

Belarusian scientists have invented a new method for monitoring road surface quality



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One more Belarusian rite is included in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage



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INTERNATIONAL

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## Best beginning for start-up

Ideas, innovations, discoveries and developments were the main topics for two days within the walls of the National Library, as part of the *Smart Patent'19* Trade Fair of Innovative Ideas and the *INMAX* International Scientific and Practical Forum. The traditional December event, whose organisers include the Minsk City Executive Committee and the Minsk City Technopark, gained in importance and size by uniting more than a thousand representatives of science, education and business from Belarus, Russia, Lithuania, Kazakhstan and Ukraine. It's a great opportunity for authors of projects not only to present themselves, but also to learn how to move forward. → 6



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# Example to follow

Expansion of innovative and investment co-operation, joint oil production, transfer of BelAZ dump trucks to natural gas based motor fuel, identity of Belarusian Tatars and other promising projects were discussed at the Palace of Independence during the meeting of Aleksandr Lukashenko with the President of the Republic of Tatarstan, Rustam Minnikhanov

By Maksim Osipov

Noting that Kazan is the most important partner of Belarus in the Volga Federal District of Russia, Mr. Lukashenko emphasised, «To preserve and increase such a significant result, we need to look for new growth points. An increase in the volume of innovation and investment co-operation is viewed as the main vector of interaction in this direction.»

An important co-operation project between Belarus and Tatarstan dealing with the development of natural gas vehicles is aimed at the practical use of advanced technologies and scientific achievements. It involves Belarus' MAZ, MTZ, Amkodor and BelAZ who actively co-operate with Tatarstan's RariTEK Holding. This trade and industrial association was at the start of the development of natural gas based motor fuel in Russia. The Belarusian President 'illustrated' the importance of co-operation, «Over the past two years, almost 200 buses that run on natural gas have been assembled. In 2020, the same number of similar units will be produced. Together with the Minsk Motor Plant, work is progressing on the production of four- and six-cylinder gas based engines for MTZ tractors and Amkodor vehicles. In future, we plan to transfer BelAZ dump trucks to this type of fuel. These examples confirm

that we have chosen the path of partnership rather than competition.»

As a result, self-sufficient co-operation is developing between Minsk and Kazan. New jobs are created and equal opportunities for enterprises provided. Mr. Lukashenko believes, «The spread of this exemplary experience to other regions of Russia would ensure greater returns from our economic dialogue. Our country has significant opportunities in the field of nano- and biotechnology.»

At the same time, co-operation in the petrochemical sector, which accounts for half the trade turnover, remains a key area.

With this in view, the Belarusian Head of State stressed, «We are now conducting a dialogue with Russia on building co-operation in the field of oil. I think the present conversation will be important not only in terms of information, but also in connection with the work in this sector.»

Later, speaking with journalists, Rustam Minnikhanov said that Tatarstan is ready to involve Belarus in oil production. The fact is that, three years ago, the possibility of attracting Belorusneft (which has good specialists and competencies) to oil production in the Volga Region was discussed. The President of Tatarstan con-

firmed, «This topic is not closed. By and large, to have this competence, we need deposits. The idea hasn't gone away, it's still topical. These are different points: everything is already established in the area where we work already but development of new fields envisages a resource base for Belarus. We are ready for this.»

In his talk with the President, Mr. Minnikhanov noted that every visit of the Tatarstan delegation to Belarus brings a lot of positive feelings. «I've visited the BelAZ plant which produces 450 tonne capacity dump trucks — which are unique in the world. We were taken there by an electric bus which was also very impressive. However, I especially want to thank you as a Muslim: you have a magnificent mosque, beautiful both architecturally and internally. More than 7,000 Tatars live here, they are very happy with the dynamics of the country's development; at the same time, they've preserved their identity and songs and have a mosque such as this. I cannot but thank you for this: it all shows well how you, as Head of State, resolve the issues,» he said.

«We do not want to offend any Muslim!» affirmed Mr. Lukashenko.

«On the contrary, many should envy such conditions,» noted Mr. Minnikhanov.

«These people are like gold. They've never let me down. Never!» the Belarusian President added and Mr. Minnikhanov agreed, «They'll never do this!»



BELTA

## Aleksandr Lukashenko, President of Belarus:

The deepening of co-operation in mechanical engineering, the implementation of projects in the field of innovation should lead to the growth of bilateral trade. I am convinced that, in the near future, we will have every opportunity to reach an annual turnover of \$2bn. I am very grateful to you for co-operation in the field of production and sales of our equipment, especially MAZ — despite the fact that you have your own KAMAZ production.

## Rustam Minnikhanov, President of Tatarstan:

Sixty percent of the agricultural machinery we use is produced in Belarus; these are of very good quality. Another direction is MTZ tractors assembled by us in Yelabuga [on the basis of the local MTZ-Tatarstan TPK JSC]. The third area focuses on natural gas based motor fuel. Belarusian producers are very advanced in this sphere and we are actively collaborating on these issues. With this in mind, \$2bn trade turnover is a do-able task for us.

# Learn to benefit your health!

Last week, the Head of State visited the Belarusian State Medical University to talk to students and lecturers. The conversation was extensive — focusing on the most important issues in the sphere, including personnel employment, salaries, telemedicine and university clinics. The President answered dozens of questions, with a live broadcast to regional audiences provided.



BELTA

At the beginning of the meeting Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, «National medicine faces the most important task: to increase the life expectancy and improve the quality of life of our citizens. This is one of the fundamental priorities of the state's national

policy.» According to the President, the medical education system in Belarus now is a fusion of rich traditions, scientific basis and vast practical experience. An individual approach to each student, high quality teaching, including in foreign languages, pro-

vide a worthy international rating for domestic medical universities.

The Head of State paid special attention to the accommodation issue. He stressed that young doctors should be supported both in the capital and in regions as 25 percent of them need housing.

«The Health Ministry and local authorities need to pay special attention to the modernisation of existing hostels, including family type accommodation, to build new modern housing. It is unacceptable to settle young professionals in dilapidated houses and apartments,» Mr. Lukashenko stressed, adding that the Government will develop a programme aimed at construction of housing for state employees. Its prototype will be the doctor's housing recently built in the Minsk Region. The President personally visited these houses.

«I will not discuss the price; it's fairly reasonable. The task is to develop a programme within three years and build such houses for teachers, doctors and workers in

## FIGURES

More than 15,200 Belarusian students and 4,300 foreigners study at the country's medical universities. At the Belarusian State Medical University alone, over the past three years, the enrolment of foreigners has increased almost 6 times to reach 400–450 people. Exports of the Health Ministry's educational services are growing annually and now account for a third of all educational services in the country.

the cultural and social spheres — the areas where they are most needed. When a young specialist gets an apartment like this, they will never leave it to go abroad. It's essential to fulfil the task in two-three years and build such houses,» Mr. Lukashenko added.

During the meeting, the President was asked about changes in the system of salary calculations in the budget sphere starting from 2020. Mr. Lukashenko assured those present that the salaries of teachers and doctors will grow. He explained that the number of existing salary grades will be reduced (there are currently more than 50 of them) as they will be united under new names — with simultaneous merging of their amounts in monetary terms.

Wages will not fall because of the optimisation of different additional payments.

«On the eve of the Presidential election, how can the incumbent President afford to cut salaries for those on whom he mostly relies? These are teachers and doctors who are paid by the state budget. The main condition is that in no case should the reform and modernisation of the system of salary payment to state employees reduce the sums paid,» he stressed, also drawing attention to the fact that, next year, the salaries of doctors should grow by 20 percent and double by 2025.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

# President of Belarus' long-anticipated visit to Vietnam

The parliamentary delegation of Vietnam headed by the Chair of the National Assembly, Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan, has paid an official visit to Belarus. The guests were greeted at the Palace of Independence by President Aleksandr Lukashenko who stressed that Belarus and Vietnam have done much to ensure more successful development of trade and economic relations.

«We have very warm relations based on the good history of our two states, which would be the pride of any country and the basis for the development of relations. Recently, we have done much to ensure that our trade and economic relations develop more successfully. As for politics and the international agenda, we have good positions that coincide on the agenda of international relations,» the Head of State said, also stating with pleasure that heads of the Vietnamese Parliament regularly visit Belarus.



Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan

«Your chairmen often come to us and I'd very much like your visit to Belarus to give an additional impetus to our co-operation in all areas.»

