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Generous gilding definitely stresses special adornment
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Golden finish for Margarita Makhneva, Nadezhda Lepeshko, Olga Khudenko and Marina Litvinchuk

Ten medals and twelve licenses to Olympic Games

Belarusian rowers perform well at Canoe Sprint World Championships in Milan

Not parting with friends but saying good bye

Vietnamese Ambassador Do Van Mai completes his diplomatic mission in Belarus. Following well established tradition, President personally meets diplomat who's worked ardently to strengthen our bilateral friendship and co-operation.

By Vladimir Khromov

Alexander Lukashenko thanked Do Van Mai for his ardent work and expressed his hope that the newly arriving ambassador will be no less active in promoting bilateral ties. Minsk is interested in the expansion of trade-economic liaisons and collaboration across all spheres.

Political contacts of recent times clearly demonstrate that Belarus is eager to make friends with all constructively guided states. We are

viewed as a desired friend and enjoy an extensive geography of contacts. Of these, Vietnam occupies an important place, being among the most populated states in Asia and worldwide, being home to 90 million residents. Its people live in a quickly developing and strategically important region.

The President has no doubt that, in the coming decade, Vietnam will join the most advanced states of the globe. In building relations with this country, Belarus hopes to participate

in this process, helping ensure that Hanoi's interests are represented at the centre of Europe and in the Eurasian region. Wide prospects exist and, this May, a free trade zone agreement was signed between Vietnam and the Eurasian Economic Union, creating a strong foundation for further interaction.

Top level political contacts are an efficient impetus for interstate co-operation. Mr. Lukashenko has officially visited Vietnam twice and, last November, the Secretary General of

the Communist Party of Vietnam visited Belarus. As the party plays a leading role in the state, Nguen Fu Chong is Vietnam's top official.

H.E. Mr. Do Van Mai believes this visit drove forward our interstate liaisons and has hopes that the President's return visit (scheduled for the end of 2015) to Vietnam will further promote bilateral ties. In line with Belarusian foreign policy, several joint projects are to be discussed regarding avenues of co-operation.



Do Van Mai

Visit to boost bilateral relations

Official visit of Belarusian President to Vietnam scheduled for late 2015

The Head of the Belarusian state, Alexander Lukashenko, has met the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Vietnam to Belarus, Do Van Mai, who is concluding his time as head of the diplomatic mission in our country.

According to the Ambassador, the visit of the General Secretary of the Communist Party of Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong, to Belarus in November 2014 was vital to the development of our bilateral relations. The diplomat expresses his hope that the visit scheduled for late 2015 will help advance these further.

The Ambassador added that the signing of the free trade zone agreement between Vietnam and the Eurasian Economic Union in May 2015 launched a new era in the enhancement of traditionally friendly relations.



Union of hearts not indifferent

By Olga Petrova

Belarusian Union of Women undergoes reshuffle: Nadezhda Yermakova hands over post of chair to Minister of Labour and Social Protection, Marianna Shchetkina

Interestingly, Ms. Yermakova personally initiated the reshuffle, as part of the 6th extra-ordinary national conference of the public association. She is convinced that the organisation needs to be headed by someone with extremely high authority in the social sphere, as issues of family support are vital to its work. Ms. Yermakova remains an active member of the major women's public association, acting as its Deputy Chair.

The Belarusian Union of Women's charter is also to undergo major changes, to become more flexible and modern, with obligatory membership fees introduced. At the moment, the organisation unites over 180,000 Belarusian women. The Chair of the Central Election Commission, Lidia Yermoshina, points out, "Our key task — of protecting families and children — is

close to every woman's heart." All socially significant events — whether to raise money for charity or relating to election campaigns — involve women. According to Ms. Yermoshina, the latter particularly rests on women's shoulders: women account for 59 percent of staff at the 153 territorial commissions.

The Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Igor Buzovsky, acknowledges the importance of this public organisation, calling it 'a most informal yet efficient movement'. On presenting Ms. Yermakova with the honourable award of the Presidential Administration (for her personal contribution to the development of the women's movement), he said, "As the President has stressed many times, the Union of Women occupies not only a worthy place in civil society but is a pillar of our society, uniting many representatives of executive power directly involved in social policy. I sincerely thank you for the approaches you use and for your sincere attitude towards this business. It's only possible to win hearts — and especially women's — through organisations such as yours."

Support campaign with real benefits

Belarus will hold a large-scale charity campaign to help children from low-income families and large families to get ready for school



Trade offers wide range of goods for schoolchildren

By Vladimir Velikhov

The corresponding instruction has been given by President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, as he heard out a report from Education Minister Mikhail Zhuravkov. Preparations for the new academic year have begun and, of

course, it's costly to buy everything a child needs: from study guides to their uniform. Mr. Lukashenko notes that citizens are always ready to undertake charitable support of children from low-income and large families, saying, "We shouldn't forget about it this year. Everyone, from

the president to those who can provide footwear and clothes for children, needs to be engaged in this campaign. There should be no difference between children from disadvantaged and well-off families. All children are equal. Therefore, we must do our best here," he added. Mr.

Lukashenko has instructed the Education Ministry to organise 'engaging all society in helping children prepare for school'. Moreover, the President has remarked that special attention should be drawn to first-grade pupils. This year, the number of first-graders has increased to 106,000 (up 1,600 on last year). "This is a good trend. We've finally replenished the demographic gap, so the number of first-grade pupils is increasing," said the President.

The Education Minister also informed the Head of State about the results of the enrolment campaign. All admission quotas have been filled, especially for state sponsored places and specialities, which serve to meet economic demand. Mr. Lukashenko is particularly focused on training blue-collar workers, who are needed not only in the CIS but across Eastern Europe. Belarus has preserved its system of vocational training, and the President was keen to know the current state of affairs.

'6+5' formula is applied

By Yelena Alexandrova

Standing Committee and Shanghai Co-operation Organisation agree to work together

The Standing Committee recently hosted a meeting between the State Secretary

of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, and the General Secretary of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, Dmitry Mezentssev, to discuss the opportunity for Belarus to receive observer status within the SOC (as was noted after the summit in Ufa).

The SOC Head especially noted the expansion of collaboration with observer-states, using the '6+5' formula. Fulfilling the instructions of SOC member states, the organisation ensures the participation of representatives of ministries and depart-

ments from observer-states at most meetings and sessions. Annually, 18 such meetings are held.

Mr. Rapota told Mr. Mezentssev about the construction of the Union State and shared the experience of Belarus-Russia interaction.

Symbolic sign of large-scale investments

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, joins Chairman of Gazprom JSC Board, Alexey Miller, in laying capsule at Gazprom Centre multifunctional complex construction site, in Minsk

By Vasily Khatitonov

Most Belarusians know this Russian company as the major miner and supplier of natural gas. However, the transnational corporation also runs several social projects, and one is being currently realised in Minsk. Construction of the Gazprom Centre multifunctional complex is in full swing on the city's central avenue, not far from the National Library. This mini-town is set to become prestigious for work and leisure time.

Alexander Lukashenko and Alexey Miller recently joined forces to lay a commemorative capsule in the foundations.

The scale of the construction is impressive. Walking the perimeter of the huge ditch, you realise that it's as large as a dozen football fields. Mikhail Gaukhfeld, the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Architects, took us on a tour, pointer in hand to attract our attention to spots on his miniature model. He calls the site 'unique' and I'm convinced that he's right. Not only Minsk but the wider country has nothing similar. A 36-storey building (190m tall) will crown the site — becoming the tallest in Belarus. The complex will include a four star hotel, a congress centre, a trading zone, restaurants and a café, in addition to under-



Alexander Lukashenko and Alexey Miller at ceremony to lay capsule in foundations of Gazprom Centre

DIRECT SPEECH

Alexander Lukashenko:

Russia is our common homeland. We've never butted heads with Russia but we've had and will continue to have some issues regarding minor aspects, as we share a common house. However, these are not major problems... and never will be. These would never be borne in our country. Any western or American politician who has come here would never say that we've conducted talks on behalf of Russia or scared someone with Russia. This has never happened and will never take place. At the same time, we openly state that we wish to normalise our relations with the EU and America — in the same way as Russia or any other state wishes to do so. However, these are our problems and we would never solve them at the expense of our fraternal Russia.

ground parking for 1,300 cars.

