

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

ISSN 1991-2978



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 42 (664) ● FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 11, 2016 ● WWW.SB.BY



Participants of opening ceremony of 23rd Minsk International *Listapad*-2016 Film Festival

Festival week screens more than 160 films, from 52 countries

Solemn opening of 23rd Minsk International *Listapad* Film Festival → **9-10**

Best country for agrotourism

Belarus wins National Geographic Traveler Awards 2016 in 'Agrotourism' category

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus received 24 percent of votes in the ranking of best countries for agrotourism, followed by Italy (22 percent) and France (20 percent). Russia gained 18 percent, and Georgia 9 percent. Belarus is among the top five countries for recuperative leisure,

behind Israel, the Czech Republic, Hungary and Russia in this nomination.

Online-voting was organised on the National Geographic Russia online site over a period of almost two months, with the best tourist destinations of 2016 named across 23 nominations. Spain was named as the best country for a

beach holiday.

Bulgaria is ranked first in the 'Family Holiday' nomination, while Italy leads for excursion tourism and Austria is best for mountain skiing. India has won the adventure tourism nomination, and those keen on ecotourism should go to Sweden. Georgia has won 'Discovery of the Year'

nomination.

Agrotourism is one of the most successfully developing types of tourism in Belarus, with 2,263 agro-estates registered; since 2006, their number has increased 66-fold. In 2015, their services were used by almost 295,000 tourists. Last

year, Belarus was ranked second in the National Geographic Traveler Awards in the 'Agrotourism' category, behind Italy.



MTZ presents its most powerful tractor yet: the 'Belarus-4522'

At the square near Minsk Tractor Works, the enterprise presented its new 450hp capacity tractor

By Stanislav Vetrov

The development meets the latest trends in world tractor building. The new model is the most powerful tractor in MTZ's range, and one of the most powerful wheeled tractors in the world.

The 'Belarus-4522' is designed for general purposes, in the 8th drawbar category, with 4K4 axle arrangement, of classical configuration. It boasts a Caterpillar C13 engine, complying with Stage-III norms in terms of harmful emissions. Meanwhile, its transmission provides sixteen forward gears and



Presentation of new model of 'Belarus-4522' tractor

eight reverse. The tractor uses an electrohydraulic mechanism.

"The combination of powerful engine, contemporary transmission, a power take-off system, lift-

type systems, a comfortable cabin, and drive system enables consumers to use 'Belarus' 4522' tractors for the most difficult, energy-intensive works in contemporary

agriculture," notes MTZ. The company notes that these tractors are perfect for countries with large swathes of croplands, such as Kazakhstan and Russia.

30th place in gender equity ranking

Belarus placed 30th in World Economic Forum's *Global Gender Gap Report 2016*, covering 144 major and emerging economies

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The report was presented in Geneva, placing Iceland at the top of the rankings, followed by Finland and Norway. Belarus is 30th, between Spain and Portugal, while Russia is in 75th place. The report provides insight into gender inequality, via the Gender Gap Index introduced by the World Economic Forum. This index measures the magnitude of gender-based disparities across four key areas: health, education, economy and politics. Belarus has a total score of 0.737,

which means that the country has closed 73.7 percent of its gender gap. This is well above the global average of 68 percent. In Russia, this figure stands at 69.1 percent and Iceland has a statistic of 87.4 percent.

Belarus ranks in the top five in terms of economic participation and opportunity, with a score of 0.823: 29th in educational attainment (1.000), 40th in health and survival (0.979), and 80th in political empowerment (0.146).

The report indicates that 144 countries have closed 96 percent



of the gap in health outcomes between women and men and more than 95 percent of the gap in educational attainment. However, the gaps between women and men on economic participation and political empowerment remain wide: 59

percent and about 23 percent respectively.

With current trends, the global gender gap may close in 83 years' time. The most challenging aspect remains in the economic sphere, which, at the present rate, will not close for another 170 years. The education-specific gender gap could be removed within the next ten years. The currently widest gender gap, in the political dimension, could close within 82 years. The health gender gap is, sadly, larger now than it was in 2006.

Three years until next 'count'

By Olga Korneeva

Population census scheduled for Belarus from October 4th-30th, 2019, following signing of corresponding decree by President

The population census will be conducted in the form of a survey by census takers on temporary contracts, working voluntarily, without pay. The decree specifies the list of categories of people who may be appointed to this employment by local executive and regulatory authorities.

Census takers will be released from their usual work or studies for the period of training and information gathering, with their places at work and university guaranteed, as well as their average salary (or scholarship), pension and allowances protected.

Temporary census takers will be provided with voluntary accident insurance coverage. The document aims to equip government bodies with a unified approach to the organisation and holding of the population census, with prompt resolution of emerging issues, and acquisition of comprehensive and objective information.

Enabling parliamentarians not to lose

Club of former deputies may appear in Belarus

"Considerable work has been done and the most important point is that deputies aren't lost when the convocation is over. We'll try to maintain relations with them through invitations to sessions. We may organise a former deputies club. The most vital thing is that they continue working for the benefit of our Homeland, because these are people with good life and work experience," asserted Vladimir Andreichenko, the Chairman of the National Assembly's House of Representatives.

According to the Speaker, the work conducted by the fifth convocation of deputies is very impressive. "Over 400 draft laws have been adopted and they all aim to develop our country, to enhance people's well-being and to ensure security," noted Mr. Andreichenko. Speaking of the new deputies, he paid attention to the positive trend for the increasing number of female parliamentarians.

The President's visit to the Middle Eastern region has come to an end

Agreements have been reached, informed by specialists on both sides. The official visit by the President of Belarus to the UAE ended with a final meeting between Alexander Lukashenko and the Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi, Deputy Supreme Commander of the UAE Armed Forces, Mo-

ammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan, before the departure of the Belarusian Head of State to Minsk.

During negotiations, both sides confirmed interest in strengthening co-operation, and a list of investment and trade projects to be implemented very soon.

The Crown Prince of Abu Dhabi personally bid a friendly farewell to the President of Belarus, showing the warm relationship. At the airport, Mr. Lukashenko and Sheikh Mohammed bin Zayed bin Sultan Al-Nahyan also exchanged gifts.

Before arriving in the UAE,



Dubai today

Mr. Lukashenko had visited the State of Qatar, where a package of bilateral documents was signed.

Harmony from Lisbon to Vladivostok

By Maxim Osipov

Minsk remains a peaceful venue for debate of acute issues, welcoming representatives of almost all 56 member states of UN European Economic Commission, as well as leading figures and expert and business communities, discussing practical interaction between countries and integration structures

The President's greeting to the forum emphasised the need for harmonious community, without barriers to trade, from Lisbon to Vladivostok, as is a foreign political priority for our country. Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, underlined, "Speaking at the UN Summit [in September 2015] Alexander Lukashenko proposed an 'integration of integrations' as a key principle of collaboration, orienting towards all-round economic interaction between countries and coordinated counteraction of global threats and challenges."

Many integrations exist globally, causing Belarus to urge avoidance of unnecessary competition. Mr. Makei stated, "We should avoid unnecessary and dangerous counter-negation of integration models, working to achieve compatibility and complementarity."

Countries advance towards each other

Belarus' Embassy in Madrid opens in December 2016, notes Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to France with concurrent accreditation to Spain, Pavel Latushko, on meeting Spain's King Felipe VI

Mr. Latushko recently attended a state reception on behalf of the King of Spain, to mark the country's national holiday. The Belarusian diplomat conveyed congratulations on behalf of Belarus' President, Alexander Lukashenko, on the occasion of the holiday. He apprised the King of Spain of plans to open the Embassy of Belarus in Madrid in December 2016. In turn, the King of Spain stressed that Belarus' decision is an important political step, promoting bilateral co-operation.

Silk Road partners

Belarus, with observer status at Shanghai Co-operation Organisation, supports integration of EAEU and SCO



During the SCO Heads of Government Council session

By Alexey Fedosov

Speaking at SCO Heads of Government Council session in Bishkek, Belarus' Prime Minister, Andrei Kobaykov, said that as far as economic interaction is concerned, we are in accord with Russian partners regarding close integration for the EAEU and SCO. Belarus is supporting the Chinese Silk Road Economic Belt project, creating a platform of co-operation for industry, transport and communications, innovative and financial collaboration, and IT.