In turn, Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan stressed that she was glad to pay a visit to Belarus. The Chair of the National Assembly conveyed to Mr. Lukashenko a greeting from the President of

Vietnam, Nguyen Phu Trong, and an invitation to visit the country once again.

The Deputy Prime Minister, Igor Lyashenko, later commented on the results of the meeting, paying special attention to the issues of increasing trade turnover between Belarus and Vietnam. He also commented on what prevents the countries from reaching a trade turnover of \$500m, «So far, customs duties in ASEAN are a significant limitation. In light industry and electrical engineering, they reach 50 percent. Without addressing these issues, it will be difficult to exceed this level. This is quite a long process but we are working on it now.»

According to Mr. Lyashenko, this year, the growth

rate of trade between Belarus and Vietnam could reach 170 percent. In January-September, it amounted to more than \$150m and, in 2018, the figure stood at about \$115m. Belarus pins considerable hopes on the assembly of MAZ trucks at a plant recently launched in Vietnam. In addition, tests of BelAZ dump trucks are being completed at Vietnamese quarries. Based on the outcome of these tests, contracts for the purchase of Belarusian quarry equipment may be signed.

According to Mr. Lyashenko, the construction of a joint dairy facility is almost complete in Vietnam and, as planned, Belarus will export milk powder to this country for the further production of dairy products, expected to be launched in 2020.

In addition, the Vietnamese side is interested in creating

## ACCENT

According to experts, in 2019, Vietnam remains the fastest growing economy in ASEAN. In the first nine months of the year, the country's GDP increased by about 7 percent.

new materials, intensifying co-operation in the field of tourism and in mutual student exchanges.

Nguyen Thi Kim Ngan discussed the development of inter-parliamentary co-operation between Belarus and Vietnam at talks with the speakers of the both houses of Parliament: Natalia Kochanova and Vladimir Andreichenko.

## DIRECT SPEECH

**Natalia Kochanova, Chair of the Council of the Republic:**

Belarus views Vietnam as a starting point for increasing its economic presence in the South-East Asia region. However, the level of mutual trade between the states does not correspond to existing potential. It is necessary to develop trade between our countries and bring economic liaisons to the level of political co-operation.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Hundreds of experts, six issues and many hours of discussion were the marathon that accompanied the scientific and practical conference in Moscow dedicated to the 20th anniversary of the signing of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State. Politicians, diplomats, economists, business leaders and media representatives were united by a single goal: to discuss topical issues of the construction of the Union State. Many of these have been accumulated over the years of the Union's existence. With this in mind, the theme of the conference was wide — ranging from issues of convergence of legislation to co-operation in the youth and social spheres.

By Vladislav Sychevich

Opening the conference, the State Secretary of the Union State — Grigory Rapota — noted that it's important to talk about the future, paying tribute to the past and properly assessing the present realities. He recalled the expectations the parties had when signing the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State, «It was a month of hope and expectation, New Year's Eve. Of course, I want to believe that, in many respects, these expectations and hopes were justified, although there are many unresolved issues. However, on assessing the recent period, we can say that the project of the Union State is alive, though sometimes it's difficult to say how this is manifested — since we live in these realities.»

For 20 years, the issues of the Union State establishment have been discussed at different levels and in different formats but this was the first time they were on the agenda of a thematic scientific and practical conference. The event itself was held in classic format. Firstly, the guests read

# Problems solved together



Vladimir Semashko, in the centre



Grigory Rapota

out welcome addresses from the heads of government of the two countries and the speakers of the parliaments. Then the participants split into sections.

As the State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, noted, the agenda is extensive. «Problems exist and they won't disappear. Moreover, new problems emerge at each stage. Even when addressing these issues, new challenges arise. Therefore, it is a natural process that reflects the dynamics of development of any living organism. We have

issues that are being resolved within the framework of the working group on deepening integration. In general, we are working on the expansion of programmes against the background of a frozen budget, which has not changed since 2009. Secondly, we need to expand the list of major projects that would unite us in a single creative project. We will also address issues relating to the creation of a single transport, energy and economic space,» the official added.

The abolition of roaming in the Union State remains unresolved. The matter is the balance of interests. The technical aspect was mentioned initially but everything depends on money — though, at the level of the two states' communication ministries, there is an understanding of a positive decision.

This 'understanding' was probably the most common word at the conference. Belarus' Ambassador to Russia, Vladimir Semashko, believes the two states' further integration is impossible without this. «We are now going through a fundamentally new stage. When we re-

## OPINIONS OF FORUM PARTICIPANTS

**Aleksandr Karlyukevich, Belarus' Information Minister:**

With respect, it is surprising how many concrete practical things have been done, how many joint programmes have been implemented that contribute to the consolidation of society and our economies. Of course, there are problems but they exist in order to find a compromise.

**Aleksandr Sergeev, President of the Russian Academy of Sciences:**

Joint developments in the field of fundamental and applied scientific research have long been an integral part of co-operation between Russia and Belarus. Every year, specialists of the two countries participate in the implementation of a number of scientific and technical programmes of the Union State. Successful realisation of each of them requires not only a high level of professional training, but also co-ordinated work by each of the parties. The final result of the interaction of scientists within the Union State is something more than just the sum of individual components.

vising the programme for the implementation of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State, the task is to build the material and economic base to achieve those goals. The meeting of our presidents in Sochi on December 7th was dedicated to this issue. We live in a new millennium — with new risks, challenges and threats. In these difficult conditions, both countries need to make joint efforts to strengthen their economies and move from the raw material economy to the economy of knowledge. Moreover, it's important to revamp production facilities to ensure manufacturing of high-tech products with high added value. It is necessary to use all reserves of co-operation for a wide exchange of technologies,» he stressed.



belinterexpo.by

# From Europe to Africa

By Olga Korneeva

National expositions abroad in 2020 unite universal and sectoral, specialised exhibitions. While preparing their list, the proposals of embassies, the Foreign Ministry and other agencies were taken into account. More than 100 exhibitions were considered during the selection process.

«We've conducted a preliminary analytical assessment of each of them in terms of profile, efficiency, participation of other countries and businesses. We've also taken into account the 30-30-30 export formula, which we strive to achieve in order to balance our exports. We proceeded from the products of enterprises and their competitiveness in these markets,» Mr. Ulakhovich said.

## Europe

The national exposition will be shown in March at ITB Berlin (Germany) — the world's leading travel trade show — and this will be its first presentation at this fair. The exposition is being prepared by the Sports and Tourism Ministry and tourist organisations. «We have serious targets and high rankings in mind, in particular in agro-tourism and medical tourism. Our task is



to present Belarus as a tourist destination and demonstrate the country's opportunities to over 180 participating countries,» Mr. Ulakhovich said.

Another notable industry fair is the International Exhibition of Inventions of Geneva. It is held in Switzerland — the country that ranks first in patents in the field of intellectual property and artificial intelligence — under the patronage of the World Intellectual Property Organisation. The national exposition here is being overseen by the State Committee for Science and Technology. «We have significant developments. In case of universal exhibitions, we present 'Made in Belarus' products but here we will be offering Belarusian intellectual achievements,» the official added.

In 2020, Belarus will also be represented at UK Construction Week in Birmingham. Our woodworking enterprises have received an exclusive invitation from the organiser to act as a privileged partner-country next year. The British market is new for Belarusian woodworking and there are significant opportunities to promote products.

The national exposition will be presented for the first

time at PLMA's *World of Private Label* International Trade Show in Amsterdam (Netherlands). It is planned to ensure the wide participation of small Belarusian non-state owned enterprises at this event.

## Asia and Africa

The international exhibition of food, hospitality and agriculture — *Food & Hotel Asia* — in Singapore is one of the largest in the world. «We are primarily interested in the ASEAN market since it's actually an integrated space. For example, Singapore has removed fees and customs duties within this large and rapidly developing market,» Mr. Ulakhovich explained.

In addition, the national exposition of Belarus will be presented at two exhibitions in China: the 3<sup>rd</sup> China International Import Expo in Shanghai and the Western China International Fair in Chengdu. «This year, at the International Import Expo, we enjoyed the effects of our repeated visits: the event brought contracts for the supply of over \$170m of Belarusian products. As for the exhibition in Chengdu, we have an opportunity to use this platform to promote our products. China is now opening its market, including imports of food in huge volumes. It is a very promising

Belarus has approved a plan for national exhibitions abroad for 2020. Belarusian enterprises will present their produce worldwide — including in the UK, Germany, China, Zimbabwe, Switzerland and Singapore. The Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, Vladimir Ulakhovich, described the results achieved by domestic producers through participation in foreign exhibitions and what role the adoption of the decree on export support will play.

and important market for us,» the official explained.

