



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ●

● NO.12 (586) ●

● THURSDAY, MARCH 26, 2015 ●

● WWW.SB.BY



Reaching mutually beneficial consensus and elaborating a plan of action during dialogue
Page 5



Khatyn bells offer eternal reminder
On March 22nd, 1943, German Fascists destroyed the Belarusian village of Khatyn
Page 7



Native images against the background of love for Homeland
National Art Museum introduces exhibition of works by People's Artist of Belarus Vladimir Stelmashonok
Page 9

Darya Domracheva earns her first Big Crystal Globe



President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko congratulates Darya Domracheva on her brilliant victory

→ 11

Emotional shots can surely move audiences

Victory for All exhibition, prepared by Belarusian Telegraph Agency, launches in Gomel

→ 2

There was evidently much to discuss and consult upon

During working visit to Kazakhstan, Alexander Lukashenko takes part in trilateral meeting with presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia, with the three heads of state discussing trade-economic challenges within Eurasian Economic Union, and some international issues

→ 3

'Business should be transparent in the country: both state and private'

From January 1st, 2016, all entrepreneurs in Belarus will be working under equal conditions. President Lukashenko made the decision after a session tackling issues of regulation and the development of various types of entrepreneurial activity and communication with business representatives.

→ 4

Victory Portraits take shape in game

World of Tanks military-historical compute game tournament devoted to 70th anniversary of Great Patriotic War victory launched in Brest

→ 6

Berin's native land

Famous conductor Arkady Berin, who has worked in Belarus for many years, celebrates his 70th birthday with a Minsk concert

→ 10

Encouraging home game

Tsmoki beats Russia's Krasny Oktyabr 89:84 at home, during regular VTB United League championship match

→ 11

Emotional shots can surely move audiences

Victory for All exhibition, prepared by Belarusian Telegraph Agency, launches in Gomel

By Mikhail Svetlov

From the BELTA archives, 74 unique photos dedicated to Victory are on show, including those by famous military correspondents, and some little known shots capturing partisan life. Most tackle the liberation of regional cities across the Republic.

Battles involving the partisans and underground resistance are recorded, as are moments during the occupation and liberation. Some were taken in pre-war days and others post-war, with most of the latter dedicated to 70th anniversary celebrations marking Belarus' liberation from the Nazi invaders.



Great Patriotic War veteran Fiodor Krivonogov with youngsters at exhibition in Mogilev

Almost all the photos are black-and-white and all are highly emotional, allowing us to empathise with the thoughts and feelings of those portrayed. The shots have already appeared in the *Victory* —

One for All photo album, released by the Belarusian Telegraph Agency Publishing House to mark the 70th anniversary of Belarus' liberation (funded by the Standing Commission of the Union State). The project has involved the National

Library and the Belarusian State Archive of Film, Photography and Sound Recording.

After being shown in Gomel, the exhibition will tour each regional centre, returning to Minsk on the eve of Victory Day.

Very clean work

Belarus highly praised by international experts for eco-achievements



By Veronika Artemieva

The UN Economic Commission for Europe has been working on its Third Environmental Performance Review, with almost a decade having passed since its last visit to Belarus. Since then, much has been achieved, notes Antoine Nunes, who heads the UN Economic Commission for Europe secretariat's reviews programme. He helped compile the previous review and believes that Belarus has made significant progress. He has praised eco-related legislation, noting that it is contributing to environmental protection, and is pleased at the level of interaction between ministries and agencies.

"Following the results of our work in 2005, Belarus received ecological recommendations. We can now assert that these have been met in 80-90 percent of cases — and the true figure may be even greater. It's an impressive result, especially since most other states only achieve 72 percent. Nature protection is being considered across various industrial sectors of Belarus, as

a result of wider state strategy," comments Mr. Nunes.

Belarus' First Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Iya Malkina, tells us that nature protection issues remain to the fore for Belarus, although the same is not always true abroad. She underlines, "Ecological issues head our national development, being taken into consideration within all strategic programmes; sometimes, they are quite fundamental. Almost every economic branch is somehow related to ecology. For example, in promoting the achievements of our nature reserves, we are supporting future ecological tourism, aiming to attract visitors from abroad. Moreover, enhanced ecological measures at our production facilities aim to raise export volumes, since foreign consumers often wish to buy ecologically friendly products."