The PM voiced interest in expanding partnerships with SCO states, naming production co-operation with member states as a major priority, taking into account our current experience of establishing joint

ventures on various continents.

Good opportunities exist for consolidating efforts to produce new and competitive machine building goods, while ensuring proper service and after-sales maintenance. The agro-industrial complex is another area of mutually beneficial collaboration. According to Mr. Kobaykov, partnerships in industry and agriculture should be reinforced via constant development of logistics and transport elements. It's hoped that Belarus' participation in an agreement between the governments of SCO member states could become an important step in creating favourable conditions for international automobile transportation.

Belarus is ready to co-operate with SCO countries in the sphere of

security provision, with Mr. Kobaykov stressing that last year saw more interaction between power and law enforcement departments than ever before. He noted, "Belarus is ready to liaise in counteracting international terrorism and crime, in the spheres of IT, and illegal trafficking of narcotic and psychotropic substances across SCO state borders. All these negative manifestations are of trans-boundary character. It's only possible to efficiently struggle against them by uniting our efforts."

As a member of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, Belarus is advocating for expanded interaction between the CSTO and the SCO Regional Anti-Terrorist Structure, strengthening security and stability, including for information sharing,

counteraction of religious extremism and illegal migration.

The PM has called collaboration at inter-departmental level 'promising', saying, "The Emergency Ministry of Belarus is ready to join events under the SCO aegis, to prevent and tackle emergency situations in 2017."

The SCO is an active regional international organisation, uniting China, Russia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Uzbekistan, with six countries possessing observer status: Afghanistan, Belarus, India, Iran, Mongolia and Pakistan. The decision to enhance Belarus' SCO status to that of observer was adopted on July 10th, 2015, at the SCO Heads of State Summit in Ufa. Before this (from 2011-2015), Belarus took part as an SCO dialogue partner.

Discussion from a military point of view

By Dmitry Umpirovich

Observing Belarus-Russia relations in the sphere of military security, no one can doubt Union State development

A session of the joint collegiums of the Defence Ministries of our two states has confirmed recent achievements. The co-operation plan for 2016, comprising almost a hundred events, has been completely fulfilled. United systems of intelligence

and communication are gradually developing, as are radio-electronic and technical provision systems. General Lieutenant Andrei Ravkov, Belarus' Deputy Defence Minister, notes that the collective security of our two countries is a reliable, solid shield of bilateral relations, and an important element of CSTO collective security in the western direction.

The joint session for the military allowed the opportunity to synchronise watches and to confirm pros-

pects for our military collaboration. The Deputy Defence Minister of Russia, the General of the Army, Sergei Shoigu, tells us, "Our major focus was preparation of military administration and troops, and maintenance of the necessary level of inter-operability. In future, we plan to reinforce practical orientation of such events, taking into account foreign political realities."

He views the situation as alarming, since NATO members are ac-

tively expanding their attack potential along the western borders of the Union State, opening new bases and developing military infrastructure. The *Zapad-2017* strategic exercises are being held in September, across several shooting ranges of Belarus and Russia, dealing with the planning, management and application of regional troops. Exercises will include scenarios around radiation, and chemical and biological agents during joint manoeuvres.

Mr. Ravkov commented, "Agreements have been signed regarding technical co-operation between regional forces, and a protocol has been signed for joint protection of the Union State's external border, and the creation of a single regional air defence system. There is also provision regulating interaction in the sphere of information sharing and a bilateral co-operation plan for 2017 which includes around 130 joint events."

Obviously good mark with appreciation

The World Bank's *Doing Business* ranking can be compared to an 'Oscar': some are pleased to receive a golden statue, while others simply enjoy walking down the red carpet. Belarus has now rocketed to 37th place, ahead of EAEU partners Armenia, Russia and Kyrgyzstan.

By Polina Konoga

We have two reasons for pride. Firstly, the country has risen by 13 positions. Secondly, according to the World Bank, it has joined the top ten leading countries in the world for reforms favourable to business. In fact, when a new ranking is published, previous results are corrected. The 2016 report placed Belarus in 50th position, rather than 44th. Therefore, the present surge can really be called a breakthrough. The Head of the World Bank Office in Belarus, Yang Chul Kim, praises 'the Government's successive efforts to improve the regulatory environment for businesses' — which have improved the country's position in the report.

Belarus has preserved or has progressed its position in the categories of 'Registering Property' (5th place against 7th last year), 'Getting Credit' (101st against 109th), 'Trading Across Borders' (30th in both rankings), and 'Enforcing Contracts' (27th against 28th). Significant progress has been



observed in 'Protecting Minority Investors' (42nd against 62nd) and 'Resolving Insolvency' (69th against 95th). Meanwhile, 'Getting Electricity' demonstrates a significant jump for the second year in a row: in this ranking, the country is 50 points higher (shifting from the 74th to 24th place). Two years ago, Belarus was 148th in this parameter. Belenergo cannot hide its joy: finally, the banking experts have taken into account all changes introduced last year.

However, the country has also lost some positions: Belarus has dropped in 'Starting a Business' (31st from 30th), 'Dealing with Construction Permits' (28th from 25th) and 'Paying Taxes' (99th from 95th). According to the aver-

DIRECT SPEECH

Vladimir ZINOVSKY, Minister of Economy:

This year, we've seen a pretty good result: 37th place in the ranking. This is the result of the Government's meticulous work to implement the President's orders. You know about them: by 2020, Belarus should have entered the top thirty countries for doing business. The current result is satisfying but we won't rest on our laurels; we must keep moving forward. We have potential for much more. In particular, we're preparing legislation to assess the regulatory impact on businesses. We want to convert state agencies' services to electronic form; this is very important. Of course, we also need to improve our taxation issues, simplifying them as much as possible.

age calculations of the World Bank, one point in the *Doing Business* rating brings around \$500-600m in investment to the country. As a result, it's easy to calculate Belarus' hypothetical gain as a possible \$6.5bn-\$7.8bn.

This year, the three leading countries, with the most favourable conditions for doing business, are New Zealand, Singapore and Denmark. Interestingly, Singapore has dropped from first place for the first time in a decade.

Reshuffle in currency basket subject to market situation

By Aelita Syulzhina

An important indicator governing the Belarusian Rouble exchange rate is now changing. The basket of currencies is moving from comprising 40 percent Russian Rouble to 50 percent, with the Dollar remaining at 30 percent and the Euro dropping to 20 percent.

The National Bank comments, "The decision aims to reflect the specific weight of the Russian Rouble in the basket of currencies, and Russia's share in Belarus' foreign trade turnover (which ranges from 48 to 51 percent)." Following this logic, the Dollar share would actually need to be reduced, since foreign trade turnover with the United States is not high. However, the level of Dollarisation in the economy (not only in Belarus) is significant. In fact, 40 percent of all trading on the Belarusian Currency and Stock Exchange is conducted in US Dollars, with 27 percent in Euros. The National Bank has attempted to correct only the shares of the Russian Rouble and Euro, to reflect their share of our foreign trade.

What was the reason for this move? The basket of currencies helps smooth fluctuations in the national currency, linked not solely to the Rouble, Dollar and Euro but to the composition of these currencies. This is vital in ensuring the cost competitiveness of our exports. This is the second increase in the share of the Russian Rouble within the basket, it having increased to 40 percent in January.

"The increase of the Russian Rouble share in the currency basket will strengthen the binding of the Belarusian currency to Russian. As a result, slight weakening is possible," says Georgy Grits, the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Scientific and Industrial Association. "In turn, reducing the national currency's rate makes the country's exports more attractive and imports to Belarus less appealing. This benefits the trade balance."

Mr. Grits predicts some weakening of the Belarusian Rouble exchange rate but believes it will remain virtually unnoticeable in exchange offices since, at present, the market is experiencing an inflow of foreign currency rather than an outflow. "Most companies with large turnovers, especially in the private sector of the economy, showing profitability of less than 5 percent, will be glad of any possibility to improve their financial position," he adds.