Belarus will also be presented at the Zimbabwe International Trade Fair in Bulawayo and Mr. Ulakhovich said, «This is a very interesting direction, which is also in our field of vision. In addition, we've received an invitation from the President of Zimbabwe to participate at the level of a national exposition.»

## Effect generated by participation in fairs

«The exhibition industry continues developing and expanding worldwide. Nothing can actually replace the personal participation of interested organisations and companies' representatives in exhibitions,» Mr. Ulakhovich believes.

The effectiveness of exhibitions is confirmed by international statistics. They boast both short-term and long-term benefits. «You can present products, find partners, pre-agree on the agenda of negotiations. However, we must understand that contracts are rarely signed at events such as these, they require additional, more thorough study. Here's a recent example. Our *Made in Belarus* exhibition in Tashkent was a success. A Belarusian company operating in the field of agricultural machinery met with a partner and, after 6–8 months of



Vladimir Ulakhovich

discussions, they have agreed on considerable volumes of deliveries. We often open up opportunities at exhibitions, which give a good result after a certain time,» Mr. Ulakhovich added.

## Decree on export support

Not so long ago, a decree was signed. According to the document, the state will compensate exporters up to 50 percent of the costs spent on participation in foreign exhibitions and certification. This is an important tool that opens up opportunities to support enterprises of all forms of ownership. «Jointly with the Foreign Ministry and other agencies, we are now working on a formula to make it clear to businesses how to get this support. In the near future, we will discuss these issues with a wide range of manufacturers. Such a support tool exists in other countries and I think we will also get good results,» Vladimir Ulakhovich said.

# Belarus is among countries with very high Human Development Index

**The 2019 Human Development Report — *Beyond Income, Beyond Averages, Beyond Today: Inequalities in Human Development in the 21st Century* — was presented in Minsk, indicating that Belarus has advanced by three points to occupy 50th place in the global ranking**

The Human Development Index (HDI) is based on statistics across three main indicators: life expectancy at birth, literacy and mean years of schooling as well as the gross national income per capita.

«Belarus has risen by three positions and now shares 50th place with Kazakhstan on the Human Development Index of 189 countries. Russia is one notch ahead, some countries in the region are behind. Belarus is among the countries with a very high level of human development,» the UNDP Resident Representative in

Belarus, Alexandra Solovieva, said.

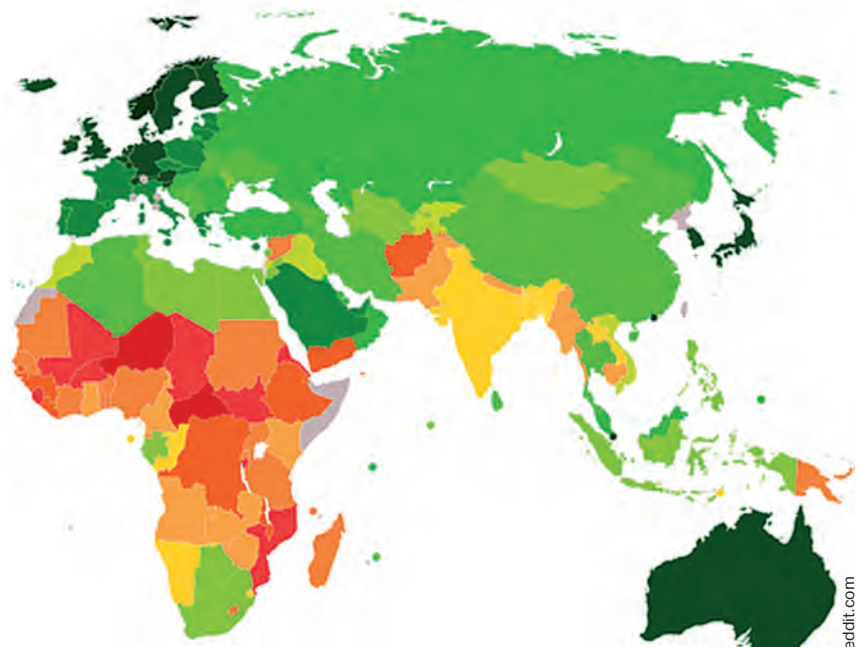
In terms of the gender issue, Belarus also has positive indicators. «Women's Human Development Index is higher in Belarus than in Europe and Asia. Interestingly, unlike most states, it is even higher than the index for men's development,» noted Ms. Solovieva. Gender inequality does persist in the economy where women's participation is more than 10 percent lower than men. This is the area where additional efforts are required.

The human potential development in Belarus has, however, been progressive. From 1995 to 2018, the HDI value increased by 24.5 percent. Life expectancy rose by 3.9 years during this period, mean years of schooling by 3.8 years and the expected years of schooling by 2.5 years. The gross national income per capita increased by 103.8 percent.

Based on materials of belta.by

## Human Development Index (2019)

Very high	High	Medium	Low
≥ 0.950	0.750-0.799	0.650-0.699	0.500-0.549
0.900-0.949	0.700-0.749	0.600-0.649	0.450-0.499
0.850-0.899		0.550-0.599	0.400-0.449
0.800-0.849			0.350-0.399



# Nothing to compare domestically or globally

Scientists of the Belarusian State University have invented a new and promising method for monitoring road surface quality. Current methods to determine strength, composition and reveal hidden faults in each layer of asphalt rely on extracting samples and extensively analysing them in the laboratory. The new, innovative method makes it possible to assess the quality of the surface without contact, quickly and without damaging the road. There is no similar technology in our country or abroad.

By Yulia Popko

## New approach

It is planned to use the innovative technology and equipment during road construction and in the operation of Belarusian highways. A senior researcher at the Institute of Applied Physical Problems at the Belarusian State University, Aleksandr Khodasevich, tries to describe clearly the advantages of the new method and the complex expensive equipment used, «This is a fundamentally new measurement method which uses a combination of geo-radar and acoustic sensing methods. With the help of our equipment, for the first time, we can determine the strength and characteristics of each layer of the road surface without contact, identifying inconsistencies, hidden faults and damaged areas, without destroying the road surface,» he says.

Modern software makes it possible to instantly measure fluctuations in the boundaries of all layers of roads and process digital information. At present, the assessment of asphalt quality

is a great expense of both labour and time. It's necessary to determine the site and drill the road surface to a depth of 40-50 centimetres. Then the core sample is extracted, which includes all the layers of asphalt. It is taken to the laboratory to be studied for several days. Mr. Khodasevich adds, «Only random small areas are analysed, so the traditional method of asphalt assessment does not produce a complete picture of the road's condition.»

## Results match down to the smallest detail

China is already seriously interested in the new Belarusian innovation. A large national company has volunteered to become our partner to bring the idea to life. The world-famous firm producing road construction equipment has financed the project and, up to now, an experimental sample of the equipment has already been developed and produced. Initially, the tests were carried out on the roads in China. Mr. Khodasevich recalls, «A group of our scientists arrived in the Henan



New method makes it possible to assess the roadway remotely without damaging its integrity

Province, where Chinese experts were waiting for us. For the experiment, we were allocated a whole strip of the local busy highway. It was temporarily closed to traffic, but cars were passing nearby. Vibration from passing cars was a source of acoustic disturbance. Vibrations of natural or artificial origin are a mandatory element of the method.»

The equipment was placed on a wheeled cart. Scientists consistently moved it along a straight line for about 150 metres and the data on the strength of the layers in that road section was obtained in just a few minutes. Later, the indicators were compared in the laboratory where the same calculations were carried out using the standard method. The results were striking: the numbers in the two experiments match

down to the smallest detail.

In addition, the experiment was carried out not only in China but also at our ring road. The results were also positive. «Chinese treat the quality of roads seriously, so our development aroused interest among them,» the expert adds.

## Safety is paramount

The prompt non-contact quality control of the surface will increase road safety, reduce road accidents and ultimately cut material and human losses.