The Gazprom Centre aims to make Minsk more dynamic and modern in appearance, hosting businessmen and advantageously allowing them to take office space in close proximity. It's thought that 5,500 new jobs will be forthcoming, generating personal income and tax revenue for the state.

The President is eager to ensure that the complex will welcome everyone, with a range of services and entertainments. Among those planned are a multi-functional medical and children's educational centre, an open tennis court, a gym for competitive sports, fitness machines, swimming pools, saunas and banyas. The

first Minsk amphitheatre is also planned, surrounded by fountains to cool on hot summer days. The pond will act as a skating rink in winter. Importantly, all will be affordable for Minsk and guests.

The site is unique in more than scale, brightly symbolising our Belarusian-Russian Union State relations. Despite recent Russian criticism, reproaching our leadership for its separatist talks with the West and betrayal of Russia, the centre is a perfect example of our co-operation.

The President emphasised, "Belarus will never choose between the West and the East. We've never traded our common security and our common

independence. We'd never do so — however we might be pushed. We've never begun negotiations to choose between Russia and the West." Mr. Lukashenko asked Gazprom's Mr. Miller to tell the Russian leaders not to doubt Belarus' fairness, adherence to principles and reliability."

Interaction with the major energy company — Gazprom — is the ideal demonstration of such relations. The Belarusian section of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline is the shortest route for Russia to supply natural gas to Europe. Mr. Lukashenko has stated that, if necessary, our country is ready to provide its Russian partners with increased volumes of gas trans-

sit. In turn, Mr. Miller shared that his company is increasing its investment into Belarus; in particular, constructing gas pipelines and distribution stations across the regions.

Speaking of Gazprom's social projects in Belarus, Mr. Miller mentioned participation in the restoration of Brest Fortress, its 'Gazprom to Children' programme, and construction of accommodation for large families. Already, over 30 such families have received flats in one of Minsk's residential suburbs. Such work is highly appreciated, as it fully meets the social policy pursued in Belarus.

After their bilateral meeting, Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Miller laid a commemorative capsule on the site of the future Gazprom Centre. They inspected the construction site and Mr. Miller assured the President that deadlines will be met, with the highest standards. By late 2018, the city will be launching a modern multi-functional complex: not just a centre for businesses and tourism but a new calling card for Minsk.

Security needs constant support

By Vladimir Khromov

Acting State Secretary of the Security Council, Stanislav Zas, and Defence Minister Andrei Ravkov, meet President Lukashenko at Independence Palace to discuss how best to strengthen state security

Mr. Lukashenko primarily asked the heads of the defence and law enforcement agencies about the general situation in the Armed Forces. Judging by the reports, it's at a worthy level, with the moral and psychological spirit of officers strong. Meanwhile, out-flow of personnel has almost stopped, especially among young officers. Interest towards joining the professional army is evidently growing, looking at enrolment at military educational establishments.

Last year, some specialities lacked alumni, requiring additional stimulation measures. Now, there's no longer need, as the prestige of the army service is high. The military have plenty of examples of courage and dignity, as was shown particularly at the recent International Army Games in Russia, which definitely suits young boys.

The meeting also paid attention to the performances of our national team, which was ranked third among 17 countries at a recent tournament, despite having only two months of preparation. Of course, the army should be in constant combat readiness, being able to fulfil its tasks perfectly at any moment. Nevertheless, preparations for other, similar events have been discussed, with certain decisions adopted.

The President was also keen to hear how his instructions are being fulfilled regarding the reinforcement of our southern borders. Mr. Lukashenko explained, "We aren't hiding the fact that we must strengthen our southern borders, but not because we fear the Ukrainians or an assault by anyone. We'd like to prevent anything detrimental to Belarus, such as entry of weaponry from due to Ukrainian events. This concern should always be on our minds. It's a matter we must tackle, as no one else will do the job for us."

The Commander-in-Chief's instructions are being fulfilled, using the reserves of the State Border Committee and other state funds.

Work is also underway to modernise hardware, re-arming the forces with new planes and helicopters, while rocket equipment is being repaired and upgraded. Those responsible for the country's defensive capacity are true professionals, aiming to guarantee the maintenance of peace and stability in our country.

'An ambassador should work to mend and unite rather than tear apart and separate'

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko praises the contribution of Maira Mora, the Head of the EU Delegation to Belarus, for her work to improve relations between Belarus and the European Union, as he bids her farewell at the end of her mission in our country

By Alexander Pimenov

"You've done much to promote dialogue with Europe, helping us understand each other better and improving our relations," noted the President of Belarus. He expressed confidence that, although Ms. Mora leaves Belarus, she will

remain a sincere friend of the country. He extended his welcome for her to return at any time. "Wherever you live, you can come at any time to this land, where you will always be a dear guest," added the President.

Praising the contribution of the EU Delegation Head

of Mission to developing relations between Belarus and the EU, Mr. Lukashenko said that her actions had always been sincere. "We know that you've done much with sincerity. You've always kept silence where you couldn't do anything, and we've always understood this," noted Mr. Lukashenko. He once again thanked Ms. Mora for her sincerity and wished her success in her new undertakings.

"You'll have reliable friends

in Belarus," assured the Head of State. The President pointed out that he doesn't meet every leaving ambassador so this meeting spoke for itself. "Our country honours those committed to improving our relations rather than worsening them, as happens sometimes," he underlined.

In his opinion, Maira Mora's work is 'an example to follow for every ambassador in their host country.' "An ambassador should work to



Maira Mora

mend and unite rather than tear apart and separate," added Mr. Lukashenko.



Belintertrans Transport-Logistics Centre in Kolyadichi — one of the biggest in the country

91 countries on the export map

By Alexander Pimenov

In H1 2015, Belarus' Industry Ministry ensured positive dynamics of supply to 22 foreign countries

From January to May, supplies to Bulgaria rose 6.9-fold, while those to Latvia increased 2.6-fold, to the Netherlands — 5 fold, to Vietnam — 5.6-fold and to Afghanistan — 2.3-fold. Moreover, the growth rate of deliveries to Spain reached 145 percent (against the same period of the previous year) while those to Egypt rose 152 percent and dispatches to Tunisia rose 6.2-fold. The total volume of exports to these states was worth \$8.7m, with \$3.2m of goods supplied to seven promising new markets: Ireland, Nepal, Zimbabwe, Mali, New Zealand, Morocco and Columbia.

From January to June 2015, organisations affiliated to the Industry Ministry supplied goods worth \$1.591bn, ensuring a positive trade balance worth \$861.2m. Industry Ministry enterprises have ensured positive dynamics of supply to South-East Asia, with a growth rate of 175 percent, as well as to African states (up 104 percent) and to EU states (up from 15 percent growth to 25 percent). Not all forecasts have been fulfilled, with the export growth rate failing to reach 100 percent. By the end of the year, enterprises should ensure the fulfilment of their targets. Meanwhile, the Industry Ministry will continue working to create equal conditions within the single economic space for industrial enterprises. The tasks also include removal of restrictions for the supply of goods to the Eurasian Economic Union, reinforcement of customs protection for enterprises, and the creation of economic conditions for the expansion of holdings' collaboration. The inclusion of export support measures and investment programmes for enterprises are also part of the 2016 budget.

Ferrari for Kolyadichi

Minsk is situated at the crossroads of two major international transport corridors, connecting the west with the east, and the north with the south. To benefit from this, infrastructure needs to be developed cleverly.

By Vladimir Yakovlev

With this in mind, major modernisation was recently completed at the urban commodity station of Kolyadichi, allowing export-transportation capacity to rise many-fold — as confirmed by foreign clients. The Director of the Minsk Transport-Logistical Cen-

tre, Sergey Shvyrev, comments, "The centre boasts the newest equipment, which is unique countrywide. We operate day and night, in all weathers. Not long ago, 70 wagons carrying metal arrived from Ukraine, and were unloaded in just two days. There are now 10,500 tonnes in the warehouses: double the previous volume. MAZ,

MTZ and other enterprises are being supplied with metal without any need to wait or delay production."