The eco-programme is extensive, involving several ministries, the Gosstandard, and the Belarusian Steel Works (in Zhlobin). Their data will help inform the latest UN Environmental Performance Review.

Trees of memory on Victory Avenue

By Svetlana Markova

Gallery of portraits of front-line soldiers from Great Patriotic War launching at Mogilev Regional Art Museum (named after Pavel Maslenikov)

The Chairman of the Regional Council of Veterans, Anatoly Lyubchenko, notes that the portraits are being painted this spring, during an international plain-air — as is traditionally hosted by Mogilev in memory of artist Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya.

On the eve of the 70th anniversary of Great Patriotic War Victory, an avenue in honour of that time is also being created. Mr. Lyubchenko tells us, "Veterans, young people and social organisations will plant as many lime trees as the years which separate us from that far off, yet resonant, day: May 9th, 1945." The site for planting is yet to be determined but may be situated in either Panikolsky Park or Buinichi Field, in Mogilev. Trees are to be planted either side of a path, leading to a memorial.

Young teachers and elderly students

By Boris Svetlov

Over a thousand pensioners take part in state programme: All Ages Can Master the Internet

Pensioners who have successfully mastered Internet literacy recently competed in a Republican tournament, following 'brain ring' rounds across regional cities. The final saw pensioners fight for the title of 'best senior citizen IT and Internet expert'.

Launched in autumn 2013, the state programme *All Ages Can Master the Internet* has allowed 2,000 Belarusian pensioners to learn basic principles of computing, the Internet, and useful programmes, services and social networks. On

'graduating', each is able to independently make phone calls online, book appointments with doctors, and locate medicine in local pharmacies, as well as pay utility bills, and find bus and train timetables. Booking tickets, communicating on Odnoklassniki, reading blogs and finding information on Yandex are also covered.

Training methods are adapted to reflect each group's age and experience, with a 14-week course of lessons, held once a week. Volunteer teachers are drawn from various professions: programmers, doctors, economists, accountants, marketing

Status of business entities can be checked online

By Anastasia Shoplya

Unified state register of legal entities and individual entrepreneurs launches online site service

The website of the unified state register allows us to check the status of any business entity registered on the territory of the Republic of Belarus, without paying a fee. To use the new option, just enter the name or the registration number of a legal entity in the search window — or the surname, name and patronymic (registration number) of an individual entrepreneur.

The site also allows us to send the Ministry of Justice an e-request for information from the unified state register on any business. A fee is payable for the issuance of the original certificate to be sent by post. Moreover, an electronic version may be sent to an email address.

Successful adaptation

Around 60 percent of forced migrants from Ukraine (most from the Donetsk and Lugansk regions) plan to remain in Belarus, according to local poll by UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The Chairman of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Dvornik, has met the UN-CHR Representative in Belarus, Jean-Yves Bouchard, during the latter's two-day official visit to the Gomel Region. Mr. Bouchard highly praises the work of local authorities, as well as efforts by residents of the region, in helping those from Ukraine with social adaptation.

The conversation tackled possible visits by representatives of the International Organisation for Migration to the region this year, alongside those by diplomatic missions wishing to study the positive experience of assistance to migrants from Ukraine.



specialists, journalists, students and even, schoolchildren (aged 12 to 15). The average age of volunteer teachers is 28, while that of students is 65.

The project will continue in late March, with around 550 more pensioners sitting at computer desks this spring, in Minsk. Meanwhile, 650 are ready to start their studies at regional centres. Bobruisk and Novopolotsk have just joined the project.

There was evidently much to discuss and consult upon

During working visit to Kazakhstan, Alexander Lukashenko takes part in trilateral meeting with presidents of Kazakhstan and Russia, with the three heads of state discussing trade-economic challenges within Eurasian Economic Union, and some international issues

By Vasily Kharitonov

On arriving in Astana, the President of Belarus met the President of Kazakhstan, expressing his hope that our two nations can expand trade.