Our Chinese partners have a further idea relating to the Belarusian know-how. Mr. Khodasevich shares ambitious plans for the future, «Our Chinese colleagues have the desire and opportunity to create a whole complex of measuring equipment that will move



Equipment placed on a wheeled cart to be consistently moved along for about 150 metres

on the roads. Externally, it will look like a bus with modern equipment. To assess the strength and quality of the asphalt, it will not be necessary to block the road. The complex on wheels will operate on a small strip at low speed, similar to the road-sweeper to take all the measurements.»

The project is supported by the Chinese Government and its implementation has become possible thanks to the programme of Belarusian-Chinese scientific and technical co-operation.

## NEWS IN BRIEF



### Belarus signs documents establishing diplomatic relations with Barbados

The Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN, Valentin Rybakov, and the Permanent Representative of Barbados to the UN — Henrietta Elizabeth Thompson — have signed a joint communique on the establishment of diplomatic relations between the countries. The diplomats discussed promising areas of co-operation between Belarus and Barbados in the trade and economic sphere, as well as in the field of tourism. Barbados is an island state in the Lesser Antilles in the Caribbean. The country's independence was proclaimed on November 30th, 1966. The population of Barbados exceeds 293,000 people.



### Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House presents edition about composers

The *Composers of Belarus*. Nikolay Aladov. Yevgeny Glebov. Sergey Kortez book has been published as part of the *Great and Famous People of the Belarusian Land* series. The presentation ceremony took place during an international scientific and practical conference at the Belarusian State Academy of Arts. The book is devoted to the life, musical creativity and activities of three outstanding Belarusian composers of the 20<sup>th</sup> century and is based on unique archival documents, letters, manuscripts and photographs from their personal archives and memoirs of their contemporaries.



### Belarusian Park of Friendship established in Istanbul

This is the first national park of Belarus in Istanbul, with its 16m population, and in Turkey as a whole. The opening ceremony was attended by the Mayor of the Istanbul District of Bakirkoy — Bulent Kerimoglu, the Consul General of Belarus in Istanbul — Aleksei Shved, and the Head of Administration of the Sovetsky District of Minsk — Yuri Trushchenko. The Belarusian *Polyphonica* choral band performed a folk programme at the opening ceremony which gathered representatives of the city authorities of Istanbul, the consular corps, business and public organisations and the Belarusian diaspora.



### Honorary Consulate of Ukraine officially opens in Vitebsk

The Ambassador of Ukraine to Belarus, Igor Kizim, notes that the Consulate will contribute to the development of relations between the districts of the Vitebsk Region and Ukrainian regions. One of the priority areas of co-operation is the economic sphere. In January-October, the trade turnover of the Vitebsk Region with Ukraine amounted to \$264.2m, including exports of \$196.9m.

The diplomat also expressed the hope that the work of the society of Ukrainians in Vitebsk will be intensified. In addition, the Consulate will assist in resolving issues involving Ukrainian citizens during their stay in Belarus and the protection of their rights.

Aleksandr Kushner

ECONOMY

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5

# Best beginning for start-up

Ideas, innovations, discoveries and developments were the main topics for two days within the walls of the National Library, as part of the *Smart Patent'19* Trade Fair of Innovative Ideas and the *INMAX* International Scientific and Practical Forum

By Yulia Vasilishina

Although the innovation market today is one of the most dynamic, its main problem is the start, the first step, believes the Deputy Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Artem Tsuran. An extensive training module was provided for participants to teach developers how to enter the real economic sector, «At present, technological processes are rapidly replacing one other and the leader is the one who works to create the technologies of the future. The major goal of the trade fair is to support the ideas presented and help them to be realised.»

In this respect, leading experts in the field of innovative company management, representatives of investment funds and the technology transfer centre, invited to the forum, are ready to help. It became apparent at *Smart Patent'19* that had no shortage of good ideas of different calibres. For example, Radar Design Bureau presented a serial model of a

**Smart Patent'19 and INMAX displayed more than 100 innovative projects, more than 20 start-ups, 240 scientific projects by pupils, 190 from students and 115 by young scientists.**



Vitaliy Pivovarchik

dio-electronic gun 'Groza-R' to deal with drones. According to researcher Sergey Suravtsov, technologies have been used in its development that allow, without harming other consumers or sources of GPS navigation or radio navigation, to work specifically on a particular device and exclude the possibility of illegal action. In future, there are plans not only to impede the flight of drones, but also to intercept them and force them to land.

The next project — 'ReBottle' — comes from a completely different area, but it solves the equally important problem of plastic dominance. The inventors propose to produce outdoor furniture using old bottles.

«We take any re-formed types of plastic, grind it up and make a material suitable for 3D printing and print benches, chairs, sofas... It's unique in that we are not limited by the standard

form, as we can make furniture with any parameters,» explains entrepreneur Mikhail Bunevich. For this purpose, a huge 3D printer will be created, which is already designed on paper. All the technology has been tested so far on a smaller model, with mini-furniture samples being created: an original designed bench (reduced by 10 times) could be seen at the exhibition.

Vitebskenergo training centre introduced the 'Energy Box' — a safe outlet, which is especially suitable for a child's room and would complement the smart home. «This is a controlled outlet, with automation, electronics and an electricity meter. Even if a child shoves, for example, a needle into it, it will turn off completely and save their life,» explains Dmitry Vorokhobko, who came to the forum for the first time to launch the project.

This, in fact, is the goal of all exhibitors. A third-year student of BSU, Anastasia Ksenzova, who introduced a porous biocompatible ceramic material for the manufacture of bone implants, also pursues the same goal, as does Valentin Yarmolinsky, who presented the technology for remote monitoring of heart, lungs and blood value, while referring to the creation of a whole telemedicine digital portal. Such venues as *Smart Patent* help find investors and partners, as well as continue development.

## Technology for innovation

By Olga Pasiyak

**The first FACT certified training centre on Industry 4.0 technologies and mechatronics has been launched at the Minsk College of Modern Technologies in Machine Building and Auto Service of the Republican Institute of Professional Education. It's been established with EU financial support and aims to establish training in modern digital specialties, including programming, for college and university students, as well as adult workers.**



Aleksey Vyazmitinov

Education Minister Igor Karpenko believes that the success of the state depends on the quality of training in working professions. With this in mind, the Minsk College of Modern Technologies in Machine Building and Auto Service has become a platform for such an important project: it has already secured the status of a resource centre for the automobile manufacture and training of specialists for maintenance of machine tools with software control.

«We are opening the FACT training centre on the automation of production processes jointly with the Festo company — a world equipment leader which actively participates in personnel training; our lecturers have also undergone training on its preparation system. This is a real connection with production. We must not simply keep up with the times but stay

ahead of them. Accordingly, we've improved our youth policy programme and are allocating funds to equip resource centres.»

According to His Excellency Dirk Schuebel, the Ambassador of the European Union to the Republic of Belarus, one of the most important projects with our country is the modernisation of vocational education, with a budget of 11.5m Euros. A new training centre is part of this project. It will provide classes not only for college students but also for adult professionals in the automotive industry and car maintenance from different regions, as well as seminars for teachers and training of *World Skills* participants.

As the Rector of the Republican Institute of Professional Education, Valery Golubovsky, notes, the new centre presents the Industry 4.0 technologies where human participation in production processes is minimal and artificial intelligence and the automation of production processes are more extensively involved. «With the help of the new equipment, young people will learn how to maintain, diagnose, operate and programme modern systems, including robotic systems and link them to economic processes. This is the first such centre in the post-Soviet space. It has been certified according to international standards, and the competencies that are mastered here are recognised by more than 200,000 companies around the world. This means that an investor who comes to Belarus and sets up a new production facility here understands that a system of training professionals at a modern enterprise in the innovative economy has been created,» he says.

Among the teachers of the College, who will work on the new equipment, is Mikhail Leshkevich who knows all the nuances of the work, since he has personally been trained by the company. «We are now developing a new competence for *World Skills* in Belarus: 'Polymechanics and Automation of Production', also preparing for international competitions on the basis of the Festo elements. This year, Nikita Shtraus represented our juniors in Kazan and was placed second,» he says.

## Fare dodgers, watch out!



bsu.by

By Aleksandr Nesterov

**Fare dodgers on public transport can't be spotted until the ticket inspectors enter the carriage. However, students of the BSU's Faculty of Economics have come up with an interesting system that can detect fare evasion even before they meet the inspectors.**

A team of authors — third-year students Maksim Tolkahev and Artem Babenok and fourth-year students Stanislav Kachalko and Artem Latyshev — suggest measuring the mass of the bus wheel suspension (using sensors) and correlating it with the readings of the stamped ticket counters.