He notes that the timing for this revision of the basket of currencies is apt, since oil prices and, consequently, the Russian Rouble exchange rate, have stabilised. However, the National Bank warns that this move should not be accepted as dogma. "The President and the National Assembly have set the task of diversifying exports," Mr. Grits notes. "Accordingly, if our trade with Russia falls in the future, the share of the Rouble Rouble in the basket should also be cut."

Colleagues exchange experience

Belarusian specialists study Italian Financial Guard (Guardia di Finanza) organisation

By Alexey Fedosov

A delegation from the Department of Financial Investigations of the State Control Committee recently visited Italy to study best practice within the Italian Financial Guard, learning about its working methods. Other states' experience, including

that of members of the European Union, is very useful for the Department of Financial Investigations of Belarus, as our country seeks to improve its system of measures to combat financial crimes, protecting the country's national interests.

The visit took place as part of the *TAIEX* programme — a Techni-

cal Assistance and Information Exchange instrument of the European Commission. The Department of Financial Investigations has been liaising with the European Commission within the *TAIEX* programme since 2015. Minsk has already hosted two seminars with the participation of experts from France,

Spain, Lithuania and Austria. Representatives of the Department of Financial Investigations have visited colleagues in Lithuania, Estonia and Slovakia, to discuss ways of countering tax offences, including methods of battling financial crime within the European Union, learning from international experience.

Well-known brand with high reputation

Official launch for 'Belarus' tractors assembly facility, at Avtomash-Radiator in Bishkek, attended by Belarus' Prime Minister, Andrei Kobyakov, and Kyrgyzstan's Acting Prime Minister, Sooronbai Jeenbekov

By Vladimir Khromov

The plant will be able to assemble up to 5,000 tractors per year. The first stage (2017-2018) envis-

ages production of up to 1,000 vehicles, for the domestic market of Kyrgyzstan and for export. The first overseas deliveries are planned to China and Turkmenistan.



'Belarus' tractor assembly production



'First-born'

As Mr. Kobyakov said at the opening ceremony, Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ) has a rich history and is among the world's top ten tractor producers. The company is ready to offer its Kyrgyz counterparts a wide range of modern tractors. "We're delighted to open our centre in Kyrgyzstan, producing tractors and providing services to other Belarusian producers, such as MAZ, Gomselmash and Amkodor," he noted.

Mr. Jeenbekov stressed that the new plant is of great importance for

both the industry and agriculture of Kyrgyzstan. "We firmly believe in the success of this project as it involves two famous plants: MTZ and Avtomash-Radiator," he said.

The new joint facility's goods will primarily enjoy demand among Kyrgyzstan's agrarian sector. "Our farmers know Belarus tractors very well, use them and consider them reliable," Mr. Jeenbekov added.

According to MTZ Director General Fiodor Domotenko, the free warehouse customs regime will

be used to deliver vehicle sets to the assembly plant in Kyrgyzstan — making it possible to sell goods to final customers without VAT.

The project is being implemented in line with a memorandum of co-operation between the Ministry of Agriculture and Melioration of Kyrgyzstan, Minsk Tractor Works and Avtomash-Radiator. The latter runs a dealership selling Belarusian machinery and providing pre-delivery inspection, after-sales and post-warranty services.

Innovation as a determining factor

Ten thousand jobs to be established at Belarus' large and medium-sized enterprises in 2017

By Vladimir Velikhov

"In 2017, at least 56 thousand jobs at medium-sized and large enterprises are to be created," notes the Economy Minister, Vladimir Zinovsky, at the Council of the Republic, adding that there's potential to create new jobs in small and medium-sized businesses and the services sector.

Innovative projects, realised in line with the state innovative development programme, are to become one of the main areas for economic growth. According to the programme, next year, 19 innovative projects will be completed, resulting in the creation of almost a thousand highly-productive jobs. "This will ensure a GDP growth rate of 0.12 percent and, in the future, the contribution will increase," Mr. Zinovsky added. The number of innovative projects will continue to grow through the development of industrial parks, start-ups and innovative businesses.

Mr. Zinovsky stressed the importance of the Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park's projects in this innovation and investment activity. "2017 is likely to become decisive in revealing the Park's potential and resident registration of new innovative companies," he said. "The total

investment in the development of the Park will be at least \$60-70m and the results of the Head of State's visit to China enable us to be optimistic about the issue."

According to Mr. Zinovsky, a focus will be made on external sources in the 2017 investment policy. Their share in the investments in fixed assets is likely to increase from 18 to 24 percent. Direct foreign investments will remain a priority.

"The recovery growth of the traditional economy, capacity utilisation and cost reduction will pro-

climate, including the protection of property rights arrangements, a reduction of administrative and control burdens on businesses, the elimination of excess workers in businesses and the creation of new jobs. There will be financial rehabilitation for organisations in the

celeration of growth, rather than large jumps," the Minister said, adding, "The 2016 GDP shortage is expected to be made up in 2017-2020 — proportionally to the pace of development envisaged by the five-year programme." This is planned on the basis of two major factors: the growth of efficiency and impact on existing industries and the creation of new sectors of the innovation development economy. "The peculiarity is that the contribu-

pensation for damages in case of violation of property rights, the reduction of financial penalties for minor breaches, the expansion of the practice of issuing a warning instead of imposing fines in attracting business entities to administrative responsibility for the first time, the adoption of legislation to create a mechanism for assessing the regulatory impact against regulating the entrepreneurial activity of administrative procedures, reduce the administrative burden on business by creating their electronic register and transfer the 25 most commonly used procedures in an electronic format as early as 2017. A law on tax advisors is likely to be adopted — for tax servicing of legal entities to meet best international practice. It is planned to remove legal barriers for small and medium-sized privatisation.

Among the main tasks for next year is the provision of a positive balance of trade, the recovery of industrial production without increasing stocks. "The volume of production has adapted to the payment of domestic and external demand. Evidently, this has become possible owing to the lowering of gross indicators. At the same time, this opens up the possibility for balanced production capacity of our enterprises in 2017," concluded Mr. Zinovsky.

