Pristrastiya* band — led by Ilya Cherepko-Samokhvalov — began the concert. The team — famous in Minsk for its bizarre lyrics and groovy concerts — created no less excitement in Lida. By the time the second group arrived on stage, the audience were warmed up and *Krambambulya's* performance was greeted with much more enthusiasm. The *Rockers from Lumen* — who came later — virtually 'exploded' the

dance floor. The motto of the festival — 'Make It Loud!' — was well met.

After *Lumen* left the stage, there was a break whilst the next band adjusted their instruments. As soon as the first chords were played and band leader Svyatoslav Vakarchuk appeared on stage, everyone sighed with relief. The touching lyrics and Svyatoslav's spine-tingling voice made *Okean Elzy* one of the most emotional performances at the festival. 'I will not give up without a fight!' — echoed the audience, repeat-

ing the soloist's famous text and he thanked the sympathetic audience. Fans were so eager to see the band perform longer that the musicians made a double encore.

It seems that *Lidbeer* has secured its place among the best Belarusian festivals of 2017. It was bustling and friendly. It pleased the audiences with delicious food and drinks. It entertained with diverse attractions and a rich musical programme... Its 'Make It Loud!' motto worked well but, more importantly, the event was also held to a high standard.

‘Orange’ gain upper hand

Belarusian footballers lose to Netherlands — 1:3 — in final home match of 2018 World Cup qualifying tournament

By Alexey Grishin

The Belarusian team played its final home match of the season with a quite unusual line-up. For various reasons, several leading players failed to take part: in particular, Pavel Savitsky and Mikhail Gordeichuk missed the match due to health problems. The Netherlands squad took the initiative from the very beginning, placing their hosts on the backfoot.

Until the middle of the first half, the Belarusian team, coached by Igor Kriushenko, appeared only to quietly restrain the attacks of the ‘orange’ squad but, in the 24th minute, Davy Pröpper sent the ball into Sergey Chernik’s net, from a short distance. Before halftime, the Dutch — led by team captain Arjen Robben — had several more chances to score but the Belarusian squad fought them off.

In the first five minutes of the second half, the Dutch enjoyed an overwhelming advantage but failed to score. The Belarusians began by delivering several sharp attacks and scored in the 55th minute, thanks to Maxim Volodko. The Dutch were caught off guard



A moment of Belarus-Holland match

and were obliged to go on the defence thereafter, as the Belarusian team created several dangerous moments which could have ended in a goal. Dutch goalie Dick Advocaat showed great skill, while Belarusian goalkeeper Chernik allowed two more goals into his net:

in the 84th minute, when Robber realised a penalty; and in the third minute of extra time, when Memphis Depay executed a perfect free-kick.

The Belarusian and Dutch footballers have met seven times in world and European champi-

onship qualifying tournaments. Belarus has triumphed twice: at Minsk’s Dinamo Stadium in 1995 — 1:0; and in 2007 — 2:1. Meanwhile, the Dutch have won five times, including in the first round of the present tournament, in qualifying Group A — 4:1, in

Rotterdam.

The recent match was important for Belarus only in terms of the struggle for penultimate place in the standings. The Dutch needed to win in order to go through to the World Championship final.

As regards other matches in group A, the French defeated Bulgaria (1:0) in Sofia. Meanwhile, in Stockholm, the Swedes defeated Luxembourg with a score of 8:0. After nine rounds, France leads with 20 points (goal difference of 16-5), while Sweden is close behind with 19 (26-7), and the Netherlands are third, with 16 points (19-12). Bulgaria has 12 (13-18), and Belarus (5-19) and Luxembourg both have 5 (7-25).

In the final round, on October 10th, the Belarusian team will play the French, in Paris. Bulgaria has an away match in Luxembourg and the Dutch are hosting a match against the Swedes.

Winners of nine European qualifying groups will receive direct tickets to the final stage of the 2018 World Cup in Russia. The top eight ‘runner-up’ teams will play another four matches this November.

Good game to bring to Super Cup

By Igor Svitov

Minsk’s Stroitel wins Belarus Super Cup in men’s volleyball, beating country’s champion — Soligorsk’s Shakhtyor — 3:1

The Belarusian Volleyball Federation’s tournament has seen Belarus Super Cup champion Stroitel (seventime winners of the domestic championship) win the title, having lost it last year to Soligorsk’s Shakhtyor.

The Minskers were clearly ready to return to first place in the championship, having taken the initiative from their first match, at Minsk’s MAPID Sports Complex. Coached by Alexander Singaevsky, shining stars on the squad were Alexey Komar and novice Niklas Seppänen from Finland. The club from Soligorsk is awaiting its debut in the Champions League. On October 18th, the squad will play an away match against Maccabi, from Tel Aviv, while the return game will be held on October 22nd, at Uruchie Sports Palace. In December, Minsk’s Stroitel will play in the CEV Challenge Cup, where it has previously achieved the most significant success among Belarusian clubs, reaching

Distinguishing with victories from the first to final fight

Belarusian judoka Dmitry Minkov claims gold medal at Grand Prix stage, in Tashkent

By Kirill Karin

In his first fight, Dmitry Minkov defeated the athlete from Kazakhstan with a perfect throw. He then spectacularly crushed his Belgian rival, and defeated the Uzbek judoka to reach the finals. In the fight for gold, Minkov beat Mongolian



Dmitry Minkov pleased with his success

Kherlen Ganbold. Bronze went to Uzbekistan’s Sardor Nurillayev. In total, more than a hundred athletes from twenty-nine countries competed for fourteen sets of medals.