«A change in weight indicators while maintaining or disproportionately fluctuating data on tickets indicates the presence of people who have not paid for the fare on the transport,» they say, revealing the principle of the system's operation. «Devices read out information during the opening of the doors before the passengers board.»

In addition, the service enables the operators to determine the load of a particular route and the feasibility of launching additional buses. The project by BSU students was recognised as the best socially significant at the International Christmas Hackathon, the final of which was held in early December simultaneously in Belgium and France in the form of a teleconference.

The magnificent Assumption Cathedral is located in the heart of the city: pilgrims and tourists can see it from afar



BELTA

# Where the heart of Orthodox Belarus beats, or five reasons to visit ancient Zhirovichi

By Sofia Arsenieva

## To worship a miracle

This cosy town owes its existence to the Holy Dormition Stauropegion Monastery which has been a stronghold of Orthodoxy in Belaya Rus for five centuries. The miraculous image of the Zhirovichi Holy Mother is a true magnet for both pilgrims and tourists. According to legend, it was discovered by shepherds in the spring of 1470 on the branches of a wild pear in the forest. The icon was literally glowing — attracting their attention. The young men took the find to the boyar, Aleksandr Soltan, but he simply locked it away in a casket. Despite being secured in the box, that night, the icon began shining again in the crown of the mysterious pear. Soon a church was built at the place where the miracle happened — to attract crowds of worshippers who wished to ask for intercession and healing. The annals of the monastery describe many cases of miraculous deliverance from terrible diseases, healing of souls and even resurrections.

The Zhirovichi icon is only 5.7 × 4.4 centimetres, being the smallest of the world's icons devoted to the Holy Mother. Its tiny size has, in fact, saved it more than once: in the 1920s, the icon was hidden in a jar of jam.

## To see the boulder of the Virgin Mary

Local children were once returning home from the parish school and noticed a woman of extraordinary beauty. She was surrounded by radiance and held a jasper icon in her hands. The children rushed home to tell the adults but the lady had disappeared. However, a miraculous image was preserved. The boulder on which she was sitting was immediately fenced off and, later, a church was built on the site — to honour the Nativity of the Blessed Virgin, now known as Yavlenskaya.

It is the oldest building in the monastery complex, preserving the only direct evidence of those long-ago events. During services in the warm season, the church is always crowded as everyone wishes to see the boulder under the altar stone.



zhirovichi-monastery.by

Copies of the Zhirovichi icon can be seen in churches around the world — from Poland and Lithuania to London and New York

## To appreciate the Emperor's gifts

The pearl of the architectural ensemble of Zhirovichi is the large and luxurious Assumption Cathedral which was established in 1613. It combines features of Baroque, Rococo and Classicism and the Chancellor of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Lev Sapega, personally donated money to decorate the interior. Sadly, the new cathedral was not to everyone's taste and, in 1655, it was besieged by Bogdan Khmelnytsky. Cannonballs from

the Zaporozhie army have even been preserved at the site.

The museum at the local Theological Seminary has many interesting artefacts — such as body crosses from the pre-Mongolian period of Ancient Rus, Western European icons, an original copy of *The Apostle* by Ivan Fedorov, a fragment of a memorial tablet confirming the visit paid to the monastery by Polish King Wladislaw VI, and gifts from Emperor Aleksandr III. All these seemingly unrelated artefacts reflect the complex history of the monastery. For centuries, it has been defending the views of Orthodoxy or has been forced to promote Unitatism. Throughout, it has never closed its doors to Christian believers.

The state's top officials also visit the site on occasion and, in May 2020, President Aleksandr Lukashenko is scheduled to come to the monastery. It's quite possible that Vladimir Putin will join him.

## To hide in the fortress-church

Just thirty kilometres from Zhirovichi there is another ancient site: Synkovichi. Passing by, travellers often stop at the formidable Gothic fortress and are surprised to learn that it's actually a church.

According to legend, it was here that Grand Duke Vytautas once hid. His brother Jagiello, not wanting

to share power, dealt with all his rivals brutally but Vytautas was more cunning: he dressed as a woman and moved to a dilapidated castle. Once he had regained his influence, he built the place that had saved him into a fortress-church.



zhirovichi-monastery.by

Children enjoy the monastery zoo: they've previously only seen such birds and animals in pictures

The Mikhailovsky Church is one of the most unusual in Belarus. Spiral staircases in the towers lead to the defensive storey of the building. The machicolation windows enabled warriors to pour tar and boiling water on attackers' heads and archers could fire arrows. No wonder the church is so well preserved.

## To experience the apples of Eden

Zhirovichi has its own paradise. The former ancestral homestead of the Soltans is still full of life. Instead of seigniorial lands, there is now the monastery courtyard with a huge fruit garden. In the autumn, the apple smell is so intense it's impossible to walk past.

In the distance, through the trees, is the sound of hooves: a herd of Hanoverian and Kabardian horses are calling for a ride. The monks don't hide away: they are recreating the garden of Eden on the land. Apart from the horses, the menagerie is home to raccoons, moulons, camels, deer, fallow deer, goats, pheasants, peacocks, ostriches, rabbits and other animals. Brown bear Masha is a local 'star' who moved a couple of years ago to Zhirovichi from Moscow.



neft.by

Fortress-church in Synkovichi



### The newly-minted Miss Universe beat 89 other contestants to nab the coveted title

Zozibini Tunzi was crowned Miss Universe after excelling through rounds of swimsuit and evening gown struts, questions on social issues and one final chance to explain why she was the right choice.

«I grew up in a world where a woman who looks like me — with my kind of skin and my kind of hair — was never considered to be beautiful,» she said in her last response. «I think it is time that that stops today. I want children to look at me and see my face and I want them to see their faces reflected in mine.»

a representation of dedication, resilience and perseverance. I do believe my mission is to show the world that magic happens when we refuse to give up because the universe always listens to a stubborn heart.»

The massive competition was hosted at Tyler Perry Studios in Atlanta.

Last year's winner, Catriona Gray from the Philippines spoke during the pageant, saying the past year has been 'unforgettable, life-changing and purposeful'. «We're getting this amazing platform to voice the things we're passionate about, the things we care about,» she said. «I always had a voice, but Miss Universe allowed me to amplify it.»

### The UN Secretary General has called on business and civil society leaders to press governments into articulating policies that support private sector efforts to address climate change

António Guterres issued the charge in a speech to the annual Caring for Climate Meeting, held during the UN COP25 climate conference, «I'm meeting more and more

business leaders that complain that they cannot do more because governments will not allow them to do so, because of the environment that is still created in the bureaucratic, administrative, tax regulatory and other frameworks that are under government control», he said.

Business and financial leaders have been doing their part to beat climate change, as the Secretary General acknowledged. He was encouraged that 170 ma-

major companies have committed to set scientific, verifiable emission reduction targets through the 'Business Ambition for 1.5 Degrees' campaign. However, he said the business and financial sectors cannot act alone.

Next year, many governments will present plans to reduce their emissions, in line with the 2015 Paris Agreement. Mr. Guterres forecast that these enhanced Nationally Determined Contributions (NDCs) will in-

clude carbon neutral strategies and green initiatives in sectors such as energy, industry, construction and transport.

The UN Chief added that millions worldwide, particularly young people, recognise that more must be done to limit the worst impacts of climate disruption.

COP25 is the last UN Climate Summit before 2020 when many nations must submit new climate action plans.

# The COP25 talks in Madrid trying to change the world



## Thousands gather for change climate protests

**While policy makers and activists have gathered in Madrid for the COP25 various protests continued around Europe**

In the Spanish capital, dozens of Extinction Rebellion demonstrators marched through the main streets with a handmade whale skeleton to demand better protection of the oceans. In Brussels, thousands formed a human chain which encircled the Belgian federal parliament and the Royal Palace.

Marleen De Vry said she was demonstrating to support younger generations, «I'm with 'Grandparents For The Climate' and, for about one year now, we've been supporting the youngsters who've been demonstrating on the streets for the climate. Many people laughed at them and didn't take them seriously, but we did. So, we came here to support them from the very beginning and we're still here.»

In the UK, climate change activists blocked roads leading to Heathrow Airport. The action was a protest against plans to build a new runway. There are fears of worsening air quality and increased noise pollution.

In Paris, French activists held portraits of President Emmanuel Macron upside down, calling for bolder government action at the climate talks.