He told Mr. Nazarbayev, "Our relations are sound but our pace of trade co-operation has slowed. I'd like it to develop more actively despite well-known external factors having affected the situation in Kazakhstan and Belarus, as has the almost twice devaluation of the Russian Rouble."

Mr. Lukashenko recalled that, last year, much attention was paid to problems within the EEU and suggested exchanging views on how best to enlarge the Union, via the accession of Armenia and Kyrgyzstan. The President of Belarus also drew attention to the ongoing presidential election campaign in Kazakhstan, saying, "You know our attitude and that we are rooting for you, wishing you victory."

President of Kazakhstan Nursultan Nazarbayev noted that the Eurasian Economic Union (launched on January 1st, 2015) owes much to the Belarusian President, who accelerated integration processes. The Kazakh President also underlined the importance of the 'Normandy Four' meeting in Minsk. "It's excellent that such a meeting took place in Minsk. You did a great deal," stressed Mr. Nazarbayev. "One way or another, the war has stopped; nobody needs a major war, filled with bloodshed and internal confrontation, and that includes us."

Speaking about Belarus-



Alexander Lukashenko, Nursultan Nazarbayev and Vladimir Putin during their meeting in Astana

Kazakhstan bilateral relations, Mr. Nazarbayev remarked that bilateral trade turnover has remained steady, with many joint ventures and dozens of Belarusian assembly enterprises operating in Kazakhstan. "We'll continue this work," said the Kazakh President.

The next day, during a trilateral meeting between the presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia, the heads of state discussed existing trade-economic challenges within the work of the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as some international issues.

"It's clear that, in the run-up to the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory, we

should be united. Too many challenges exist and there have even been attempts to rewrite our common history. At this time especially, we should demonstrate political and economic unity," asserted the President of Belarus.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that each year brings new challenges but that the Eurasian Economic Union is providing timely assistance. He urged remembrance of other members of the Union, for whom new development options should be proposed.

Later, after the trilateral meeting, Mr. Lukashenko told journalists that he and his fellow EEU presidents

have agreed to meet next on May 8th, in Moscow. He added that the agenda will include issues raised in Astana and his hope that the three EEU member governments will have adopted decisions by that time.

The leaders of the three states discussed areas of collaboration in detail, alongside possible joint measures to boost trade, and control monetary-credit and other spheres, to ensure sustainable and mutually beneficial development.

The President of Belarus was pleased to note that vice prime ministers from our three countries have previously conducted efficient meetings, aiming to eradi-

cate problems between our states. Moreover, a whole range of problematic issues has been tackled during presidential bilateral talks between Belarus and Kazakhstan, and between Russia and Kazakhstan.

Mr. Lukashenko added that, at the trilateral meeting, the heads of state focused on economic issues, besides others, since, in 2014 and early 2015, trade turnover fell. "It's not a good trend; however, the reasons are clear, as we've discussed. We've outlined possible solutions for these complex issues, which need to be resolved. There's also a simple formula for raising Union trade turnover: we need to

sell our own goods!" said the Belarusian leader.

More than 100 items of legislation are lined up for the EEU in 2015, with a new Customs Code to the fore, governing a common market for electricity, gas, oil and oil products, as well as international treaties regulating currency-financial and socio-economic interaction.

The heads of state have agreed to develop trade-economic and investment interaction, instructing their governments to elaborate measures to support trade growth.

The accession of new members to the Eurasian Economic Union also came under debate. "We've confirmed our wish that new members of the Union observe the principles set out by our three countries. We've worked hard to create this Union, so new members must observe its existing principles," underlined Mr. Lukashenko.

The leaders of the three countries additionally noted issues on the political agenda, such as regulation of the situation in Ukraine. Mr. Lukashenko noted, "Our meeting has resulted in a coincidence of positions across most areas of co-operation."