The Kolyadichi station is a 'dry port' regarding its volumes of processed cargo and applied technologies. Its powerful Ferrari machinery can easily lift a many tonne 20-foot container. Among

the deliveries are car components for Chinese BelGee: a major user of the facility. The direct railway connection with the Asian-Pacific Region is allowing cargo delivery volumes to reach double the amount arriving by sea, while being cheaper than air. The Kolyadichi Centre is at the heart of 21st century trade for Belarus.

True grounds for optimism

By Alexander Pimenov

The gross domestic product is expected to increase in Belarus by the end of the year

"Our goal is to keep the GDP at last year's level. We are not considering growth now, but certainly we expect it by the end of the year. This is an extremely difficult task that we have given ourselves," commented Belarus' Economy Minister Vladimir Zinovsky.

The Economy Ministry's optimistic outlook is based on industry performance. In the first half of the year, Belarus' GDP amounted to 96.7 percent. "It will be very hard to make up for this drop. But we expect the industry to recover. Those measures that were adopted by the President and the Government are expected to bear fruit. Some of our major enterprises have been upgraded in



recent years and this should soon yield results. We expect growth in these sectors: processing, agriculture and woodworking amongst others," adds Mr. Zinovsky. In addition, the Ministry predicts inflation at 16-17 percent this year. "This is a very positive point. If we can manage to bring inflation down to below 10 percent, then the refinancing rate will be lower, and loans to businesses will be cheaper. Then we will have economic growth, of course," concluded the Minister.

Infrastructure of Brest, Grodno and Minsk has its role to play

By Vladimir Velikhov

Transport and Communications Ministry of Belarus and DHL Global Forwarding (China) sign memorandum on mutual understanding and co-operation

The document aims to set up strategic partnership for the development of cargo carriage via railway, air and other transport means, between China-Asia-EEU and European countries. The Minister for Transport and Communications, Anatoly Sivak, recently met representatives of the company to discuss transport and logistics infrastructure opportunities for Brest, Grodno and Minsk, working with DHL Global Forwarding.

The number of projects, proposed for implementation, includes to move cargo via Chinese container trains in an eastern direction (with consolidation and supplement in Brest and Minsk) to the countries of the Northern Europe,



as well as to transport cargoes from China in a western direction, with de-consolidation in Brest and further carriage from Brest to Western Europe via direct trains.

Brest and Minsk could become logistic hubs for cargo transportation into the European part of the Russian Federation, as well as into the northern and southern regions of Ukraine and the Baltic States (including using the Viking and Zubr trains). The Transport and Com-

munications Ministry and DHL Global Forwarding (China) plan to consult on creating comfortable and economically feasible conditions for transportation.

The Belarusian Ministry is undertaking commitments to facilitate direct ties between domestic transport organisations affiliated to the Ministry of Transport and Communications. The memorandum also lays out methods of sharing experience and information on various types of transport, transport logistics and infrastructure. "We hope that negotiations will result in greater fulfilment of our transit potential," asserts the Belarusian Ministry.

DHL is part of Deutsche Post DHL — an international group of companies in the sphere of postal services and logistics, which boasts infrastructure across 220 countries. Its range of services includes international express delivery, and transportation of cargo by air, sea, road and railway.

Gas torch baton

The first main gas pipeline passed through Belarus thirty years ago, connecting Urengoy, Pomary and Uzhgorod. Billions of cubic metres headed to European consumers from Western Siberia via the export artery laid across Belarusian fields. It brought clean, inexpensive fuel to our villages and cities. However, large-scale gasification was only launched in the mid-1990s, with corresponding state programmes approved, and much money allocated.

By Valentina Kozlovich

As a result, 118 Belarusian districts and all 113 cities are connected to the gas supply, with over 70 percent of urban dwellers and 54 percent of villagers enjoying access to 'blue fuel'. In the Brest Region alone, over 10,000km of pipelines have been laid, to ensure use by residents of villages, agro-towns, cities and enterprises. Over just a few decades, Brest gas workers have laid enough pipeline to join Brest and Vladivostok.

In addition, thousands of Polesie residents can proudly repeat the famous lines from Sergey Mikhalkov's poem: 'We have gas in our flat!' Pipelines have reached the most remote areas of the country, including villages affected by the Chernobyl disaster (where using firewood is extremely dangerous).

Nikolay and Maria Sinkevichs, from the Pinsk District's Boyary village, invited me to their home. Its rooms are spotlessly clean, and are adorned with my host's embroidery: on the sofa, pillows and the table. A hand-embroidered towel frames an icon in the corner. Maria loves to embroider on winter evenings, explaining, "Our stove failed to warm us, so we had to resort to using firewood. It took a lot of effort to keep it going. Now, I only need to switch on the lamp and I can calmly embroider by the window." Nikolay adds, "It's hard for me to collect wood, as I'm 74. Last winter was easier, almost like a holiday — for the first time in our life."

Gas pipelines were laid through Boyary at the end of 2014, transforming the home life of Galina Shpakovskaya. She lives in a pretty house on the outskirts, and believes their entire village has been improved. "It's now clean everywhere! People are installing inside bathrooms as a result." Galina explains that the whole village agreed to cover the cost of hav-

ing pipelines laid. "We've set up a co-operative, registering all documents; 70 percent of costs are covered from the village budget and the remaining 30 percent are paid by villagers. We've received privileged-term loans and have coped with the task well."

The Head of Pinskraigas, Alexander Sinkevich, took me on a tour of Boyary village, bordered by the River Yaselda, meadows and forests. It's modest in size, being home to around 100 people, and has found a new lease of life recently, thanks to gas. Those used to urban living, such as sculptor and artist Sergey Zhilevich, may find themselves released from the 'cage' of city life in such a place. He moved from Pinsk to Boyary, building a house in

his grandfather's garden. He has even encouraged the villagers to construct their own church. Mr. Zhilevich has filled the space around his home with a fairy-tale sculpture garden: open to all, regardless of him being at home.

A yellow box with a gas metre indicates that the house is connected with convenient natural gas: the wonderful landscape of the village remains unaffected and the house is all the more comfortable.

The village of Lyubel 'envies' its neighbours but, by autumn, should also enjoy its own gas supply: pipelines are being laid from Boyary. A powerful excavator is already digging a trench and small vehicles are operating nearby. It's no easy task when



Gas infrastructure developing countrywide

the lanes are narrow and agricultural fields cannot be disturbed. Mr. Sinkevich tells us, "Since gasification began in the Pinsk District, in 2001, 24 villages have received gas supply: 4,187 individual houses. Those in the Chernobyl affected areas are especially happy."

Neighbouring Ivanovo District is yet to enjoy extensive gas supplies. At the end of 2014, pipelines were laid to remote Tyshkovichi. This large village has almost 1,300 residents but only two houses have gas at the moment. The chief engineer of the district branch of Ivanovoraigas comments, "Gas pipelines have been laid to the village and a co-operative established. Once all necessary agreements and

registrations have been completed and a distribution gas pipeline has been built, gas will be supplied to all homes."

Lidia Kotkovets, who lives in one of the two 'happy' houses, is pleased. "I must admit: I was persuaded," she admits. "I'm fully enjoying the advantages of gas supply. It's great that my furnace works uninterrupted: in summer, we were using one gas canister monthly. We've been making jams and I'm preparing for my son's wedding but I know I can cook without problems. Thank you."

A major section of the pipeline (over 4km) has been laid to Tyshkovichi under the Yaselda River and through surrounding marshes. Mr. Ignatovets stops his car by the river, explaining, "Initially, we planned to use the shortest route but then learnt that we'd need to halt at an ancient settlement. As a result, we laid pipes under the river and through its marshes, using special machinery (from Brest)."

The Brest Region is a Belarusian leader in terms of agro-towns' gasification: 69.8 percent already enjoy natural gas supplies. Soon, the agro-town of Dostoevo (the home of Dostoevsky's forefathers, in the Ivanovo District) will have its own gas. Mr. Ignatovets shows me the future route.

I wonder how villagers can afford to purchase gas boilers, since they aren't cheap. However, I'm told that there's a specialised shop selling a range of brands, under loan or payment in instalments. Automatic gas boilers (which keep the necessary temperature, switching on and off independently) cost more than those you load yourself with wood or peat.