## Miss South Africa crowned 2019 Miss Universe

The two runners-up for the crown were Miss Mexico and Miss Puerto Rico.

«If you do not use your beauty for your life's mission, it's just an empty ornament,» Sofía Aragón, representing Mexico, said earlier in the competition.

Madison Anderson represented Puerto Rico. «Being on the Miss Universe stage is not just a dream,» she said. «I believe that I found my mission. It's



## New Zealand volcano: death toll rises to 16

**Death toll rises to 16 as bid to retrieve the remains of those still missing on White Island is unsuccessful**

There were 47 people on the island, also known as Whakaari, during the blast. Eight were killed close to the crater and the retrieval of those bodies has been the focus of a joint police-defence mission.

The high-stakes recovery operation from the ash-covered surface flew out six bodies, much to the relief of families. Police have vowed to continue their search until all eight bodies have been recovered.

In a press conference, Police Commissioner Mike Bush praised the work of the recovery team. «The environment that those staff encountered was unpredictable and challenging, and those staff showed absolute courage in order to en-

sure that those six people were returned to their loved ones,» he said. «It's not over yet.»

He added that it had been a 'traumatic and harrowing' time for the local community and the families who have been directly affected.

Deputy Commissioner Mike Clement said there were nine divers in the water, working to a buddy system.

Speaking to reporters after the bodies were retrieved, Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said questions over why people were allowed to visit the active volcano 'must be answered, and will be answered'. But she said 'we also need to respect the phase we're in now, with families only just getting their loved ones back'.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# Preserving memories

Professor of Physics Igor Malevich has written a book about outstanding compatriots

By Lyudmila Kovaleva

The name of Igor Malevich is widely known around the world, and not just because he bears the surname of the famous artist Kazimir Malevich. Igor Malevich has enough achievements of his own. He is the author of a unique laser method for measuring the distance to the Moon and the creator of equipment of unprecedented and unsurpassed accuracy. He received the first Soviet patent in the field of space technology and established a scientific school of world-class laser statistical chronoscopy. He was one of the first Soviet scientists to work at NASA as part of the intergovernmental agreement and was well acquainted with Neil Armstrong. He taught at Harvard University and other prestigious universities and research centres around the globe. He worked in Belarusian diplomatic missions in China and was the first head of the diplomatic mission in South Korea. In addition, he is one of the authorities in the field of contemporary art and a famous writer.

Igor Malevich wrote his first books about the countries in which he worked as a diplomat: *Attention, China; While It's Still Yesterday in Europe It's Already Tomorrow in Korea; Asian Triangle of Dragons...*

«Rarely do diplomats write books such as these. But I'm also a research scientist. I'm used to analysing and drawing conclusions,» notes the writer. «These books are serious examples of international analytics.»

His book *Kazimir Malevich. Ascension to the Cross of Fate* has created a true sensation both in the author's homeland and beyond. Igor presented to readers

a whole layer of hitherto unknown facts about the famous artist and his relative, proving that Belarusians have every right to lay claim to the heritage of Kazimir Malevich. When writing, he used the memories of his relatives and the materials discovered during the research. In particular, he managed to find the history of Kazimir Malevich's collections at the University of Berkeley in San Francisco, taken from Vitebsk to Berlin in 1927. And he was lucky to get copies of 150 letters by the artist at a flea market in one of the European cities. Today, these historical handwritten masterpieces of the first philosophical works of the theory of Suprematism and *The Black Square* were donated by Professor Igor Malevich to the Vitebsk Museum of Modern Art.

As Igor Malevich admits, the book about the artist was more difficult for him than the others, «I usually write books quickly, but I rewrote this three times. For a long time, I was looking at the form and presentation. I didn't want to offend anyone. Both Russia and Ukraine have contributed to the preservation of Kazimir Malevich's legacy. But I'm convinced he is our national artist. According to one very reliable version, the artist was born in Belarusian Kopyl. Moreover, it was in the territory of Belarus, when he served as the quartermaster during WWI in the area of Sharkovshchina, Smorgon, Krivichi and Postavy, he wrote his main Suprema-

tist works. Their cost today is estimated at tens of millions of Dollars. Museums in every country strive to take possession of these masterpieces.»

The last book by Igor Malevich is entitled *Grushevka Lanes of Millionaires*. This is a continuation of his urban novel *Clever Men, or Music in the Museum of the Deaf*. The author writes about prominent people from the old Minsk district of Grushevka, where he himself grew up. These are artists, scientists, and writers...

«These are people who have run forward with a torch all their lives, making history. But time passes, and these people pass away. It's important that the intellectual halo of their national significance remains and does not disappear after them,» explains Igor Malevich.

The book resonated with both ordinary readers and critics. We also recommend an abridged version of the review on the *Grushevka Lanes of Millionaires*, authored by a Professor of Mathematics and a Doctor of Sciences — Irina Novik.



An old water tower in Grushevka — built in 1910 — is an architectural monument

## Old Minsk's Grushevka. City stories.

*'Your city is not only houses and streets, the city is its people'. So begins the book 'Grushevka Lanes of Millionaires' by the Belarusian scientist and writer Igor Malevich, known for his books about the present time and what is happening to us today.*

*It's about our city, about time, about the crooked lanes and the Minskians who live in this disappearing district: old Grushevka, famous for its traditions of street parks and special military facilities for the Belarusian Regiment (Belpolk). It's well-known thanks to the great scientists, university professors, doctors and architects, athletes and legendary teachers of the local Grushevka schools who brought up several generations of brilliant Grushevka residents, despite the difficult times of the post-war devastation and poverty of the sixties.*

*All the novels and essays in the book are about the lives of Grushevka residents, to which the author relates himself. They see themselves objectively in the time of the city and in the space of their destiny. He meets them in America (the story 'Ours in America'), or in Syria ('Maaloula. Palmyra. How Much Is Antiquity Now'), and often in the Grushevka suburbs ('Can't Teach an Artist'), and in China with amaz-*

*ing stories of deep lyricism and romanticism ('Behind the Wall of China').*

*With great love, the author writes about his friends: Minsk artists. The philosophy of the essay 'Dust of Paintings Abandoned by Time in the Attic' is a small but bright moment in the life of Minsk painters. The author is passionate about their creative search for the truth. For the first time in his books he calls them by their proper names, which adds touching reality to everything that happens in their relationship with Minsk's Grushevka.*

*The author feels their creativity as a national cultural heritage, undoubtedly of world class. The author's vision of their creativity is respected not only by professional art historians but is also admired by ordinary readers. Listing the iconic names of national painters is like visiting famous museums. Among them are People's Artist L.D. Shchemelev, outstanding graphic artist V. Basalyga, talents of modern artistic aesthetics M. Basov, S. Krishtapovich, V. Nemtsov, Raisa Siplevich, A. Faley and others.*

*Each story and essay in the book is preceded by a drawing, delicate in its brevity and humour, created by painter A. Marochkin, which adorns the book.*

*With great love, the author writes about the friends of his youth — Minsk artists, about their special and very often unrecognised paintings and sculptures, about Victor Nemtsov, Vitaly Chernobrisov and Leonid Davydenko.*

*The author, a professor of laser physics, known in many world scientific centres and universities from China and South Korea to America, could not help but write about his students, with whom they walked a difficult path in the science of confronting socialism and capitalism. These former pupils, virtually unknown engineers*

*and graduate students, did a great job of conducting research and development in the most competitive areas of science and often at secret training grounds.*

*The essay 'Monologue in Front of the Conductor's Wand' about the brilliant musician, Conductor with a capital letter, Aleksandr Anisimov, is a whole philosophy of music and the city. The music of the Conductor and his orchestra is like an invisible thread connecting the Minsk Philharmonic and the Bolshoi Theatre with the world music venues in Europe and Asia, where conductor A. Anisimov is identified with the world heritage of our national culture.*

*One can only thank the author for the brilliant philosophical essay — 'Bridge to Kazimir: Golden Gate of San Francisco' — about our artistic genius and philosopher of the century, Kazimir Malevich. This is a literary discovery of a physicist with his understanding of the quantum nature of light, time and space. The author introduces readers to the world of new percep-*



Igor Malevich

*tion and understanding of Suprematism and 'The Black Square'. The philosophy of 'The Black Square' and Suprematism, described by the author with intellectual subtlety, adorn the book as a cultural matrix of attraction and community of science and many arts.*