The heads of state have agreed to continue meeting informally to discuss and adopt decisions, aiming to respond promptly to any crisis arising. The presidents of Belarus, Kazakhstan and Russia also visited the Library of the First President of Kazakhstan, chatting to young visitors, and Mr. Lukashenko and Mr. Putin were awarded electronic reader tickets.

Integration obviously has many constituents

By Mikhail Govorov

Chairman of Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Mikhail Myasnikov, urges speedy creation of currency union for Eurasian Economic Union

"A currency union would be one of the last phases of integration. The date set by the treaty on creating the Eurasian Economic Union, by 2024, is quite far off. Where financial markets lack sufficient stability, of course, we need to approximate this term, considering issues relating

to a single payment system, and increasing the share of national currencies in mutual settlements," noted Mr. Myasnikov.

Issues of further integration in the currency and financial spheres were recently discussed with Russia, particularly with Prime Minister Dmitry Medvedev and the Chair of the Federation Council of the Federal Assembly of Russia, Valentina Matviyenko. "We've talked about the need to approximate terms of integration, to enable the launch of the first stages of the currency union over the next 3-4 years," underlines Mr. Myasnikov.

New traditions in good neighbourly relations

By Galina Grishkovets

Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Lithuania to Belarus, Ewaldas Ignatavicius, offers praise at event marking 25th anniversary of restoration of Lithuanian independence

The Ambassador stressed the importance of neighbouring Lithuania and Belarus

being united not only by centuries of history but by significant trade and tourism. He added that Lithuania, marking the anniversary of the restoration of its independence, also notes the 250th anniversary of the birth of Michal Kleofas Oginski — a political figure, composer and diplomat (as celebrated under the aegis of UNESCO).

Oginski's creativity greatly influenced following genera-

tions. "The creative heritage of Michal Kleofas Oginski is a beautiful link between Lithuania, Belarus, Poland and many other European nations," believes the Ambassador.

Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Alexander Guryanov, emphasised the importance of developing Belarusian-Lithuanian relations and pointed to the necessity of fully utilising our potential for bilateral co-operation.

‘Business should be transparent in the country: both state and private’

By Vladimir Khromov

From January 1st, 2016, all entrepreneurs in Belarus will be working under equal conditions. President Lukashenko made the decision after a session tackling issues of regulation and the development of various types of entrepreneurial activity and communication with business representatives.

A related Presidential decree envisages that, from July 1st, 2014, all individual entrepreneurial retail traders paying a single fixed tax should have the necessary documentation for goods, confirming their purchase. A transition period was set up for this category of entrepreneurs, until March 1st, 2015, allowing the sale of goods without corresponding documents on the basis of inventorising remaining goods, for submission to the tax body by July 30th, 2014. From the final quarter of last year, entrepreneurs began to address various institutions with the problem of remaining goods being disqualified from sale after March 1st, 2015 (lacking the necessary documentation from sellers in Russia to confirm purchase and guarantee quality and safety).

According to entrepreneurs, the current economic situation is the main reason for the presence of large stocks of unsold goods. Moreover, conditions are unequal, since foreign citizens have the right to trade a wide range of light industry goods at our markets and trade fairs.

The Head of State recently visited Expobel shopping and entertainment centre in Minsk, chatting to entrepreneurs, whom he assured of his desire to find a compromise of interests: between individual entrepreneurs, those who provide them with trading space and those involved



PAVEL CHUYKO

Entrepreneurs involved in trade have their own circle of customers

in light industry.

The President continued his discussion of entrepreneurial issues at a session attended by representatives of small business, including from the regions. Mr. Lukashenko underlined that, over the last year, some individual entrepreneurs have fulfilled requirements set out by the state, starting to use transparent methods of work. However, not all followed this example.

The President also expressed confidence that individual entrepreneurs ‘should be involved in normal transparent business which guarantees equal conditions for all participants’. He commented, “The main thing is that they should work in conjunction with Belarusian light industry, selling Belarusian-made goods. As far as business is concerned, competition under equal conditions (regardless of the form of ownership) is the main priority.” Today’s situation is that some individual entre-

preneurs work transparently while others don’t accept the new business terms envisaged by legislation.