Undoubtedly, access to the gas supply raises our quality of life. Those living in almost 4 million Belarusian flats would surely agree. Once people have the chance to use natural gas, they do all they can to take advantage of the fact.



EXPERT VIEW

Alexander PROSTAKOV, Deputy General Director of Beltopgas:

Belarus is among the most advanced countries regarding the level of its gasification. Pipes stretch for over 53,700km, including 29,300km through villages. In the first half of 2015, 30 agro-towns and villages received gas supply.

Beltopgas organisations have participated in several state programmes — including the 2010-2015 social-economic development programme for the complex use of natural resources in Pripyat Polesie. Homes

in the Gomel, Mogilev and Brest districts (on lands contaminated by radionuclides) are now connected. In line with the programme (in particular, in the Brest Region), 77.8km of supply pipelines have come into operation, costing Br45.8bn — including Br45.3bn from the Republican budget (partly from the Energy Ministry's Innovative Fund). The 2011-2015 state programme for the sustainable development of villages has access to Br47br for pipeline construction so far.

Roaming for neighbours: prices to go down

By Artem Kiryanov

Heads of antimonopoly agencies of Eurasian Economic Union member states discuss lowering international communication tariffs, at recent Brest meeting

All agree that the situation concerning roaming charges needs correction. Expensive international calls affect around 26m people across Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, with subscribers paying around 5 cents per minute within their own network but, on crossing the

border, up to \$1.50. This is deterring people from travelling, and from making business contacts. With this in mind, the Eurasian Economic Union's antimonopoly agencies have recommended that mobile communication operators keep to 'principles of fair roaming'. Tariffs should be gradually and voluntarily cut, as they were within the European Union — which has faced similar problems in the past. After a special directive was adopted, EU communications became 'fair'.

Nurlan Aldabergenov, a member of the Board and the



Minister in charge of Competition and Antitrust Regulation, within the Eurasian Economic Commission, notes that reduced tariffs aim to improve public welfare. He underlines, "We've come to the conclusion that roaming charges are a factor influencing citizens'

comfort. We are now making all possible efforts to solve this problem. However, we know that communication tariffs won't be without charge."

Residents of border areas across Russia, Belarus and Kazakhstan hope to enjoy cheaper international calls

The introduction of fair roaming principles within the Eurasian Economic Union should save residents of the border areas of Belarus, Russia and Kazakhstan at least 1.5bn Russian Roubles. Naturally, people will then spend the money in other ways. Meanwhile, experts believe that mobile operators should actually enjoy greater profits, owing to increased traffic as a result of lowered tariffs: generating up to 22.7bn Russian Roubles.

Antimonopoly agencies will continue their vigilance, as the Brest meeting confirmed. Several video-con-

ferences are to be held, including with representatives of mobile operators, and a meeting is planned in Moscow for those interested in settling the problem.

Operators have been asked to prepare plans for stage-by-stage reduction of tariffs. Of course, it would be much easier if the problem affected only one country. However, major companies in five states are involved. With this in mind, operators may initially need to ensure 'fair approaches' in their national legislation — introducing corrections as necessary.

Big endeavours of small settlements

On visiting any district centre, I love walking through the streets, sitting on a bench in the local park, or perusing the shops. Small towns have changed in recent times, each having their own character, and have gained much from investment, allowing new buildings to appear. They have improved their economic 'health' as well, thanks to state programmes in the regions. Small and medium-sized town development is driving forward, as I've seen with my own eyes in the Mogilev Region's district centres.

By Pavel Minchenko

Osipovichy has always been known as a major industrial centre in the Mogilev Region. However, its economy has traditionally depended on enterprises located in other towns. For example, the local automobile aggregates plant supplies components to MAZ and MTZ. While the Belarusian industrial flagships flourished, so did the Osipovichy plant. However, when its partners began experiencing difficulties, the problems accumulated.

Now, the town is more economically independent, having developed its own market character. Only a few state run enterprises still operate in Osipovichy; the remainder are privately owned. Entrepreneurs have brought in investments, encouraged by preferential terms.

Until recently, the automobile aggregates plant lacked funds to complete its latest workshop construction. However, the building has now received new life, housing the Sontsa modern perfumery-cosmetics factory: a major influence in its field in Eastern Europe. Taking a tour, I was impressed by the orderliness: no smoking or idle workers. Employee Yuri Solovey explains, "People come here to earn money and there's no ceiling on your salary. I have my own targets and everything over this receives a bonus, which motivates me not to waste time. I'm former military, having served with a unit in Osipovichy. I earned good money there but, here, my salary is higher. I also receive a uniform to wear."

Altimed is another Osipovichy enterprise, unique within post-Soviet territory in producing artificial hips and placing Belarus among the top three European states manufacturing in this sphere (with Germany and Switzerland).

The Head of Altimed's Planning and Dispatching Department, Vladimir Gruntov, tells us that the company produces around 6,000 artificial limbs annually. This has cut waiting time for Belarusian orthopaedic patients. Moreover, the company is now developing an innovation for Belarusian medical science.

Jointly with the Deputy Chairman of the Osipovichy District Executive Committee, Vladimir Devoino, we take a tour of the town. His pride and pleasure are obvious as he tells us, "A neglected shed was situated here but a private businessman began using it as a construction material shop. Here, you can see a former shop selling furniture; the owner decided to expand the business and set up another company manufacturing plastic windows." On entering, we see fitter Igor Sukach, who explains



At privately-owned Sontsa perfumery and cosmetics factory



Altimed produce



On the street in the district centre

OFFICIALLY

The Economy Ministry informs us that, between 2007 and 2010, the state programme for the regions included plans for small and medium-sized town development, involving 170 major investment projects. Industrial production volumes rose over 1.5-fold, while the number of small enterprises almost doubled. Moreover, over 120,000 new jobs were created. The state programme resulted in a breakthrough for Belarus' small and medium-sized town development. Now, the major focus for regional development is the enhancement of living standards (irrespective of place of residence) and the reduction of differences between regions, based on stable economic growth. This year, all regions are generating profit and growth in labour productivity is outstripping salary growth. Almost all districts are registering reduced production costs, which is raising our competitiveness.

that, in the past, he used to travel to Moscow for employment, but now realises that similar salaries can be earned at home, without leaving his family. Mr. Devoino is convinced that the district centre is full of advantages. He stresses, "It's better to

have many small facilities operating than one major company. If any problems emerge, these won't affect the others. The people, the budget and the town all benefit."

Osipovichy investors aren't yet satisfied with their results, ever try-

ing to develop their businesses. Local Techsoyuz Polus, which produces polymer film as a rolled roofing material, is now negotiating supply to Russian tyre plants, while preparing a new project. It plans to manufacture film for packing heavy cargo pallets, such as bricks and construction blocks. At present, such film is imported but domestically produced materials would be at least 20 percent cheaper, benefiting our enterprises.

Leso-Vek began as a small sawmill until owner Nikolay Kirdun thought it would be more profitable to install a dryer. He bought the equipment and is now preparing to build another workshop.

Mr. Devoino notes the profit generated by private initiative, explaining, "Fifty percent of the district's GDP comes from individual entrepreneurs' products and services: private enterprises with no state share. The state has a small share in a few. Just 3-4 years ago, the share of private companies in the district's GDP didn't exceed 12 percent; now, businessmen's contributions account for half of the district budget."



Gennady Korotkevich

Good programming tradition

By Anastasia Shoplya

Belarusians occupy first place in Google programming contest

Gennady Korotkevich of Belarus has repeated his 2014 success by coming first in the Google Code Jam programming contest finals, solving five out of six tasks, in 3 hours 59 minutes. He claims a prize of \$15,000 and immediately qualifies for next year's Google Code Jam finals.

The finals gathered 26 programmers, including another Belarusian entrant. Ivan Metelsky of Belarus won Google Code Jam in 2013.

Architects keen to amaze

By Yuliana Leonovich

Minsk and guests to the city know that the National Architecture Festival involves not only city planners but all residents

The capital is to host the 11th festival from September 3rd-5th, featuring traditional contests of professional mastery, and exhibitions by national architects' unions from around the world, as well as those by designers, sculptors and monumental artists. There will be contests of children's artistry and lectures by well-known professionals.