*The author's interpretations of Suprematism and the philosophy of 'The Black Square' simply confirm the intellectual field of foresight of the 'supreme sense — supremus' of the painting of our great artist and philosopher of art, who not only predicted, but also accurately saw the role of a person as part of the intellectual and spiritual singularity of the modern world of creativity and science.*

*Here are a few of the author's ideas, written personally in both Russian and English: 'Contemporary art intuitively strives into the depths of knowledge. Modern science is the science of the microworld of elementary forms, elementary particles, nano-sized phenomena, statistical theory of light quanta, time nonlinearity, space discreteness, black hole energy and the singularity of the Universe. Their intellectual and genetic connection is obvious. Modern art and science at its core contains the traditions of Suprematism'.*

*The author convinces readers that the meaning of Kazimir Malevich's paintings is being revealed more and more with each day. It does not disappear in time, and it never becomes simplistic. It will only intensify until all the arts come to the 'supremus — the supreme sense' of their meaning.*

*'Rural' stories are also quite interesting: 'The Apple Hill', 'The House that Grandfather Built' and 'Quantum Consciousness of Granny Zina'. These are stories about his peers, his Grushevka friends, who found for themselves a village on the shores of a large lake and made it their 'small homeland'. These stories are simply charming in their understanding of the souls of nature of their native land and full respect for its people.*

*Unfortunately, there is no story or essay about the author himself in the book. He is a third generation Minsker, a Grushevka resident who, with his school and street friends, despite the problems of growing up in the Grushevka streets, found and built his own path in science, art, and sports.*

*The book is written from a great spiritual height, with a potential and civic maturity which arouses admiration. The author is an example of the brilliant integration of the creative potential of science and art in an intellectual.*

*The publication of the 'Grushevka Lanes of Millionaires' book by Professor Igor Malevich is undoubtedly an important event not only in the life of our own Minsk, but also an example of brilliant modern literature.*

# Joining world list of cultural treasures

By Arina Novikova

**The Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage has decided to include the 'Spring Rite of Jurauski Karahod' on the list at its 14th session in Bogota, Colombia**

Work to prepare the nomination file for inclusion in the UNESCO list was financed by the Culture Ministry and involved the promoters of the tradition, Belarusian experts and the National Commission for UNESCO, the Permanent Mission of Belarus to UNESCO in Paris and the Foreign Ministry.

This is Belarus' third item in the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage. This status was granted to the traditional folk rite 'Kalyady Tsars' (Christmas Tsars) in the village of Semezhevo, Kopyl District, Minsk Region in 2009, and 'Celebration in Honour of the Budslav Icon of Our Lady' (Budslav Fest) in the town of Budslav, Myadel District, Minsk Region in 2018.

The 'Jurauski Karahod' rite has already been added to the State List of Historical and Cultural Treasures of Belarus. The living form of the rite has survived only in Pogost in the Gomel Region's Zhitkovichi District. It is a small village with a population of about 500 people, located in the south of the country, not far from the ancient town of Turov (founded in the 10th century and known as a centre of early Christianity in Belarus).

'Jurauski Karahod' is a spring rite, which has long been held on the feast of Yuri on May 6th — for the fertility of the soil and prosperity. It includes ritual chants, 'magical' activities and entertainment. On the eve of the celebrations, all village houses and yards are cleaned and people prepare their traditional festive attire. Women bake and decorate ritual bread. The next morning, all the villagers go to the field. In front of the procession, young girls carry an embroidered towel and men hold an icon, decorated



BELTA

bread, an eight-pointed star and a green cloth attached to a rake (which is replaced with a red one when leaving the field). The procession goes through the streets of the village to the field sown with rye and most of the participants remain on the outskirts.

The women who sing the ritual songs and the men who carry the bread and the icon go to the centre of the field and the others dance around. The participants then distribute ritual bread among the villagers and celebrations continue until the end of the day.

## On violins, tambourines and sticks

Folk instrumental music of the Smorgon District to be registered on the State List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

By Tatiana Kondratieva

The treasury of the unique heritage of our ancestors currently contains vocal, dance, culinary, weaving and various ritual traditions of different regions of Belarus. But instrumental music has not yet been included and here the Smorgon District is a pioneer. In the Grodno Region, documents are being prepared for the intangible cultural heritage element — 'Traditional Musical and Instrumental Style of the Smorgon Plain between the Viliya and Golshanka Rivers' — for its inclusion in the State List of Historical and Cultural Heritage.

The original musical style was spread throughout the area of the Smorgon and Zhodishki agro-towns and was also popular in other villages of the area, especially in Krevo, Sinki, and Vishnevo. It still boasts its loyal followers today. Several generations of graduates of the Smorgon children's school of arts (named after Oginski) are proponents of the tradition.

Six young musicians hold musical instruments in their hands: violins, a drum, an accordion, a pipe and a tambourine. The youngest member of the group is 10-year-old drummer Anton Strakh, who plays several musical instruments.

«I started to learn the drum last year,» says the boy shyly. «I also play the button accordion, accordion, tambourine and rattle. The hardest thing is to play the accordion, and I get confused sometimes.»

The Artistic Director of the group, Yevgeny Voronin, was a student of the music school not so many years ago and now

he teaches boys and girls in a unique style, «We travel quite often to various concerts and competitions. In summer, we were in Svisloch at the folk music festival, where we were laureates. Our team is constantly being updated though some youngsters do stay on.»

«Is it possible to reproduce your style on any instruments?» I ask.

«Well, yes, but the main thing is the violin,» says the

musician. «The main instruments also include a pipe, an accordion, and a drum. There are many noisy instruments such as a stick or ratchet.»

In principle, all the youngsters can be called multi-instrumentalists. The list of these musicians in 2019 totals 14, yet another 11 are pupils and successors of a unique tradition.

«Despite the fact that the folk tunes are put onto scores in 2019 with the aim of fixing

the music, they continue to be passed down by verbal imitation of the instruments,» adds Marina Pakhomova, the Deputy Director for Education. «The composition of the group is changing, because children study in our school for just seven years. Now, while the preparation of documents on including the instrumental style in the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage is underway, we are gathering graduates and touring

with concerts. We perform at all city and district events. In recent times, we have begun to accompany wedding ceremonies in registry offices and perform at weddings. We never expected it would cause such interest. There are many applications for our skills.»

The instrumental music of Smorgon is very rhythmic and melodic. It was always performed cheerfully and confidently, and musicians could quickly switch from one melody to another. It was played by self-taught folk musicians in village houses during weddings, as well as at dances.

Special attention should be paid to the method of teaching the tradition 'from hand to hand'. The teacher plays the melody and pupils repeat it. More complex tunes are repeated several times, and then in sections. Each pupil plays their own until they memorise the whole tune. In addition, if a folk musician wants to, they can 'decorate' their music, so the possibility of improvisation is always a key peculiarity.

The tunes are passed down 'from hand to hand' on all instruments. With such training, children improve their ear for music and develop their creative abilities. This is reflected in the technique, intonation, and in the performer's own thinking.

The unique musical style in the Smorgon District remains a relevant and sought-after part of the art of the oral tradition in which it exists. Just like a hundred years ago, without this music it's impossible to hold a single calendar, family or modern village holiday. It reflects the soul of our ancestors — talented people — open to the world.



Yury Mozolevsky

### DIRECT SPEECH

The initiator of the promotion of the traditional musical and instrumental style and a methodologist on the protection of the historical and cultural heritage of the Smorgon District Cultural Centre, Yelena Bobina, says, «The unique style has distant roots. If we talk about modernity, then the origins of the revival was a former teacher of the art school, Cheslav Zikh, who, in the 1990s, mastered the method of 'hand to hand' transmission from Vladislav Budko — a musical genius who was born in 1919 in the village of Semerniki in the south of the Smorgon area. As a child, he independently learnt to play the violin that his father gave him. The talented little boy was invited to entertain guests at weddings, and over time his style became recognisable and loved. Since then, he has passed on his learning, educating the younger generation.»

# Playing with fire

The breath of the Games is felt much more clearly every moment, as less than two hundred days are left before the start of the Summer Olympics. The sports news is now increasingly focused on the main sporting event of the quadrennial: quotas, accreditations, commissioning of new facilities, winning qualification and, of course, championship plans. The world is starting to revolve around Tokyo and every day the speed of this rotation increases.