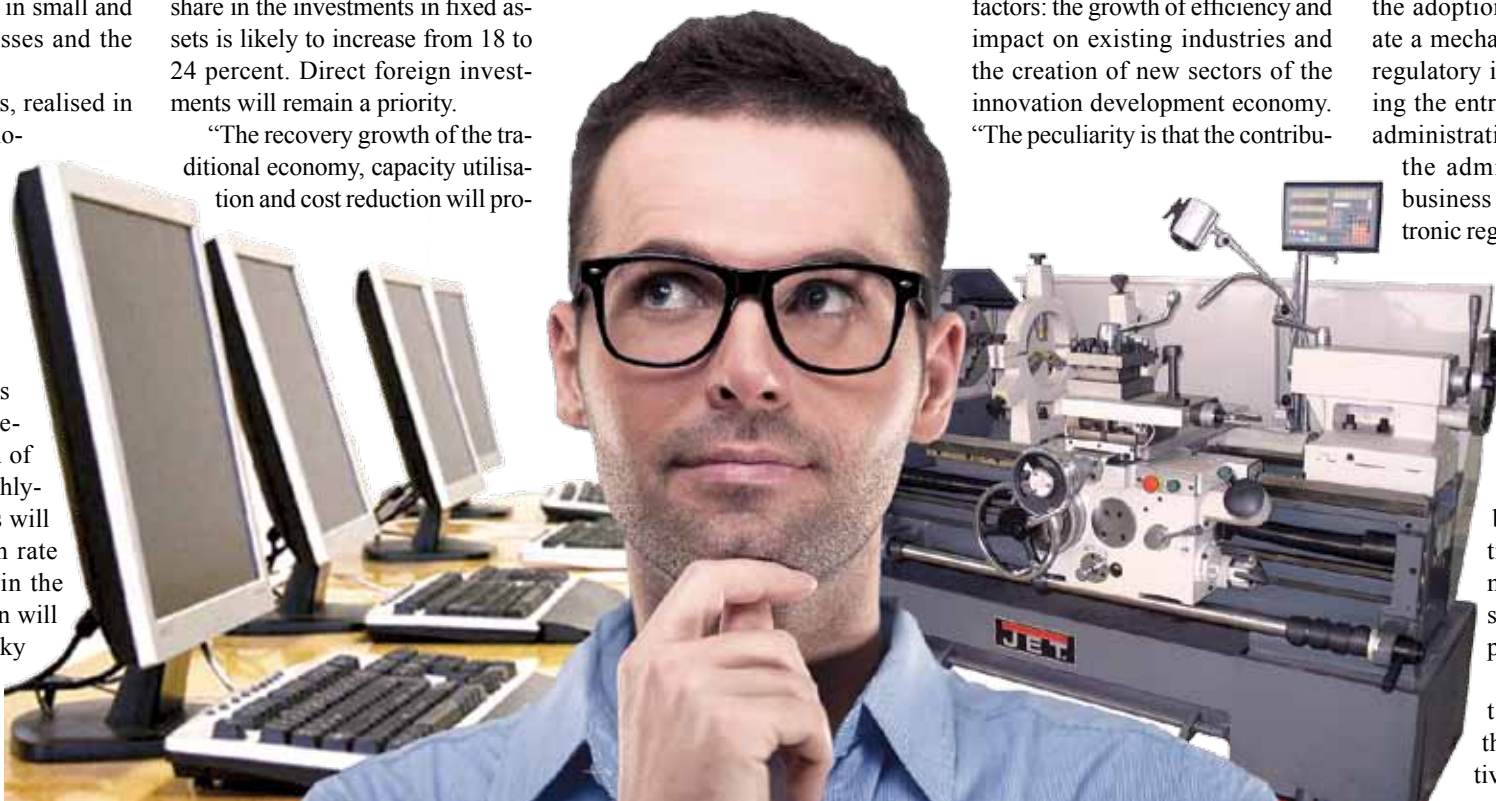
vide about half of the GDP growth in 2017, evidenced by balance calculations," the Minister added. "In order to accelerate economic growth in 2018 and 2019, the foundation is to be laid in 2016 and the first half of 2017." To achieve this, attention will be paid to a number of areas of economic policy: systemic improvement in the investment

real sector of the economy, after in-depth financial diagnostics, improving the efficiency of state property management.

"The Government has proposed a variant of the five year plans, in spite of the significantly worse external conditions in comparison with the calculated terms. There will now be a balanced gradual ac-

tion of new enterprises to economic growth is progressively increasing on the basis of the five-year plan. In 2017, they account for half of GDP growth and, in 2018-2019, two-thirds", he said.

The Minister also listed the areas for priority measures requiring regulatory consolidation. Among them is the introduction of com-



Visa-free entry for foreigners is welcomed

A document has entered into force granting visa-free entry for foreign citizens wishing to visit the Avgustovsky Canal tourist and recreation park, and adjacent settlements

By Katerina Charovskaya

The first foreigner to cross the Belarusian border without a visa was the Marshal of Poland's Podlaskie Voivodeship, Jerzy Leszczynski. He came to view the tourist potential of the Grodno trans-boundary area and took part in the opening of the Podlaskie Voivodeship tourist information centre, in Grodno.

The comfortable building in Grodno's centre is ready to offer information on all tourist matters relating to the neighbouring Polish region. A similar centre, describing the advantages of trips to the Grodno Region, opened in Bialystok in November.

Chatting with the Podlaskie Voivodeship delegation about prospects for developing visa-free tourism in Belarus, the Chairman of Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Kravtsov, underlined that friendly steps will, undoubtedly, stir travellers' interest in our country.

He sees this as the beginning of a difficult road towards conquering the world tourist market, saying, "This event will enter history and will facilitate the development of co-operation in the sphere of tourism. We have beautiful places and rich history. States were set up and destroyed here, and we need to have a caring attitude towards history and bring it to our descendants. Nevertheless, I'd like to stress that a range of issues require resolution.



Avgustovsky Canal lock

For example, Lesnaya-Rudawka checkpoint needs to be given expanded status (turning it from solely a water border checkpoint to one for pedestrians and tourists on bicycles). We need to open Sofievo-Lipszczany checkpoint and to create the necessary infrastructure there. We also need to revise our international agreement, to allow border crossing for our own small-sized vessels."

Mr. Leszczynski agrees that visa-free status for the tourist and

recreation park and Grodno is only the first step towards mutually beneficial co-operation. He states, "We understand that the creation of a single tourist system requires development and improvement of existing agreements. However, it deals with not only trips. It also refers to the development of relations in economic, cultural and social spheres. For example, Grodno airport is located much closer to our region than the one in Warsaw. If Polish citizens need no visa for such a trip, they

may more often use the services of your air companies."

There's now an Internet site where tourist companies can register foreign citizens wishing to visit the Avgustovsky Canal and adjacent territories, including Grodno, without a visa. The website contains information about sites, restaurants, cafes and hotels, as well as giving a map of the borders of the visa-free zone. The mobile application will help visitors avoid violating these borders, using a GPS feature.

Lions' symbolism for city

By Diana Garaninova

Pushkinsky Bridge in Mogilev decorated with four bronze lions, as final stage of road junction reconstruction on Dnieper

The Chairman of Mogilev's City Executive Committee, Vladimir Tsumarev, tells us that the lions 'will become a symbol of Mogilev'. Mogilev sculptor Andrey Vorobyov used the White Lion called John, from the Zapashny brothers' troupe, as a model. He notes, "When I look at the sculptures from all angles, I see that they fit harmoniously into the city concept, both aesthetically and symbolically. People tend to anthropomorphise lions. To us, they are not just wild animals but are the king of beasts, with wisdom, strength and nobility. That's what I tried to conjure while working on this extraordinary project."

Dogs and cats enjoy comfort

By Olga Pasiyak

An unusual taxi service has become operational in Minsk, transporting cats, dogs and other pets

The service was piloted back in May, and began working in fully-fledged mode in October. Entrepreneur Piotr Yakushenko tells us that people most often want to take pets to the vet, but are sometimes heading to the groomers, and occasionally need to go to the railway station, the airport or to a pet show.

"90 percent of our passengers are dogs, while cats account for about 10 percent. We have plenty of regular clients. People also transport parrots to the vet, since it's hugely stressful for a bird to be transported in a trolley bus or tram. If, for example, a Labrador dog needs to be delivered to a vet, a usual taxi is unlikely to accept the journey, since they'll feel the need to clean the inside of the car afterwards. Usually, owners travel with their pets but we do offer to take an animal without its owner."

Health benefitting from human lactoferrin line

Human lactoferrin from transgenic goat milk is now in production, at the Microbiology Institute of the National Academy of Sciences. Its experimental laboratory is extracting, purifying and drying lactoferrin, though not yet on an industrial scale. Until recently, plans for the unique protein were rather vague. The project is the work of Belarusian and Russian scientists as part of two major Union State programmes — *BelRosTransgene* and *BelRosTransgene-2*.

By Yulia Vasilishina

Human lactoferrin is contained in breast milk, supporting congenital immunity, fighting bacteria and viruses, preventing the development of cancer tumours, and counteracting inflammation and aging. It has antioxidant and

regenerative characteristics. The problem of initial material for extraction was solved via the creation of transgenic goats at the Scientific and Practical Centre for Animal Breeding at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, whose milk contains human protein. However, milk needed to

be frozen, as there was no place to process it. The line in Veliky Novgorod, able to process up to a thousand tonnes of such raw material, stands idle. A stumbling block to promotion across the Union State has been the toughening of Russian legislation regarding GMO, under which this recombi-

nant protein formally falls.

Projects dealing with lactoferrin have been included into Belarusian state programmes, and the line at the Microbiology Institute will produce at least 5kg of the substance per year: enough to provide dietary supplementation for 2,000 people. The first cus-

tomers are the National Academy of Sciences' institutes, who want to receive protein for their research. Lactoferrin can be used in baby food, as well as for sport and dietary nutrition. It will also find application in pharmaceutical and cosmetic products. World need is estimated at 90 tonnes per year.