In addition, leading architects will offer master classes and talks on their displayed works. Guests will be able to accompany them on tours of the Great Patriotic War History Museum and of Minsk's new and restored theatres, hotels and sporting arenas. The event opens on September 3rd at midday, near the Town Hall.

The Executive Secretary of the Belarusian Union of Architects, Irina Korobeinik, tells us, "This year, the festival will be held in the open air, in Minsk's historical centre. Exhibitions will be open to the public in Oktyabrskaya Square and in the Upper Town, coinciding with World Architecture Day. We aim to enhance public interest in the achievements of modern city planning and building. This year, the festival will be devoted to the 80th jubilee of the Belarusian Union of Architects, which is the country's oldest artistic association."

‘Here I obviously feel like in Europe’

This is the opinion of Maxim Osidulov from Sakhalin, who entered the university in Minsk

By Svetlana Devyatko

Long ago, Mikhail Lomonosov set off on a long wagon trip to receive an education in the capital. Now you don't need to make such sacrifices, as a plane can deliver you to any part of the globe in record time. Having been given the task of finding out how Russian students live in Belarus, our MT correspondent found the student who arrived in Minsk literally from the ends of the earth.

It has been two years since Maxim Osidulov moved to Minsk. He is a third year student in the economics department of BSU. He has become used to the Minsk way of life, but during the holidays returns to visit his parents in Sakhalin, “I hope to complete my education and become an expert in international relations. This specialism is currently in demand. We follow the examples of work of different successful companies, Russian, Belarusian and Western. The specialism is universal; it is useful in any field of activity.”

Sakhalin is a fishing area. Have you, as a future economist, considered the profitability of such a business with Belarus, for example?

Certainly, I often think about the possibility of organising logistics between the two countries. With a changeover, the flight time is 9 hours. I need to consider the situation in Yuzhno-Sakhalinsk, to study the local demand for Belarusian goods. I think that Belarusians need fish espe-



Maxim Osidulov in Minsk

MT'S REFERENCE:

About 2,000 Russian students enter Belarusian institutions of higher education annually. Of them, almost a half enters the Belarusian State University.

cially caviar. I am only able to eat fresh seafood to my heart's content when I come home.

Why did Maxim choose the Belarusian State University above all other institutes of higher education? A key factor in this decision was a friends-of-a-friend's parents, professional sportsmen who had previously moved to

Minsk. Their stories about Belarus made an impact on Maxim's family. Many of his schoolmates entered institutions of higher education of Khabarovsk, while he decided to realise his old dream of living in Europe for a while.

At first I thought of going to a Moscow or St. Petersburg university. But after visiting

Minsk I decided that I would stay here. The quality of education is of a high standard, and there is less bustle in Minsk. In the Far East, BSU has an excellent reputation.

Here, if I were to tell my fellow students that I was going to Poland or the Czech Republic, they would not be surprised. While in Sakhalin such a journey is a huge event, for us Europe is a very long way away! But now that I have lived a long way away from home, I appreciate the Far East: mountains, ocean and the wonderful nature. Before, this seemed commonplace to me.

Meanwhile, Maxim is the only person from Sakhalin at the university. And when the Sakhalin State University agreed to co-operate with the Belarusian State University, Maxim was offered an honourable role as a representative of the island. Such a ‘diplomatic’ mission is well within his capabilities!

What do you particularly like about Belarus?

Quiet people, beautiful architecture. It is pleasant simply to walk along the streets of Minsk, to sit in a cafe, to go to club with friends. I like it that the student village in which I live is a modern complex, instead of a shabby hostel.

In his free time, Maxim plays in a new musical group. He is also an athlete and tries to keep fit by going to the gym. He would like to explore all of Belarus having seen only Mogilev and Gomel. He tells us that as soon as possible he aims to visit Brest and Grodno, “Then I could rightfully claim that I saw the Union State from Sakhalin to Brest.”



Oleg Novitsky in his spacecraft

Into orbit once more

By Andrey Anisimov

Oleg Novitsky to captain crew in 2016

NASA and its partners have announced members of two expeditions to the International Space Station. American Peggy Whitson and French Thomas Pesquet will set off to the orbital station on November 15th, 2016, on the Soyuz spacecraft. The cosmonauts will spend 164 days at the station and, in March 2017, will be

joined by Russians Alexander Misurkin and Nikolay Tikhonov, as well as US representative Mark T. Vande Hei.

Oleg Novitsky and his colleagues will return to Earth on April 28th, 2017. Mr. Novitsky will perform the role of crew captain and is the third Belarusian to see our planet from orbit. He previously captained the Soyuz TMA-06M spacecraft, which launched on October 23rd, 2012.

MT'S REFERENCE:

Famous Belarusian cosmonauts:

Piotr KLIMUK

Born in the Brest Region, in 1965, he joined a crew of cosmonauts and became Yuri Gagarin's colleague at the age of 23. He made his first flight with aerial engineer V.V. Lebedev, on the Soyuz-13, and took part in three space trips, spending 78 days outside of the Earth's atmosphere.



Vladimir KOVALENOK

Born in the Krupki District's village of Beloe, in the Minsk Region, Vladimir was a pioneer of space exploration, making three space flights: the first was in 1977, the second in 1978 and the third in 1981. In total, he spent 216 days in space.



Shared memory for all

By Violetta Dralyuk

Memorial unveiled in Yelsk, commemorating Soviet Union Hero, Jan Nálepka of Slovakia, involving Ambassador of the Slovak Republic to Belarus, Mr. Miroslav Mojžita

Rural teacher Jan Nálepka, from the Yelsk District, joined the Great Patriotic War Soviet-German front to fight ‘against the Russians’; however, from the very first days, he knew his intentions. Tatiana Kashevich, Director of Yelsk Local History Museum, tells us, “In the 1990s, his brother (who has now passed away) visited us, telling how Jan had assured his relatives: ‘I’m

a Slav myself and won't kill Slavs'. He kept his word.”

Captain Nálepka arrived on Belarusian territory to head the headquarters of the 101st Slovak regiment, which should have fought on the enemy's side. However, instead, he set up an anti-fascist underground group, establishing ties with partisans. On the night of May 14th to 15th, 1943, Slovak soldiers joined Saburov's partisan movement, near the Yelsk District's Remezy village.

The museum has a chronicle of that event, which entered into history: donated to Yelsk local historians by Jan's relatives.



Memorial plaque unveiled

Jan Nálepka commanded a partisan brigade and distinguished himself in battles against fascist invaders. He died during the liberation of Ukrainian Ovruch, in November 1943, and was awarded the title of Hero of the Soviet Union posthumously.

Level of training proven in exercises

By Alexander Krotov

Belarusian soldiers bring 3 gold, 50 silver and 249 bronze medals from International Army Games, hosted by Russian Alabino training ground, near Moscow

In the overall team standings, the national squad of the Belarusian Armed Forces finished third. Perfect results were demonstrated in the ‘Masters of Gun-Fire’ contest, with the Belarusian mortar team only one minute behind the winners. The army recon unit secured third place by scoring 1,438 points out of 1,700. Our team did well in the ‘Masters of

Avia- and Armoured Technology’ contest; the auto- and tank-technical provision crew competed across a fast obstacle course.

The 2015 International Army Games were held across 11 training areas in Russia's Western, Southern, and Central military districts. The games featured competitions for ground forces, air forces, and seaborne forces. Military conscripts constituted half of the Belarusian army team.

The 2015 International Army Games gathered over 2,000 military personnel from 17 countries, with 480 sets of medals awarded across 14 events.

Britain and France seek to tackle 'Calais crisis'

United Kingdom and France plan to work together more closely to stem the flow of illegal migrants into the UK



French police patrol as migrants walk on a street near the makeshift camp called 'The New Jungle' in Calais

The two countries' interior ministers agreed to toughen up security measures in the northern French port of Calais. Calais is a popular route for migrants wanting to enter Britain.

It is home to the French side of the Channel Tunnel and is the shortest sea crossing to the UK from France. More French police will be deployed there, whilst Britain will

spend more on search and detection equipment. An estimated 3,000 migrants are waiting there, looking to enter the UK.