By **Sergey Kanashits**

The International Olympic Committee has concluded the outgoing year with a meeting of the Executive Committee in Lausanne. The disputes were keen and made almost all the participants sweat like they were in a Russian banya. Moreover, one of the main issues on the agenda was Russia related: this was talked about in official speeches, written in summaries and entered into the minutes, it was discussed in the corridors and even in the evenings during informal dinners. However, there were plenty of other issues in Lausanne. Among them was the process of restoring the rights of the International Boxing Association (AIBA), which was expelled for the reluctance of the organisation's leadership to support the proposed reforms of the IOC (so far, boxers have no license for the Tokyo event). The issues of Tokyo's preparation for the Games were also high on the agenda. The organising committees of the Winter Games in Beijing (2022) and Milan and Cortina d'Ampezzo (2026), as well as the Summer Games in Paris and Los Angeles (2024 and 2028) delivered reports. These events are in the distant future and, therefore, the upcoming Olympics was the most relevant topic. As a result, the Executive Committee decided to change the order of the teams processing at the opening ceremony. Greece traditionally opens the parade of athletes but, immediately after it, the refugee team will enter the arena. The countries that will host the next Summer Games will close the parade: these are the teams of

the USA (Los Angeles 2028), France (Paris 2024) and Japan.

The Executive Committee also changed the programme of Olympic competitions. Odori Park in Japanese Sapporo has been officially approved as the venue for the Olympic marathon. On November 1st, the IOC and the administration of the capital of Japan finally decided not to hold these competitions in Tokyo because of the heat; the races have been officially moved to another, more northern, city. Since Sapporo is 800km north of Tokyo, the



**Thomas Bach, President of IOC**

dates of the marathons have also been changed. On August 6th, there will be competitions in the 20km men's walking, on August 7th — the 50km men's walking and 20km women's event. On August 8th, the women's marathon will take place and the men's marathon is scheduled for August 9th.

In addition, results achieved already were reported on at the meeting. The main achievement is a new Tokyo national stadium. Its construction is completed, but it will be officially presented to the public on December 21st, while the final of the Emperor's Football Cup is to become the first sporting



**New National Stadium for Tokyo Olympics**

The Games in Tokyo will be held from July 24th to August 9th, 2020, with 339 sets of medals in 33 sports to be played for. Five are new: softball, karate, surfing, rock climbing and skateboarding. A total of 11,090 athletes from 206 countries will compete for medals. Interestingly, women account for 49 percent of athletes — which will make the 2020 Games the most gender-balanced.

most modern and comfortable in the world. About \$1.25bn was spent on its construction, and the stadium will be able to seat 60,000. Apart from the opening and closing ceremonies, it will host competitions in athletics and football.

As for the 'Russian issue', the fate of the Russian sport

was last Monday decided by the Executive Committee of the World Anti-Doping Agency which ruled to ban Russian athletes from participating in the 2020 Olympics in Tokyo. Moreover, some athletes from Russia, who have not tainted themselves with doping and can get special admission to the Games, will be forced to perform under a white flag with neutral status. In addition, Russia has no right to host major international tournaments or apply for them. Those tournaments that are already scheduled in Russia should be moved to other countries...

## ADDITION

**67** Belarusian athletes in **14** sports have already fulfilled the Olympic qualification requirements and standards that allow them to participate in the Tokyo Olympics. In **2020**, our athletes will continue to fight for places at qualifying events. In total, Belarusian athletes plan to win **100–120** places for the Games in Japan.



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## Topping the Six Nations Tournament

**The ice hockey players of Belarus' national team have won the Six Nations Tournament in Budapest, with Mikhail Zakharov's trainees defeating the French in the final match — 3:2 (1:0, 2:1, 0:1)**

The final match began with a strong start from the Belarusian ice hockey players, who had several opportunities to upset their rivals' goalkeeper, Sebastian Ylönen. Until the 18th minute, the goalkeeper dealt well with the challenges, however, he proved powerless in the face of a shot by Andrey Kostitsyn. The pupil of Novopolotsk ice hockey school took

the puck a metre from the goalkeeper's zone, turned around and sent it into the net.

In the second period, the advantage of Mikhail Zakharov's trainees was strengthened. Belarusians answered a goal from Robin Colombar with exact marks on goal from Andrey Kostitsyn and Artem Demkov.

In the third period, Enzo Guebey called off another puck, after which the French concentrated on the attacks, forcing the Belarusian squad to spend more time in defence and hope for counterattacks. However, in the end, the score remained in favour of Mikhail Zakharov's trainees.

## Race of the week



Minsk has hosted the Santa Race, featuring Santa Clauses, Father Frosts, Snow Maidens and other fairytale characters, as well as a New Year swim, with especially energetic 'grandfathers' swimming with their Snow Maidens on canoes

### EXHIBITIONS

#### NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 Karl Marks Street  
Until 22<sup>nd</sup> December. *KHRONOTOP\_2.1... Space/Time 2.1.*  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> January. *East-West*  
Until 20<sup>th</sup> January. *Museum of Fir Tree Toys*

#### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street  
Until 10<sup>th</sup> January. *Russian Impressionism*  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> January. *Oman: Pearl of the East. Handicraft Legacy*  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> February. *Always Ready and Brave*  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> February. *Schraga Zarfin. Leading to the Light*

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> February. *Kalyady Calling*

#### MUSEUM OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY

8 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 31<sup>st</sup> December. *Returning Time*

#### NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> January. *New Year. Anthology of the Holiday*  
Until 19<sup>th</sup> January. *Exposition of Exit project*

#### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 M. Bogdanovich Street  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> January. *There Is Charm in Old and Forgotten...*  
Until 17<sup>th</sup> January. *Kalyada Arrives on a White Sleigh*  
Until 18<sup>th</sup> January. *Golden Sunrise of Belarusian Renaissance*

#### MAKSIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> January. *Melancholy Drugs*

#### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street  
Until 22<sup>nd</sup> December. *City over Free Neva*

#### MINSK GALLERY

9 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 9<sup>th</sup> January. *Museum of Leonardo da Vinci's Inventions*

#### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 Karl Marks Street  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> January. *Dangerous Beauty*  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> February. *Magic of Wild Birds*

#### TROITSKY SUBURB

7A M. Bogdanovich Street  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> January. *Best Toys from USSR*  
Until 12<sup>th</sup> March. *Robo Art*

### THEATRES AND CONCERTS

#### BOLSHOI THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square  
19.12. *Creation of the World*  
20.12. *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*  
20 and 22.12. *New Year Rendezvous*  
21.12. *Eugene Onegin*  
22 and 24.12. *Swan Lake*  
24.12. *The Nutcracker*  
27.12. *Gala-concert of Belarusian Bolshoi Theatre's stars*

#### YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
19.12. *Local Cabaret / Prudok Radio*  
26 and 27.12. *King Lear*

#### BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street  
26.12. *Mad Woman*

#### THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

33 Masharov Avenue  
19.12. *Women Without Borders*  
20.12. *Jubilee / Continuation*  
21.12. *Battlefield*  
24 and 25.12. *The Nutcracker*  
26 and 27.12. *Mixed Feelings*

#### CHAMBER DRAMA THEATRE

5 Frunze Street  
19, 20 and 21.12. *Corporate*  
24.12. *Her New Year Wish*  
26 and 27.12. *Clinic*

#### MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street  
19.12. *Secret Marriage*  
20.12. *Tristan and Isolde*  
22.12. *Giselle*  
26.12. *True Story of Lieutenant Rzhevsky*  
27.12. *Wedding in Malinovka*

#### YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street  
19 and 24.12. *Happy New Year!*  
24 and 26.12. *Cinderella*  
25 and 27.12. *Morozko*

#### NEW DRAMA THEATRE

16 Liza Chaikina Street  
20.12. *How Much Is Love?*

#### MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street  
21-30.12. *Father the Frost Changes His Profession*  
25-30.12. *New Year Fairy Tale in Virtual World*

#### BELARUSIAN STATE PHILHARMONICS

50 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
20.12. *New Year Surprises at Musical Parlour*  
20.12. *Charming Sounds of Classical Music*  
21.12. *Kalyady Fairy Tale concert. Camerata Ensemble, with participation of Palats folk-modern band*  
22.12. *Childhood Years of Favourite Composers cycle of concerts: Battle with Fate. Ludwig van Beethoven*  
24.12 and 07.01. *New Year Toy Adventures*