Lactoferrin production



Postavy: St. Nicholas the Wonderworker Church in the background

Postavy city just 45km from Paris

Postavy, in the west of the Vitebsk Region, looks like a Slovene or Polish city, its late 18th century square having been designed by Italian architect Giuseppe de Sacco

By Kristina Khilko

Walking in the English landscape garden of the Tyzenhaus family

Postavy was first mentioned in chronicles in 1409, being home to one of numerous fortresses across the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. From 1770-1780, the role of the city changed, with Grodno head Antoni Tyzenhaus founding cloth, linen, weapon, hosiery and carriage manufacturing in the modest town.

Thanks to Italian architect Giuseppe de Sacco, the central square became the country's first stone architectural complex to be completed in one style.

The Tyzenhaus family palace, in classic style, remains today, with its flat-topped design, subtle decor, and simplicity of form, despite numerous changes made over the years. Tyzenhaus introduced white marble sculptures made by Ital-

ian masters, while adding artificial ponds and a linden avenue to the grand park, in European style.

Promenading Postavy's quiet streets, it's difficult to believe that, once, it was the scientific and cultural centre of the Vilnya (Vilnius) Region. With its schools, theatre and art gallery, including canvases and engravings by Leonardo da Vinci, Rembrandt, Rubens, Bruegel and Dürer, it was a place of significance. Konstanty Tyzenhaus also created an ornithological museum, containing three thousand stuffed animals and birds. Just imagine!

Becoming a European miller

Fire, time and natural disasters have been unmerciful to the local mill; two centuries ago, it was rebuilt on the same site, equipped with the latest equipment. It's now a monument of industrial architecture and home to a house of crafts, en-



IT IS INTERESTING

The ancient city may have gained its name from the word 'stav' (in old Belarusian, meaning 'water reservoir'), with 'po stavy' meaning to be sited alongside a river or lake. Locals have always been fishermen, with the town's coat of arms showing a silver fishing net and three gold fishes. Others say that the town, being located on the border of east and west, gained its name from its military residents, since 'po ustavy' means 'following orders'. A third variant is that the town once hosted noisy fairs, with merchants gathering to sell their goods.



Welcome to Postavy

titled the 'Old Mill', where you can make pots and bast shoes, or watch professionals doing so. You can also buy souvenirs made by local craftsmen.

While the Tyzenhaus family estate is classic, Postavy's square is Vilnya baroque in style, with ornate roofs, turrets and mansards.

Praying for protection

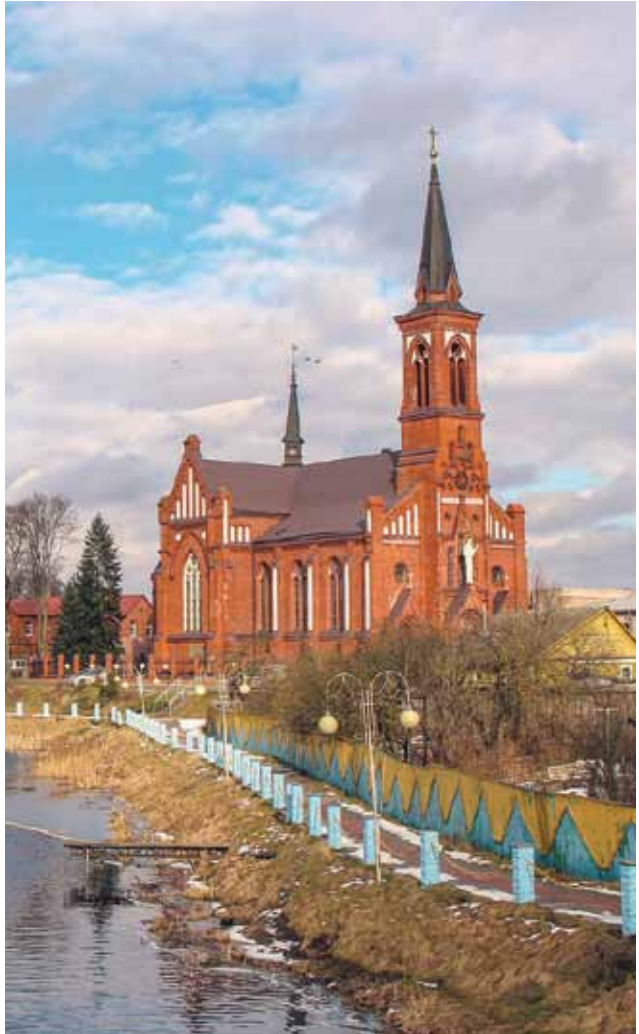
The 43m spire atop Postavy's red-brick neo-gothic Catholic church is visible from every corner of the city. Constructed in 1904, by architect Goibel, it is named in honour of Saint Anthony of Padua, a Franciscan preacher-miracle man, and a patron of the poor and of travellers. With bright stained-glass

windows, intricate chandeliers and unique paintings, the church attracts numerous tourists, inspiring them to contemplate the eternal.

As in any other Belarusian city, there's an Orthodox church on the square too: the snow-white Cathedral of Saint Nicholas, in Neo-Russian style, with traditional domes. It was built on Myadelka River bank in 1894. People pray to St. Nicholas for a miracle but the beauty of Postavy is a miracle in itself.

Visiting local Paris

Just 45km from Postavy is Belarus' own Paris. Some say it received its name from Napoleon, who, passing by in 1812, exclaimed that its



St. Anthony of Padua Roman Catholic Church

beauty was like that of the parks of Paris. The truth may be more prosaic. The landowner called the town after a maggot! However, local Parisians are proud of their town, especially now that they have their own 'miniature' Eiffel Tower.

After Postavy, it's good to visit the village of Mosar. Priest Juozas Bulka served at St. Anna's Church, his prayers and diligence helping the village become free of alcohol dependency. He brought to life the literary expression 'beauty will save the world'. Together with parishioners, he transformed the territory around the church into a real Belarusian Versailles, with Alpine hills, and avenues of exotic trees and bushes. Its man-made ponds and lattice bridges are like those in French parks. In front of the church is an exact copy of the Pietà sculpture by Michelangelo. A footpath leads from this sculpture to

the highest cross in Belarus, and a picturesque avenue leads towards curative springs. There's no doubt that these features beautify the village of Mosar, making it one of the most memorable in all Belarus.

Learning about the cembalo

Near Postavy is the village of Gruzdovo, where people have made cembalo musical instruments for several centuries. Known across many Eastern European countries, similar instruments have been available in India and China, but the Belarusian cembalo is special. In Gruzdovo, people make not only the simple cembalo, but a diatonic version, which has only one tone: F-major.

Local folk group *Poozerie* was the guest of honor at the traditional International *Dulcimers and Harmonics Are Playing* summer festival, attracting many fans annually.



More than a thousand migrants and refugees arrive at overcrowded shelter area in Piraeus

‘Keep the refugees and we’ll send you blankets’

Greece’s Migration Minister has criticised some EU member states for allegedly refusing to accept their share of the 1,490 unaccompanied child migrants it is currently housing

The most vulnerable victims of conflict zones are being shunned by members of the Visegrad Group, Greece’s Migration Minister, Yannis Mouzalas says. Refugee children, many of whom arrived in Greece and Italy unaccompanied by adults, are a top priority for the EU resettlement

programme that allows those migrants qualified to resettle in EU countries. However, the Visegrad Group made up of the Czech Republic, Hungary, Poland and Slovakia have been less than willing to accept migrants as part of the resettlement scheme.

Mouzalas recently spoke of the

Visegrad Group’s shameful stance towards refugees and trying to ultimately block the process of the EU resettlement programme in the European Court, “...they try to block (the resettlement programme) by starting legal proceedings in the European Court and also by launching a new

model, called ‘flexible solidarity.’ What is this model? They say to us: ‘Keep the refugees and we shall send you blankets.’”

UNHCR released a report, titled *Child Asylum Seekers in Europe, Situation in Figures* which reiterates the frustration felt by Minister Mouzalas.