Representatives of the business community present at the meeting supported Government proposals, expressing their wish to see the gradual launch of innovations.

Summing up the results of the discussion, the President stressed that, from January 1st, 2016, all individual entrepreneurs will work under equal conditions. “There will be no respite! We’ve giv-

en enough as it is,” said the Head of State. “Nobody will work without documents in Belarus!”

The President urged individual entrepreneurs to use more civilised methods of work, without waiting for January 1st, 2016, when no light industry products will be eligible for sale without corresponding documents confirming their purchase. “It’s not good when traders are selling undocumented goods. Therefore, sooner or later, we’ll introduce these requirements. Do not wait for

January 1st: start right now!” added Mr. Lukashenko.

Mr. Lukashenko also suggested that individual entrepreneurs join efforts to set up SMEs on transparent terms, emphasising that the Development Bank and the World Bank are ready to provide assistance. He noted, “There’s only one way. If you want to be businessmen, shift to a normal style of work.” The Head of State guaranteed that businessmen will be given support and protection within the Customs Union.

A brief summary can be made: dialogue between the state and individual entrepreneurs regarding the technical requirements of the Customs Union for light industry goods has been delayed, resembling conversation between a tolerant parent and a stubborn child. The parent has no wish to punish yet the child is slow to gain understanding of the difference between right and wrong.

The term allowed for the

sale of remaining goods without the necessary documents has been extended several times, with the last expiring on March 1st. Theoretically, after this date, corresponding way bills, certificates and other necessary documents should be available at every trade pavilion and market. However, this long-announced measure appears to be ‘unexpected’ for around 18,000 entrepreneurs (out of more than 50,000) and, now, they are anxious.

Of course, it’s easy to appreciate entrepreneurs’ point of view since individuals may need to act not only as director and accountant, but as driver, forwarder, loader and cleaner. On the other hand, most entrepreneurs have managed to shift to the new manner of working, showing that all is possible, as noted by the President in his conversation with Expobel individual entrepreneurs.

It is only fair that everyone is treated in the same manner, as stressed by representatives of large businesses during the session, which featured heads of large companies. Many of the foremost businessmen countrywide began by trading at the market and they are unanimous in agreement that rules should be clear and equal for everyone; otherwise, the engine of business — competition — is destroyed.

If Russian wholesalers don’t provide documents, goods may appear within the Customs Union in a covert fashion. As the President notes, in ignoring technical regulations, traders partake in legalised smuggling. Can a responsible leader of the country allow this? Entrepreneurs who pay a single fixed tax rate are allowed to sell the remainder of goods without documents until January 1st of next year but will need to pay more money to the state: a fixed value added tax will be levied across several stages, to allow traders time to adjust.

TO THE THEME

Valery Borodnya, member of the Standing Commission for Budget and Finance, of the House of Representatives:

Entrepreneurs yet to adapt to new conditions shouldn’t expect to see the terms extended. They need to plan their business transparently, while remaining competitive.

Georgy Grits, Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Science and Industry Association:

The Government’s term extension was another step in helping smaller businesses. However, the need for certification regarding the sale of light industry good (confirming their quality) is not unique to Belarus; the whole Eurasian Economic Union is following the same path.

Obviously timely decision to spare discomfort

By Alexander Maximov

In 2013, the state ruled that entrepreneurs conducting retail trade should be able to show documents proving purchase of goods. Responding to pleas for a staged introduction, the final deadline for compliance was shifted to March 1st 2015, to allow time for businessmen to sell outstanding stock. As that date approached, the Government again received requests for ‘more time’ from retailers, obliging the President to intervene. After

lengthy discussion with those working at Expobel shopping centre, an extension was granted until the end of 2015. It is asserted that no further time will be given.

Minsk entrepreneur Oleg Basko is famous for having become the millionth resident of Minsk 43 years ago. Now, he sells prams. Pleased by the President’s meeting with entrepreneurs, he notes, “It’s good that such an event was organised, showing openness and readiness to solve the problem.”