"This choice makes us look for and implement effective solutions to regulate the migratory flow, to host migrants in a humane way, to assume our obligations in terms of asylum but also, and I will emphasise this, to fight resolutely against the smug-

gling networks," said French Interior Minister Bernard Cazeneuve.

Both countries will also set up and run a joint command centre. British Home Secretary Theresa May said the situation in Calais 'is the result of a global migration challenge'.

May said, "That is why our two countries will continue to work closely together to make sure the rest of the European Union, and the

transit and source countries from which migrants are coming, are also playing their full part in solving this problem."

More than 240,000 migrants have already entered Europe this year by crossing the Mediterranean, landing mainly on the shores of Greece and Italy. Many of them are fleeing war or persecution in countries such as Syria or Afghanistan.

Student in Chile discovers new planet

A Chilean doctorate student has discovered by coincidence a new planet orbiting a star double the size of the Sun, some 320 million light years from Earth

Twenty-five year-old Maritza Soto Vasquez came upon the sphere while studying a nearby red star. Apparently it has a mass 100 times that of Earth.

It is also said to be closer to its star than the Earth is to the Sun and can be compared to a planet three times the size of Jupiter, in the place of Venus.

Vasquez who studies at the University of Chile said she was delighted to have her findings confirmed and that she had 'always dreamed of making a concrete scientific discovery'.

Samsung on the offensive with the launch of new Galaxy smartphones



They have launched another mission in the battle against Apple. Samsung has paraded two new Android smartphones with jumbo screens.

The South Korean company was lining up the two new super-sized Galaxy troops on the same day as a US appeals court ruled it will not reconsider an earlier decision finding that Samsung violated Apple patents. Samsung also announced the launch of its mobile payment service in the US at the end of September.

It will have greater store coverage than Apple Pay for which retailers need to install compatible equipment.

"You can put the phone near any magnetic strip reader and use the finger print sensor. So it's sort of this multiple authentication system and pay. They tokenized the credit cards just the same way as Apple pay does," explained Lance Ulanoff editor of Mashable.

According to the International Data Corporation, Apple's second quarter was its biggest shipping 47.5 million units.

IDC figures also showed Samsung remained the leader in the worldwide smartphone market but was the only company among the top five to see its shipment volume decline year over year.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Robotics a walk in the park with latest advances on display

Boston Dynamics, one of Google's parent company Alphabet's high-tech arms, has released video of its latest baby, the Atlas robot

In the video the humanoid robot is seen taking a hike in a forest and jogging along nature trails. Equally at ease on smooth and rough surfaces, it can also navigate on its own, and can go off-trail to scramble around in the undergrowth.

Although in the video Atlas remains tethered to a human with a power pack, Boston Dynamics says it is on track to let Atlas off the leash very soon. Already he can do significantly better than this lot.

However, we appear to be a long way from robots moving as well as this one does in *Ex Machina*, "Like most robots seen so far Atlas is basically humanoid, although one of the more interesting variants seen



recently is Tars from the hit movie *Interstellar*.

Atlas was revealed to the tech community earlier this month at the *FAB 11* conference in Boston.

The company says it is developing Atlas for humanitarian purposes although one of the project's main sponsors is the American military, and this latest version incorporates a variable pressure pump which allows it to be much quieter, and save energy.

It also has rotating wrists, so it does not need to rotate its forearm to open a door handle, and it is self-righting in the event of a fall.

Hidden dimensions: 3D scanner reveals the inner secrets of amazing artworks



It has long been known that, below the surface, works of art often contain important information about how they were created

However, revealing those secrets in a way that does not damage the object is a major challenge for art experts. Now, researchers at the University of Oviedo in northern Spain think they have the answer: a scanner using the highly versatile material, graphene.

Samuel Ver Hoeye, a telecommunications engineer involved in the research explained its advantages, "Gra-

phene acts as a frequency multiplier. It is able to generate higher frequency signals out of lower frequencies, in a relatively easy way. Graphene also allows us to go deeper into the work of art, and to identify the chemical composition of its materials," he said.

Graphene scanner

The pictures obtained with the graphene scanner are then combined with image processing techniques and 3D high-performance scanning to generate images of sealed 3D objects, whose hidden secrets can then be studied more easily.



Late 17th-19th century iconography and wooden sculptures presented at National Art Museum

Generous gilding definitely stresses special adornment

Late 17th-early 19th century icon painting and wooden sculpture from National Art Museum and Museum of Ancient Belarusian Culture at National Academy of Sciences go on show at country's major museum, to honour 80th birthday of Metropolitan Filaret, Honorary Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus

By Veniamin Mikheev

Since the times of early Christianity, altars have always occupied a separate space within a church, apart from the main congregation's seating area. By the 5th-7th centuries, the sanctuary screen had become a screen upon which sacred symbolic images were depicted, facing the faithful, and revealing the spiritual essence of the altar's function, and that of the Church.

The exhibition discloses the diversity of iconostasis, e.g., as a rule, the most important Christian holidays are portrayed in its second layer. Meanwhile, the image of Christ, who is to judge the living and the dead, is placed at the centre of the third layer, with depictions of the Blessed Virgin Mary and John the Precursor on either side, praying to the Saviour to forgive human sins. These supplement each other and offer full disclosure of the Church's essence.

During the 17th and 18th centuries, Belarusian iconostasis flourished. Under the influence of Northern Euro-

pean Baroque, relief carvings of flowers and fruits (particularly berries and bunches of grapes) became popular. Generous gilding adorned icons and carvers from Vitebsk, Mogilev, Orsha and Shklov became especially famous for their mastery. In the second half of the 17th century, masters filled Moscow churches with Belarusian carved iconography. Several examples remain, created by Belarusian masters under the guidance of Klim Mikhailov, Elder Ippolit, and Stepan Zinoviev.

In the late 1920s, churches in Vitebsk, Mogilev, Mstislavl and Orsha preserved carved and gilded iconostases from the second half of the 17th century; sadly, these were destroyed by Soviet powers in the early 1930s. That in St. Nicholas Church in Mogilev partially survived and has been renovated by contem-

porary carvers, gilders and icon painters. In the western part of Belarus, the 1960s saw much destruction of 'religious cult artefacts', under state atheism; however,



Exhibits delight every visitor



museums often became shelters for sacred art pieces.

The current exhibition showcases almost complete iconographic examples from the 18th century, from Prechistenskaya Church in Shereshevo; they depict 24 local and apostolic scenes, covering a range of holy festivals.

In 1958, the State Art Museum of the BSSR (now, the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus) undertook the first expedition to collect sacred art, gathering the complete iconostasis from a church (soon destroyed). This was brought from the Brest Region's Shereshevo to the museum. Deliberate restoration and study began and, in 1979, a Museum of Ancient Belarusian Culture opened.

In 2009, with the blessing of the Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus, the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, Filaret, Zhirovichi Monastery donated seven ancient icons from Assumption Cathedral, dating from around 1730. These were given to the National Art Museum, where restorers removed the upper layers to find evocative Eu-

ropean Baroque style paintings. Twelve apostles, four prophets and the Zhirovichi Icon of the Mother of God are exhibited at the exhibition, and are unrivalled. The major city and monastic cathedrals of Vilnius, Vitebsk, Minsk, Mogilev and Pinsk must once have been decorated in similar pieces but these have not survived.

The current exhibition includes the Holy Gates (in Polesie, they are called Gates of Paradise) and individual icons donated to the National Art Museum by various Belarusian rural churches.

A unique example of classical church art is a distinct work depicting the twelve apostles, from Bezdezh. This expressive work was created by an unknown painter of the academic school (probably, from Vilnya) sometime in the 18th or 19th century. Some visitors may recognise the style and be able to guess the name of the artist.

Treat yourself, dear guests!

Motol Delicacies Festival held for seventh time in Ivanovo District

By Valentina Kozlovich

Despite the burning sun, the Brest Region's tastiest event gathered thousands of guests to the ancient village of Motol for two days. Each cook was eager to share their best recipes, with every secret finding its way into their bowls and pots of Polesie cuisine. Clearly, they wished not only to impress tourists but each other.