Climate summit opens in Marrakech

The Marrakech climate summit has begun in an atmosphere of celebration

Almost 200 nations marked the entry into force of the Paris Agreement to limit greenhouse gas emissions. Opening the proceedings the UN’s climate change chief, Patricia Espinosa reminded the delegates that they needed to walk the talk.

“Early entry into force of the Paris Agreement is a clear cause for celebration, it is also a timely re-

minder of the high expectations that are now placed upon us all. Achieving the aims and ambitions of the Paris Agreement is not a given. We have embarked on an effort to change the course of two centuries of carbon intensive development.” By the conference’s end on November 18th the parties hope to define the terms of the deal — including the provision of \$100bn per year to help developing countries combat climate change.

Fossil is ‘pickled’ dinosaur brain

A small brown pebble found on a Sussex beach could be the first fossilised dinosaur brain tissue ever discovered according to UK scientists

Thought to have come from a large herbivore, closely related to the Iguanodon, the fossil could show that the extinct giants were more intelligent than originally thought.

The pebble was discovered on a beach near Bexhill-on-Sea and scientists believe the dinosaur’s head became buried allowing the brain to be picked and preserved.

“When it (the dinosaur) died and came to rest, its head, at least, would have been within a water body, presumably in a swamp, and it lay upside down,” explains Cambridge University paleobiologist, Alex Liu. “And the top of the brain would have been rotated at the bottom of this little basin that the brain

case was making and it’s that bottom of that basin where we seem to be getting the best tissue preservation.”

The cast was discovered near other dinosaur remains, including ribs and leg bones.

Using x-ray techniques, scientists produced a virtual, 3D model of the fossil, allowing them to explore its structure and how it formed. They say it shows distinct similarities to the brains of modern-day dinosaur descendants, namely crocodiles and birds.



Police clear thousands from Paris migrant camp

Hundreds of French police officers moved in at dawn to clear what is described as Paris’ largest migrant camp

Thousands of people have been camping out in tents under a bridge in the northeast of the capital, near Stalingrad metro station.

Numbers have soared since the closure of the so-called ‘Jungle’ camp outside the port of Calais, on the northern French coast.

Officials say the migrants — many from war-torn countries such as Afghanistan and Sudan — are being transferred to holding centres across the Paris area, where asylum requests will be processed.

The police operation is said to have got off to a smooth start.

Paris is investing millions of Euros into temporary facilities for migrants. But many may well not want to stay in the French capital, with some having set their sights on reaching the shores of Britain.

Eurozone unemployment eases to 10 percent

Unemployment in the Eurozone remains high but has eased to the lowest level in five years

It was 10 percent of the workforce in September, according to the latest tally from the European Union’s statistics office. August’s total was revised down from 10.1 percent to 10.0 percent. The last time it was at that level was June 2011.

Unemployment fell in most of the 19 countries using the Euro currency, notably in Belgium, Ireland and France, while more people were out of a job in Austria, Italy and Luxembourg.

Germany had the lowest level of unemployment, stable at 4.1 percent.

Youth unemployment fell from 20.6 to 20.3 percent in September.

That was driven by improvements in Spain and Italy, though the overall level of those under the age of 25 without a job remained particularly high in those countries.

At the same time the European Central Bank released its latest economic bulletin.

It said gross domestic product in the Eurozone should continue to expand at a moderate and steady pace but with risks from sluggish global growth and political uncertainty.

In an outlook that is largely consistent with the bank’s policy statement in late October, the ECB said that consumption and employment should continue to rise and the recovery in business investment should continue beyond the next quarter.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Author understatement expands space for audience imagination

Artist and Teacher exhibition — dedicated to the 100th anniversary of the birth of Pavel Lyubomudrov — focuses on the artistry and teaching of the famous graphic artist

By Veniamin Mikheev

Pavel Lyubomudrov, an Honoured Figure of Arts of the BSSR, was born in Petrograd on 17th [or, using the alternate calendar, 30th] August, 1916, and died on 27th February, 1984, in Minsk. Between 1936 and 1939, he studied at the All-Russian Academy of Arts and, from 1934, participated in exhibitions. From 1939-1941, Pavel studied at the Leningrad Institute of Painting, Sculpture and Architecture, under Boris Iohanson, Alexey Zaitsev and Leonid Ovsyannikov. However, his successful education was interrupted by World War II.

Early on, he joined the Soviet Army, fighting near Moscow and the Kalinin frontline. After being seriously wounded, he spent a long of time in hospital, returning, after the war, from 1945-1949, to his studies. He attended the Surikov Moscow Art Institute's Department of Graphics, supervised by well-known master Dementy Shmarinov.



At Pavel Lyubomudrov's exhibition

In 1949, Mr. Lyubomudrov began teaching, and collaborated with publishing houses in Moscow and Alma-Ata. He enjoyed teaching, which took him to the Riga Arts Academy's Department of Graphics for several years (1952-1956), and then the Belarusian State Theatre and Art Institute (1957-1983).

The last three decades of Pavel's life and artistry were largely connected with Minsk. As a Professor and Dean of the Department of Arts, he taught many outstanding Belarusian artists, including E. Agunovich, L. Asetsky, G.

Vitkovsky, V. Vishnevsky, S. Volkov, Y. Gerasimenko-Zhiznevsky, G. Grak, A. Demarin, P. Drachev, G. Denisov, V. Yegorov, A. Kashkurevich, L. Marchenko, M. Movchan, I. Nemogai, Y. Nikiforov, N. Poplavskaya, V. Pavlovets, V. Poshchastiev, V. Savic, N. Seleshchuk, R. Siplevich, G. Sitnitsa, V. Slauk, V. Tkachuk, Y. Tyshkevich, B. Titovich, V. Sharangovich and V. Shmatov.

The military, creative and pedagogical merits of Mr. Lyubomudrov were highly appreciated, with him receiving not only a 2nd De-



gree Order of the Great Patriotic War but various medals and the Honorary Diploma of the Supreme Council of the BSSR. The National Art Museum of Belarus and the

Belarusian Union of Artists hold his works, as do museums in Riga and Almaty, and private collections.

The National Art Museum's *Artist and Teacher* exhibition features around fifty of his works, painted from the 1940s to the 1970s. Most belong to the artist's family.

His drawings from the war years, based on his memories of WWII, alongside portraits of friends and relatives, in charcoal, watercolour and collotype, as well as his Minsk landscapes, demonstrate not only his skill

and his precise vision but his open and sensitive soul.

The evolution of Pavel's professional skills took place in a period of change for Soviet art's ideological and stylistic form. He managed to demonstrate his individuality through his compositional and colouristic solutions. His pictures from the 1970s offer a feeling of space, leaving open sections, negative space to balance the positive. His brevity and understatement allow us to apply our own imagination and interpretation.



Festival week screens more than 160 films, from 52 countries

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, Natalia Kochanova, has congratulated famous Belarusian actors, foreign visitors, critics, and the audience on the main film event of the year. She presented the Special Prize of the President of Belarus 'For Preservation and Development of Spiritual Traditions in Cinematography' to People's Actor of the USSR Gennady Ovsyannikov, who is much loved.

The Deputy Prime Minister read the greeting of the Head of State, calling the film festival an 'authoritative forum which promotes mutual cultural enrichment and popularisation of the best achievements of Belarusian and foreign cinema'.

The congratulation stated: 'Tra-

ditionally, each November, the capital of Belarus receives well-known directors, and offers audiences a rich palette of art and documentary films, from every corner of the globe. Works introduced here have already received high praise from professionals and judges of cinematography. This year's festival takes place in the Year of Culture, when the state is giving special attention to supporting the creative initiatives of art workers and seek-



Handsome faces of Listapad

ing out promising youth projects'.

'Towards Inspiration' is the slogan of this year's festival, presenting the usual selection of novelties, laureates of international competi-



tions, and holders of awards and prizes.

Naturally, the jury's thoughts are held in respect at such events. The film festival launched with a premiere of *Petersburg. Only for Love*, which has been produced, unusually, by seven women directors from Russia. The event runs until November 11th, closing with a screening of *Afterim-*

age, by renowned Polish director Andrzej Wajda. The film received the special jury prize at the Gdynia Film Festival (Poland), and has been shown at festivals in Toronto and in Busan (Republic of Korea).