Alina Basalay, who runs a knit-

ting shop, underlined, “I’ve been following Internet commentary and most people feel confident, viewing the President’s meeting with us as a sign that he values our economic contribution. Even buyers’ attitudes are changing, with them asking how we are getting along. Amazingly, sales have increased!”

Mr. Lukashenko’s main wish is to act with to ‘subtlety and care’ to ‘avoid offence’, remembering that all those involved in retail have families to support. The current solution is keeping everyone happy, since

entrepreneurs are avoiding major losses, while the state has proven its goodwill and desire to solve people’s problems.

Certain aspects continue to be of concern: after two years of endeavouring to sell ‘old’ stock without documentation, retailers appear to retain significant volumes of unsold goods. Either these items are ‘unsalable’ or new batches have been imported under the guise of old. The Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Entrepreneurs, Alexander Kalinin, believes that the latter may

be likely. He tells us that his Union warned the Government that many entrepreneurs would be unable to sell ‘unlicensed’ goods within an 8-month period — especially as economic difficulties at the end of 2014 brought amendments to Pre-New Year sales. He views the President’s decision as being well-considered, taking into account business interests. However, he notes that ‘entrepreneurs should take responsibility for their business and realise that there will not be any further shifts in terms’.

Reaching mutually beneficial consensus and elaborating a plan of action during dialogue

Representatives of the Belarusian business community schedule 16th Assembly of Belarusian Business Circles to coincide with the 250th anniversary of Michal Oginski's birth

By Alexander Benkovsky

Accompanied by the famous *Farewell to Homeland* polonaise, several hundred Belarusian businessmen stood solemnly as the string duo played, honouring the legacy of the great composer, before discussing topical issues.

The 2015 National Business Platform aims to produce an action plan of suggestions, showing authorities how they can ease entrepreneurial activity and improve the business climate. The plan is discussed and amended before being distributed to ministries, agencies, the Presidential Administration and regional and district executive committees.

Businessmen assert that the Platform produces results: around half of last year's proposals have been implemented through legislative acts, explains Vladimir Karyagin, the Chairman of the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurship. "Over the past three months, the draft project of the 2015 Platform has been amended around 20 times. It now includes 85 proposals, involving 67 diverse business associations and public organisations countrywide."

Business structures' opinions should bring momentum to the development of various state documents, as Irina Kostevich, the Deputy Economy Minister, admits.

She notes that the recently adopted 2015 government plan was significantly improved by feedback from business associations. The document unites around 40 ground-level proposals. She tells us, "At the moment, the Economy Ministry is developing a strategy for small and medium-sized business development until 2018, proceeding from recommendations by the World Bank. Meanwhile, representatives of Belarusian business structures are acting as consultants."

Among the most significant issues covered by the 2015 National Business Platform are the levelling of the tax burden and reduction of red

tape within the Eurasian Economic Union. Businesses insist on the establishment of an efficient system of counteracting monopolies and the support of fair competition (via the creation of a state agency on anti-monopoly policy). They are keen to launch a plenipotentiary to protect business rights: an ombudsman. They also hope to see legislation passed regarding non-banking and non-commercial financing of companies. Entrepreneurs additionally underline that small 'corner' shops are hampered by the need to stock the required ratio of imported and Belarusian products.