Faced with so many choices, it's no easy task to select what you should sample first. However, I have to say that Motol chorba is one of my favourites: a hearty soup of boiled heart, kidney, lungs and liver, with sautéed vegetables. The local round loaf comes a close second, followed by doughnuts. Other 'worthy' dishes include pot-baked buckwheat and couscous, potato 'babka' with bacon, tasty draniki with kidney beans, stewed beans with onion and carrot, home-made sausages, smoked pike, cheeses, and meat delicacies. Some are made to kosher requirements, as of old (a traditional Jewish style of preparation).

At first sight, all might look ordinary but each dish uses organic ingredients and is served in the wonderful Motol-style. Those coming to the festival can hardly believe their eyes. Russia's



Motol Delicacies Festival presents diverse dishes

Irina Volkova — who was staying with relatives in the Drogichin District — admitted, "It's incredible that such delicacies are cooked in a village."

Motol attracts businessmen too. The village has only 4,000 residents but several production facilities, in addition to 67 registered entrepreneurs and

around 40 private shops. Local people are convinced that this business spirit dates from the days of Bona Sforza, the wife of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania's Duke, Sigismund I the Old. Motol received the Magdeburg Right in 1555 and the Italian's residence in the area attracted many skilled craftsmen and merchants. Various family names in Motol — such as Polto — are of Italian origin. Meanwhile, the locally popular name of Kuzer has German roots. Others are Shokolay, Minuyk and Kashtelyan.

Motol is now firmly on Belarus' tourist map, owing to its cuisine,

believes the Chair of the Country Escape Agro- and Eco-tourism Public Association, Valeria Klitsounova. She notes, "It's fashionable to have an interest in food and cooking, and gastro-tourism particularly brings people to food festivals. In particular, people like to watch live demonstrations of food preparation." Ms. Klitsounova has proposed that agro-mansion hosts share their recipes, creating a Belarusian gastronomic map and encouraging patriotic feelings towards traditional dishes.

Neighbours of the Motol villagers have opened a house of ba-

con at the festival, with hosts from Odrizhin (in the Ivanovo District) making sandwiches of seemingly incompatible ingredients, such as bacon, onion and olives. Cheese makers from Priyaseldny agricultural company (located in the village of Psyshchevo) have proven successful with their cheese pies, baskets of 'cheese-mushrooms' and clever cheese hedgehogs! They use milled linen seed — known as 'makukha' — from Bezdezh (in the Drogichin District).

The first *Motol Delicacies Festival* won the *Teach Belarus* Republican Tourist Contest's 'Event' nomination. This year's (seventh) festival has officially been named as international and the local wedding round loaf tradition has gained the status of being a Belarusian intangible historical-cultural treasure.

In addition to food, those festive days in Motol gather craftsmen from all over the country. Their clay, wood, linen and straw articles always enjoy demand. Moreover, Motol offers several interesting sites for visitors: the local museum of folk crafts (which celebrated its 20th jubilee on August 8th); an archaeological (Our Roots) museum; a museum of folk medicine (a Herbalist's House); and the museum-house of Chaim Weizmann — who founded the state of Israel. The local *Motol Neighbours* folk group celebrates the round loaf tradition with Jewish dishes, dancing and songs: all in the local dialect. These attractions are deserving of a separate article...

Deep plunging into the medieval age

Visitors to Vitebsk Town Hall's museum can take a photo of themselves in a warrior's armour

By Yekaterina Knyazeva

The *Black Horse Riders* exhibition of 16th and 17th century armour and weaponry opened at Vitebsk's Town Hall and will be of great interest to lovers of the history of war and weaponry. Visitors can immerse themselves in the era of the brave and reckless warriors of 16th-17th century European armies, the 'black horse riders' (reiters), cuirassiers and pikemen amongst others.

The exhibition features weaponry of the period: rapiers, swords, spears, clubs, stiletos, maces, battle-axes, sabres and throwing hammers. In addition, visitors can view shields, horse livery and bridlery, as well as exact copies of the armour worn by Western European warriors during the transitional period from medieval knights to regular soldiery. Protective armour played a very important role, especially for cuirassiers, the Western European cavalry and the



Travelling back in time to days of fearless warriors

'winged' or shielded hussars of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rzecz Pospolita. In contrast to the heavy and uncomfortable medieval armour however, the protective 'clothing' of the 16th and 17th centuries transformed warfare significantly. The breastplate became its major feature as it protected the

body. Breastplates are one of the items available for trying on and taking photos with.

Sergey Nurmatov, who owns the collection, is a rare CIS master armorer. He has reconstructed many unique articles, such as the armour of the Holy Roman Emperor and Spain's King Karl V.



Talaka performance

Talaka performance pleases spectators

By Anastasia Shoplya

A recording of works performed at the folk festival of the European Broadcasting Union with the Belarusian ensemble *Talaka*, will air in a concert on the Culture Channel of Belarusian radio

The National State TV and Radio Company of the Republic of Belarus organised the participation of the Belarusian collective *Talaka* in the folk festival.

The collective from Belarus wowed listeners with their 'solo concert' of Belarusian folk songs and instrumental musical pieces, as well as traditional dance. Among the other musical performances this year were representatives from Russia, Ukraine,

Armenia, Latvia, Estonia, Croatia, the Czech Republic, Hungary, Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Finland, Austria, Spain, Norway, Turkey and Korea. The popular annual event was held for the 36th year in Kraków, and attracted true connoisseurs of folk music from all over the world. Accordions, violins, dulcimers and balalaikas, amongst other instruments, could be heard. The folklore festival includes a wide variety of musical genres from the European folk music tradition. Thanks to the festival, over many years, more than 2 thousand vocal and instrumental groups have achieved fame far outside their local area. The *Talaka* ensemble is a group of students from the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts.

Ten medals and twelve licenses to Olympic Games

By Igor Grishin

Belarusian Marina Litvinchuk won three gold medals at the Milan event, including the K1 5,000m (the longest distance in the kayak singles) in 22 minutes and 36.06 seconds. She also came first in the 200m kayak pairs, partnering Margarita Makhneva, and took gold as part of her kayak four, in the 500m. This season, she's also won victory at the 1st European Games in Baku, where she brilliantly covered the 5,000m singles and the 200m kayak pairs.

Sixth place and a ticket to the Rio Games went to the Beijing Olympic 1,000m canoe pair winners: brothers Alexander and Andrey Bogdanovich. They were behind Brazil's Erlon De Souza Silva and Queiroz Dos Santos, who took gold, by just 1.917 seconds.

Olympic places have also been earned by our kayak four of Pavel Medvedev, Andrey Tsarikovich, Vitaly Belko and Roman Petrushenko, who finished 8th in the final K4 1,000m.

In the 5,000m canoe event, Belarusian Maxim Petrov — who had captured bronze in the C1 500m — failed to win. Meanwhile, Oleg Yurenka took bronze in the 5,000m kay-



Marina Litvinchuk partners Margarita Makhneva to claim championship gold

ak singles: gold in this long distance category went to Australia's Kenny Wallace and silver was captured by Germany's Max Hoff. Behind the two favourites, Oleg finished in 20

minutes and 11.91 seconds.

As a result of their performance in Milan, the Belarusian team captured 5 gold, 2 silver and 3 bronze medals. Germany topped the overall rankings,

with 13 medals. Second place went to Belarus (10) and Australia was third (8). Our national team won 12 Olympic places at the Summer Games in Rio de Janeiro.

Victoria Azarenko withdraws from Cincinnati tournament

By Igor Leshin

Belarus' top tennis player Victoria Azarenko (seeded 21st by the WTA) fails to finish third round of Premier tournament in US Cincinnati

In the match for the quarter-finals, facing Russian Anastasia Pavlyuchenkova (seeded 34th), the Belarusian



confidently won the first set 6:1 and was down 0:3 in the second when she retired because of a hip injury. Afterwards, Victoria told reporters, "I'm not too upset as I really needed to sort out this problem. There's nothing which I can't overcome and I'll be ready for the US Open."

Ms. Azarenko had initially beaten American Lauren Davis (seeded 85th) — 6:1, 6:2 — and had confidently defeated the world's fifth seed, Caroline Wozniacki of Denmark (6:0, 6:4). In 2013, Ms. Azarenko won the Cincinnati event.