The ART Corporation Centre of Visual and Performing Arts has organised the event, with support from the Ministry of Culture of Belarus, Minsk City Executive Committee, Belteleradiocompany, Belarusfilm National Film Studio, and the Belarusian Union of Cinematographers.

‘I’d love to fly’

Town Musicians of Bremen, Well, Just You Wait!, The Adventures of Buratino, Mother, Winter in Prostokvashino, The Adventures of Elektronik, Visitor from the Future, Oh, That Nastya! all feature wonderful songs with lyrics by Yuri Entin, who wrote over 600 verses loved by children and adults, and whose phrases have become popular quotations

By Irina Svirko

Not long ago, the famous poet visited Minsk, arriving for the premiere of the musical *The Blue Puppy*, co-authored with composer Gennady Gladkov for the Musical Territory Theatre.

We chatted with the Moscow guest on the eve of the premiere.

Yuri Sergeyevich, many unique and popular characters speak your words from the screen. Which is dearest to you?

My favourite character is Vodyanoy (a water spirit) from the cartoon ‘Flying Ship’. I’m proud of his originality. I like the way Anatoly Papanov performed the song, and the drawn image is pleasing. By the way, my first book was initially titled ‘I Want to Fly’. However, it was published in 1985 as ‘A Winged Swing’, the first being vetoed by the chief editor of Sovetsky Kompositor (Soviet Composer) Publishing House. Two verses were removed from the book: ‘I’m Vodyanoy’ and ‘Who is a Novice?’ The former was deleted for the lines ‘Heh, my life is like a can! May it be thrown into a swamp! I live like rubbish while I want to fly!’ It was called propaganda of dissidence. The latter contained ‘A small sword’s jingle, like the jingle of a wine glass, has pleased my ear since childhood...’, and was banned because, that year, Gorbachev started his anti-alcohol campaign. Interestingly, a picture of Vodyanoy was removed from the cover, but it remained on the endleaf — probably, they just forgot to change it. ‘Town Musicians of Bremen’ is, of course, the work that people know me for; it was my first big success.

Following its release in 1969 you woke up famous.

I wouldn’t say so, because those who write song lyrics are rarely credited. No one would recognise me, as I



Characters who speak Yuri Entin’s words

wasn’t shown on TV. The songs, however, became real hits; students, especially, liked them. Young people were surprised that people in the USSR could do things as they did in the West. Freedom could be sensed in those songs. The film failed to be awarded a single prize, but received affection and recognition. It was impossible to gain a ticket to Barrikady cinema, in the centre of Moscow, where the cartoon was being screened, because of huge queues, mainly of students. I remember going to see the film with my family, and being refused entry as there were no free seats, even on additional chairs. My status as an author didn’t help. We left and I was very angry at the time but, several hours later, I calmed down and even felt proud of such a success.

You should be rightly proud of your other works, too, which are very popular.

Some are special to me, such as the song ‘Chunga-Changa’. Once, in the 1970s, in ‘Izvestia’ newspaper, I read an article called ‘The Power of Words’. It was about a boy who would be called autistic today. His parents

died, and he didn’t want to communicate with anyone in the orphanage. According to his caregiver, he first smiled and took on life after hearing the ‘Chunga-Changa’ song. Children sang it during a music class, and he joined in. At the time, I didn’t lay much significance by this, although I was pleased. Now, I’m searching for this issue of the newspaper. If my song helped at least one child, it means that I’ve not worked in vain.

Is it true that you initially didn’t like your song, ‘Beautiful Future’, although it was named as the best in the USSR in 1985?

When the song was created, I was angry with the director of ‘Visitor from the Future’ who requested that I write about a dozen songs. I’d already written several when it turned out that he needed only one, for the final credits. This was absolutely hopeless, because viewers stand up and leave the cinema as the final credits roll. However, something happened to make me change my attitude towards that song, and it began to appeal to me in a totally different way. Once, I returned home late, after a theatrical



Yuri Entin invited for a meeting

There’s an interesting story around ‘Bu-ra-ti-no!’ as I couldn’t write anything for about a month and a half and the composer, Alexey Rybnikov, became nervous at my lack of lyrics. Eventually, he said that we could play the song without lyrics if we needed to. As soon as he did so, I wrote the refrain, with syllables between the bridges. Rybnikov was astounded. I wrote the rest of the lyrics at once, in his presence.

Why don’t we have any similarly popular children’s songs today?

It’s a hard question. Times do change. After 1991, the state-supported industry of children’s musical films, animation and songs disappeared. In the USSR, the state was the producer. Much was invested in children and in our future, with thought, and with good reason. Soyuzmultfilm, Gorky Film Studio, and theatres were involved in the process. Every city with a population of a million people had two children’s theatres, as was the policy. Today, things are different, with commercialism ruling. Children don’t fit into that.

Last year, on the occasion of my 80th birthday, I published a three-volume edition, each containing 101 songs, with CDs and printed music. The first includes my widely known songs, while the second contains songs from theatrical performances almost unknown. The third has new, unheard songs, written jointly with David Tukhmanov. All have been performed, but never reached the general public, as no one promotes them, and there is no musical TV or radio programme where I can take them. I brought one copy to Minsk, for my friends Dmitry Yakubovich and Anastasia Grinenko, who worked on staging ‘The Blue Puppy’. I think viewers will like this show.

Film festival expands together with spectators

By Alexander Pimenov

Children and youth film competition programme — Listapadzik-2016 — presents works describing the life of children, their parents and the inter-relations of generations

“These films can and should be discussed, being able to educate directors, scriptwriters, camera men and actors. The most important thing is that we encourage thinking and well-educated audiences,” noted Irina Driga, Belarus’ First Deputy

Culture Minister, speaking at the opening of the children’s holiday.

Emilia Mira Haviarova, of the Czech Republic, who is the chair of the jury of the children’s competition and director of various international cultural projects, noted her pleasure in being invited to the wonderful cinematic festival in Minsk. Emilia learnt of the film forum several years ago, and now awaits it yearly with anticipation. Congratulating the children, she voiced her hope that the



young talents of this world receive the help they need to reach their potential.

The jury also included children’s writers Yevgenia Pasternak, from Russia, and Andrey Zhvalevsky,

from Belarus, alongside cinema expert Yekaterian Klado, from Russia.

Listapadzik comprised eight contest films, created by cinematographers from Azerbaijan, Belgium, Bulgaria, Germany, France and the USA, and screening of some films in the ‘out-of-competition’ section. Family comedy *Iqbal Farooq and the Secret Recipe* opened the forum (directed by Tilde Harkamp). It is Denmark’s highest grossing children’s film of recent years, full of abductions and

explosions, and is a tale of how friendship and an inventive mind may prove stronger than malicious plans.

Louise & Luka — *The Big Cheese Race* animated film brought to life characters from the children’s books by writer and illustrator Kjell Aukrust. His popularity in Scandinavia is comparable to that of the creator of the Moomins.

The film festival also saw the screening of two works by major directors of world cinema, Ira Sachs and Michel Gondry.

Taste of Champions League

Stroitel and Minchanka clubs launch at most prestigious European Volleyball Cup tournament

By Alexey Grishin

Belarusian teams are making their first appearance in the Volleyball Champions League. How does it differ from the European Cups where Belarusian volleyballers have played previously?

Several years ago, the Volleyball Champions League was a closed club for the elite. Now, the winner of any national championship from any European state can gain entry to the continent's major club tournament.

Stroitel's head coach, Alexander Singaevsky, notes, "I believe that the change of format is the correct decision. From now on, winners of national championships of European states will take part in the Champions League; some countries, boasting the strongest championships and oc-



Tiikerit was a 'pig in a poke' for Stroitel but this didn't hamper our volleyballers from achieving confident victory

cupying high positions in the European rankings, can send two or three squads."