Last year, Belarusians Daniela Kazanoy and Alexander Vakhoviyak earned bronze medals in Tashkent, while silver went to Ma-

rina Slutskaya. Winning places at Grand Prix stages in judo enables athletes to earn points (200 for first place, 120 for second place and 80 for third) in the world ranking-list. The number of points earned at tournaments brings qualification to continental championships, world championships and Olympiads.

ARENA

● Pavel Sankovich occupies first place in the 50m backstroke in the 25m swimming pool at the FINA Swimming World Cup stage that recently finished in Hong Kong

The Belarusian athlete posted a result of 23.03 seconds, confidently beating Vladimir Morozov of Russia who finished in 23.71 seconds and Brazilian Nelson Silva who finished with a time of 23.76 seconds. Sankovich’s gold medal is the second award for the Belarusian team. Previously, Ilya Shimanovich claimed gold in the 200m breast stroke.

● According to the recently published WTA rankings, Belarusian tennis player Alexandra Sosnovich has climbed five positions, to join the top 100 (seeded 97th).

Also taking part in the Federation Cup’s final match, in November, in Minsk, is Arina Sobolenko (seeded 101st).

Vera Lapko is ranked 189th, while Victoria Azarenko closes the second hundred. Spanish Garbiñe Muguruza, Romanian Simona Halep and Ukraine’s Elina Svitolina lead the rankings.

Among the men, Rafael Nadal remains the top tennis player worldwide, while the best Belarusian is Yegor Gerasimov (seeded 125th).

Festival of the week



Festival of East Asian Youth Culture, *Higan*, held in Minsk

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 19th October. *From Book Treasure*
Until 3rd December. *Napoleon Orda. Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Country*
Until 3rd December. *Käthe Kollwitz — Ernst Barlach. Overcoming Existence* Until 10th December. *Treasures of Ancient Egypt*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 10th January. *Fashionable Century*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 20th November. *Skaryna's Letters and Words* Until 31st December. *Francysk Skaryna and His Epoch*

STATE MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE

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

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Kupala Street
Until 2nd November. *Lost Images*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

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

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 14th October. *Days of European Heritage: Legacy and Nature*

TSEKH

16 Oktyabrskaya Street
Until 26th October. *If Only Nothing Would Happen*

VLADISLAV GOLUBOK PARLOUR

14 Starovilenskaya Street
Until 22nd October. Exhibition of embroidered pictures: *I'll Open You a Wonderful World*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF FIRST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 29th October. *Revolution Names*

LOSHITSA ESTATE

8-2 Chizhevsky Lane
Until 14th October. *Jointly with Minsk*

SVOBODY SQUARE

Until 15th October. *Free Museum: People and Items*

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

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

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
12.10. A Masked Ball 13.10. The Sleeping Beauty 14.10. Rigoletto 15.10. Artistic evening by conductor Andrey Galanov 17.10. Figaro's Wedding 19.10. Laurencia, Turandot

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
12.10. Gypsy Baron 13.10. The Bat 14.10. Golden Chicken; Mister X 15.10. Adventures of Musicians from Bremen; Ball in Savoy 16.10. Casanova 17.10. Sofia Golshanskaya 18.10. My Fair Lady 19.10. Jane Eyre

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
12.10. Abduction of Europe, or Ursula Radziwill's Theatre 13.10. Not Mine 14.10. Gentle; The Black Lady of Nesvizh 15.10. The Black Lady of Nesvizh; Office 17.10. Pan Tadeusz 18.10. School of Taxpayers

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
12.10. Testosterone 13.10. Pane Kokhanku 14.10. Tricks of Khanuma 15.10. Miraculous Rings of Almanzor; Viva Commedia!

17.10. Lady for a Day 18.10. Taming of the Shrew 19.10. Inn Keeper

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue
12.10. Forgetting Herostratos 13.10. Two Arrows 14.10. The Makropoulos Case 15 and 17.10. Pygmalion 18.10. Aisedora: A Love Dance 19.10. Battlefield

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
12.10. Concrete 13.10. Belarus Open. Doctor Raus' Career 14.10. Belarus Open. That's All She 15.10. Shadow of Our Thought 17.10. Belarus: Didactics

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
12.10. Love Lesson 13.10. Love of Three 14.10. Vanyushin's Children 15.10. Belarus Open. The Seagull 17.10. Playing Happy Family 19.10. The Fool

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
12.10. Mann ist Mann 14.10. Wolf and Seven Goats 15.10. Mysterious Hippopotamus 16.10. Belvedere 19.10. Tartuffe