Cup in winners' hands

Perfect result before start of new season

By Yegor Glebov

Brest handball club (named after Meshkov) wins 8th International Belgazprombank tournament, held in Brest

Alongside Brest Meshkov HC, teams from Poland and Russia competed for the Belgazprombank Cup, playing in rotation. The Brest club celebrated victory across all matches. At the start of the tournament, they defeated Polish Azoty-Pulawy, 37:26, and then smashed Russian Universitet-Neva from St. Petersburg, 30:22.

The Brest team was determined to beat Polish Wisla, from Plock, despite it being considerably stronger and a formidable rival. At halftime, the score stood at 12:13, in favour of Poland's vice-champions. However, in the second half, Brest seized the initiative, taking the lead and snatching victory, with a final score of 24:22. Brest Meshkov HC last won the Bel-

gazprombank Cup five years ago.

"The most important element is that our players managed to show their team spirit. The squad is young but it's already showing what it's capable of. Much work lies ahead, with major tasks this season, so we need to keep a cool head and fire in our belly, rather than the other way round!" noted head coach Sergey Bebesko, after the awards ceremony.

The major founder of the club, Alexander Meshkov, has set ambitious tasks for the team from the city over the River Bug: to fight for victory in the SEHA League; to qualify for the 1/8 finals of the Champions League; and to win the domestic championship and the Belarus Cup.

In the new season, the Brest handballers will hold their first match at home, facing Serbian Spartak (as part of the SEHA League) on August 29th at Brest's Victoria Sports Palace.

Three goals for two teams

By Kirill Karin

BATE and Dinamo Minsk conduct first play-off matches for Champions League and Europa League

Before the home match began, Borisov seemed to be favoured, attempting to score, though unsuccessfully, early on. Partizan Belgrade's goalkeeper Živko Živković averted goals from Mikhail Gordeichuk and Vitaly Rodionov. In the 13th minute, Partizan forward Andrija Živković came face-to-face with BATE goalkeeper Sergey Chernik, who managed to save his net.

By the end of the first half, Partizan was one man down, as half-back Marko Jevtović received two yellow cards and was sent off. BATE used this to their advantage after halftime, taking more control of the ball and dangerously threatening their rival's net. Meanwhile, the Serbian team only made one real attempt at goal, with a kick from Andrija Živković, in the 70th minute.

A corner kick brought success to BATE in the 75th minute, with Igor Stasevich's pass to Mikhail Gordeichuk resulting in a header into the net. The Belarusian team continued to possess the initiative and would have scored further but for the Partizan goalkeeper deflecting shots by Vitaly Rodionov and Dmitry Baga, leaving the final score at Borisov Arena at 1:0.

At Brestsky sports complex, Dinamo welcomed Salzburg: a rival deemed to have the advantage. The



Dinamo plays worthily

ball more towards the other end of the pitch, but failed to score, despite efforts by Vladimir Korytko, Fatos Beqiraj and their teammates.

In the second half, the Minsk squad spent less time in possession of the ball, yet were the ones to score. In the 53rd minute, Nenad Adamović (who made a substitute appearance) made a perfect pass along the left wing to Gleb Rassadkin, who brought the score to 1:0.

Salzburg intensified its efforts yet failed to create any real threat for Gutor's net. Then, at the last minute, Adamović scored a second goal for Dinamo, after his ball rebounded from the bar.

The 2:0 score, after an unsuccessful start to the season, takes Dinamo Minsk close on BATE Borisov's heels in the tournament table. Moreover, Dinamo is now close to qualifying for the European Cup group stage, for the second year in a row.



BATE retains victorious score

Austrian squad immediately seized the initiative, causing fans of the Minsk team to worry significantly. Fortunately, Dinamo's defence, headed by goalkeeper Alexander Gutor, rose to the challenge.

By the middle of the first period, Dinamo had managed to move the

Swim of the week



Around 25 swimmers take part in Belarus' first such contest at Avgustovsky Canal

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 6th September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*
Until 27th September. *Belarusian Iconostas*
Until 27th September. *A Husband, a Man, a Warrior*
Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*
Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 31st August. *Belarusian Musical Instruments*
Until 6th September. *From Hoop Skirts and Tournures to Modern*
Until 6th September. *Three Stories about War*
Until 13th September. *Fascination art-project*
Until 31st December. *Major Presentation of Museum Relics: 79 Steps Inside History*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 30th August. *The World of Big Parrots and Singing Birds*

WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz. Illustrations and Medals*

NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 27th August. *Spirit of Religious Tradition and Printed Icon*
Until 31st August. *Feeling of the Colour*

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

121 Kalinovsky Street

Until 30th August. International festival of sand sculptures

Theatres

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

30.08. *Blue Cameo* 31.08. *Women's Revolt*
01.09. *A Glass of Water* 02.09. *My Fair Lady*
03.09. *The Gypsy Baron*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

28.08. *An Ideal Husband* 29.08. *Double Eternity*
30.08. *Oedipus* 03.09. *Double Eternity*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

30.08. *People of the Marsh*
02.09. *Paulinka* 03.09. *Pan Tadeusz*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

03.09. *Abduction of Yelena*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

28.08. *Theatrical Voyage II*

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

28.08. *Para Pa Param* 30.08. *The Nutcracker*
21st Century; *Prostokvashino Holidays*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

02 and 03.00. *Thank You, Margo!*

UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square

29.08. *Summer Musical-Tourist Season*

Concerts

SVOBODY SQUARE

29.08. *Encore cycle of concerts: Nemiga concert orchestra*
30.08. *Wind orchestra of the Minsk Garrison in Svobody Square*

MINSK TOWN HALL

29.08. *Festival of Street Musicians*

DREAMLAND

80 Orlovskaya Street

30.08. *Holi Fest Dreamland*

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

August and September of decades and centuries past come to life

August 28th. In 1925, a ballet dancer, an Honoured Artiste of Belarus — Georgy Martynov — was born. Since 1952, he was a soloist of the State Opera and Ballet Theatre and, since 1963, was a ballet master of the State Dance Ensemble. From 1967-1975, he was a ballet soloist of the Belarusian Philharmonics.

August 29th. In 1909, Belarusian artist Valentin Tikhonovich was born. He was among the founders of the Belarusian animalistic graphics.

August 30th. In 1928, a Belarusian scientist in the field of nuclear reactors, a Candidate of Technical Sciences and an academician at the Belarusian Engineering Academy — Prof. Oleg Yaroshevich — was born in Minsk.

August 31st. In 1915, a critic and a literature expert — Yanka Kazeka — was born in the village of Kostrichi (Minsk Region, Bobruisk District). He worked at the *Litaratura I Mastatstva* newspaper and was the Editor-in-Chief of the Belarus Publishing House. He also deputised editor-in-chief at the Belarusian Soviet Encyclopaedia Publishing House.

September 1st. In 1914, a farther of the Belarusian piano forte school — Grigory Shershevsky — was born. Since 1939, he lectured at the Belarusian Conservatoire (now known as the Music Academy).



September 1st. In 1969, the Pesnyary vocal-instrumental band was founded at the Belarusian State Philharmonics. Since 1985, it's known as the Pesnyary State Belarusian Pop Ensemble.

September 2nd. In 1889, a linguist and a teacher — Kon-

stantin Shepelevich — was born in the village of Brodok (Minsk District). He wrote elementary schoolbooks in Belarusian language (which were re-published several times).

September 3rd. In 1915, a conductor and an Honoured

rosurgery and Physiotherapy was established in Minsk — since 2005, known as the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Neurology and Neurosurgery.

August 28th. In 1936, the Profintern Garden was renamed into the Maxim Gorky Park.

August 28th. In 1994, the Belarusian Written Language and Printing Day was celebrated for the first time in the country. Since then, the holiday is celebrated on every first Sunday of September.

August 29th. In 1939, a USSR Hero, pilot Sergey Gritsevits — became the first to receive the Twice USSR Hero title. In 1954, a memorial was erected in Minsk in his honour.

August 28th. In 1994, the Belarusian Written Language and Printing Day was celebrated for the first time in the country. Since 1998, it's known as the Belarusian Written Language Day.

August 30th. In 2001, the Mogilevskaya metro station was launched.

August 31st. In 1785, Mogilev's Seminary.