The current Champions League men's event features thirty-six clubs, with twelve directly qualifying for the group stage. The remaining twenty-four need to pass through qualifying rounds (to determine the eight further squads going through). Women have the same system: twelve clubs have no need to bother with the selection stage and four more await the group stage draw. Then, there will be play-offs to discern the final four.



Volleyballers from Minchanka in high spirits

Mr. Singaevsky continues, "To qualify for the group stage, Stroitel and Minchanka have to endure two qualifying rounds, which envisage four matches. If the teams go further, they'll

face at least six more matches, against the strongest European teams in the group stage. Compared with the CEV Cup, which actually doesn't have a group stage and the team

leaves the tournament after its defeat in a two-legged tie, this is a much more multi-step tournament, where one can gain experience at the highest level. Moreover, in case of knock-out in one of the qualifying rounds of the Champions League, the club can continue in the international season, playing in the CEV Cup.

In the Champions League, rivals are stronger than in any other European Cup event, while the requirements for the conduct of matches are also much higher. Alexander Mishin, Director General of Minsk volleyball club, tells us,

"During the coaching session, we were told to forget how we'd played in the Challenge Cup and the CEV Cup. The requirements are severe. First of all, TV and Internet broadcasting should be organised. We had to purchase a lot of devices: tablets, headsets for judges and other equipment."

Clubs from Minsk aim to qualify for the tournament's group stage. However, sporting luck in the return games didn't smile on everyone. Stroitel failed to qualify for the third round of the Champions League, losing to Finnish Tiikerit 1:3. After two matches, the teams had an equal numbers of points, so the match went to extra time, leaving Tiikerit as the victor, 13:15. Stroitel is now knocked out of the Champions League but will continue fighting in the CEV Cup, where the seven-time champion of Belarus will face Italian Piacenza in the 1/32 finals.

The women's Minchanka squad managed to defeat Finnish HPK Hämeenlinna across two matches in the second qualifying round of the most prestigious club tournament. However, in the return match, in HPK Hämeenlinna, the Finnish girls took victory, 3:0. The teams took part in an additional match, with Belarus winning 15:10. In the third round, the Belarusian squad will face the current world champion, Eczacıbaşı.

Taking revenge on Slovenian squad

Belarus' national ice hockey team defeats Slovenes in series of penalty shootouts, to win EuroChallenge first round

By Kirill Karin

There was a time when the national squad of Slovenia wasn't performing particularly well. However, these days, they are just as likely to beat our Belarusian team as to lose. They prevented our national squad reaching the Sochi and Pyeongchang Games.

Accordingly, an away victory over Slovenia in the decisive match of the Euro Ice Hockey Challenge was a great achievement for our team. Belarus was initially losing 0:2, and then 1:3 but Roman Graborenko scored twice, and Pavel Kazakevich once, taking the game to a series of penalty shootouts. In September, the Slovenes won the 'lottery' in Minsk;



A moment of game with Slovenes

this time, Dave Lewis' trainees proved stronger.

Of course, the Friendly Euro Challenge can't be compared with Olympic qualification but Dave Lew-

is' team can feel satisfied by the outcomes so far. The national squad of Belarus has whitewashed France (3:0) and Latvia (4:0) at the tournament in Slovenia.

'Returning step by step'

Triple Olympic champion Darya Domracheva returns to training after giving birth to her daughter, as she announces on Instagram

By Igor Svitov

"I'm returning, step by step" wrote the young mother, attaching a photo from a ski roller track in Raubichi. The daughter of Darya Domracheva and Ole Einar Bjørndalen was born on October 1st, called Ksenia.

Previously, Darya's teammate Nadezhda Skardino announced the return of the 30-year-old athlete to training, noting that Domracheva will join the squad



Darya Domracheva on track in Raubichi

in November, at Norway's Sjusjoen camp. Fans of the Belarusian biathlete can expect Darya's return for the World Cup after the New Year holidays. The coach of the women's national biathlete team notes that Darya plans to be back in early 2017 and won't change her plans.

We may hope that the delivery of a baby has positively

influenced the titled athlete. Fellow biathlete Marie Dorin-Habert of France made a successful return to the track after delivering her baby in September 2014, returning to training just one month later (like Domracheva). In March, she claimed two gold and one silver medal at the World Championship in Kontiolahti, in 2015.



Representatives of twelve countries take part in *Wind Rose HAIR-2016* international beauty festival

EXHIBITIONS	
MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY <i>4 Sverdlov Street</i> Until 11th December. Jānis Streičs: Films, People, Epochs	ARENA CITY <i>84 Pobediteley Avenue</i> Until 1st February. IllyuzIum interactive entertaining exhibition of illusions and 3D pictures
NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS <i>12 Karl Marx Street</i> Until 29th January. Belarusian Trade in History Until 1st June 2017. From Romanian Dinary to Belarusian Rouble	NATIONAL ART MUSEUM <i>20 Lenin Street</i> Until 21st November. Light and Air: pictorial art by Natan Voronov Until 30th January. Celestial World on the Earth Until 5th February. Russian Pictorial Art of 19th-20th Century
EXHIBITION HALL OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM <i>9A Bogdanovich Street</i> Until 13th March. Noisy Feathered Rainbow	HOUSE-MUSEUM OF 1ST RSDRP SESSION <i>31a Nezavisimosti Avenue</i> Until 4th December. World of Ancient People
MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY <i>12 K.Marx Street</i> Until 22nd January. Exhibition of Carnivorous Plants	CAT MUSEUM <i>11 Dzerzhinsky Avenue</i> Until 30th November. Cat in Leaves Until 30th November. Halloween Weeks in Cat Museum
WING OF LOSHITSA PALACE-AND-PARK COMPLEX <i>Chizhevsky Street</i> Until 9th December. Speaking Machines: History of Sound Recording	POBEDA <i>20 Internatsionalnaya Street</i> Until 20th November. African Sun
BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS <i>32 Nezavisimosti Avenue</i> 11-13, 16.11 Arena Triumphators	MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY <i>5 Muzykalny Lane</i> Until 18th November. Polonaises for Return Until 30th November. Inside

THEATRES	
BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE <i>1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square</i> 10.11 Eugene Onegin 11.11 Vitovt 12.11 Madam Butterfly 13.11 Miraculous Music; Laurencia 15.11 Grey Legend 16.11 Seven Beauties; Zarzuela: concert of Spanish music 17.11 Barber from Seville; Sleeping Beauty	THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS <i>13 Pobediteley Avenue</i> 10.11 Abduction of Yelena 12-13.11 A Very Simple Story 14-15.11 Pygmalion 16-17.11 #13
BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE <i>44 Myasnikov Street</i> 10.11 Silva 11.11 The Bat 12.11 Adventures of Kay and Gerda (Snow Queen); Merry Poppins 13.11 Little-Red-Riding-Hood. Generation NEXT 17.11 Swan Lake	REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA <i>44 Kropotkin Street</i> 10.11 Scattered Nest 11.11 Adam's Jokes 12.11 I'm Not Ashamed!... Three Giselles 13.11 Contract 15.11 Pelican 16.11 Week of Modern Belarusian Drama; This is She 17.11 Week of Modern Belarusian Drama. Quiet Whisper of Descending Steps
MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE <i>5 Volodarsky Street</i> 10.11 Run 11.11 Pane Kokhanku 12.11 As If By Magic; Ideal Husband 13.11 Lady for a Day 15.11 Wit Works Woe	BELARUSIAN ARMY DRAMA THEATRE <i>3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street</i> 11.11 Last Ardent Lover 12.11 Romeo and Juliet 15, 17.11 Plague on Both Your Houses
YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE <i>7 Engels Street</i> 11.11 Art 12.11 Crystal Shoe; Evening 13.11 Crystal Shoe; Two Souls 15.11 People on Marshes 16.11 Weltmeister Accordion 17.11 November. Andersen	MINSK AUTOMOBILE PLANT HOUSE OF CULTURE <i>117A Partizansky Avenue</i> 10.11 Napoleon's 13th Button
	BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE <i>20 Engels Street</i> 11.11 Boat of Despair 12.11 Wash-em-Clean 13.11 Uncle AU