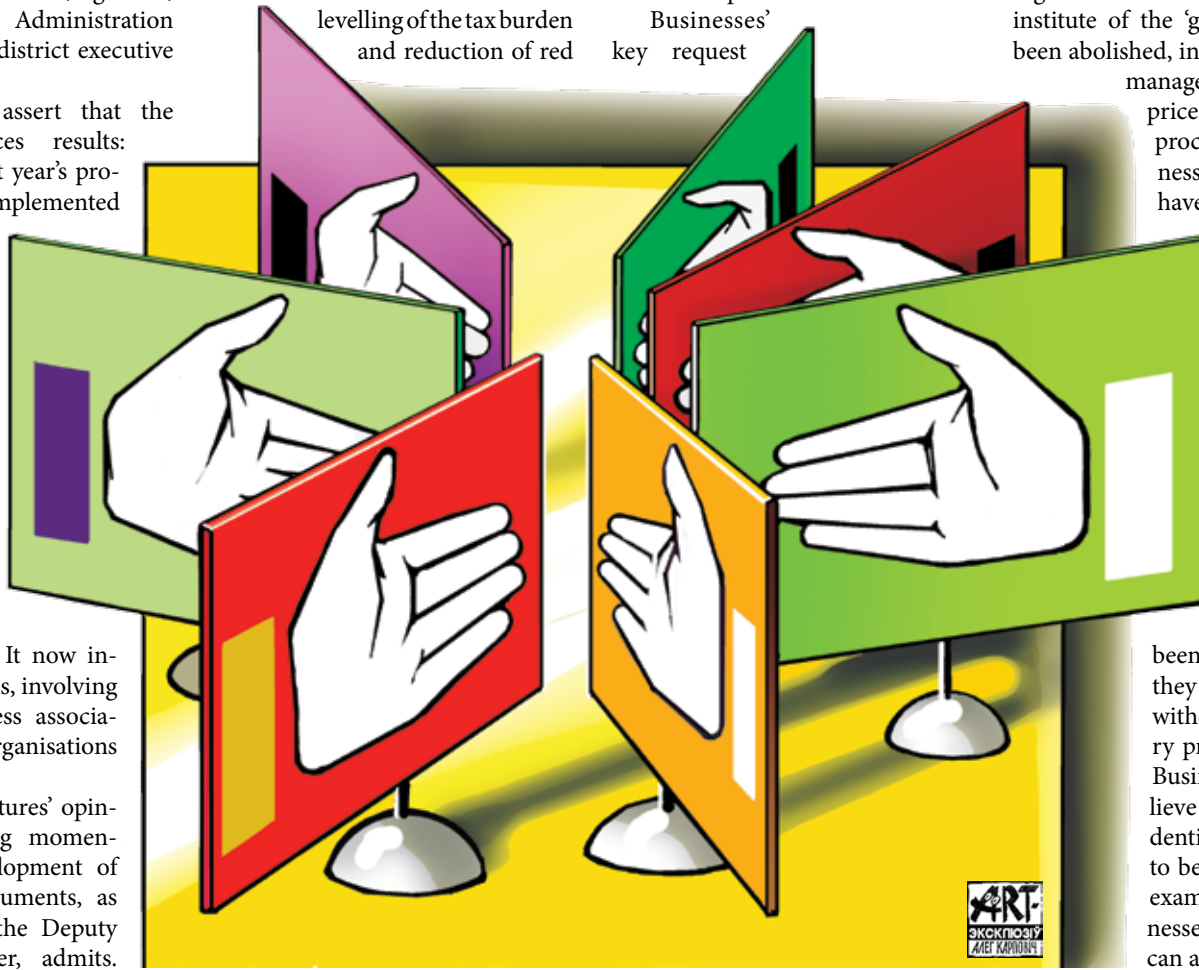
Businesses' key request

is the setting of a moratorium on increasing rental rates, penalty fees and the introduction of new taxes and fees — until 2018. Partners across the Eurasian Economic Union have taken these steps and our businesses are afraid of lacking a competitive edge against that of their neighbours.

The first Platform was adopted in 2007, with Belarusian entrepreneurs lobbying authorities for a representative voice. As Mr. Karyagin admits, consensus has been reached upon many points, with over 350 proposals realised, relating to the business climate. The institute of the 'golden share' has been abolished, in addition to state

management of retail prices. Meanwhile, procedures of business registration have been simplified.

The biggest breakthrough last year was the granting of permission for individual entrepreneurs to hire up to three employees from outside their families. Small businesses have even been promised that they may sell goods without documentary proof of purchase. Business unions believe that the Presidential decree (soon to be signed) is a real example of how businesses and authorities can and do agree.



EBRD may become shareholder in one of Belarusian state banks

By Vladimir Velikhov

Commenting on possible bank privatisation, Belarus' Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov tells journalists that European Bank for Reconstruction and Development may become a shareholder in Belinvestbank

The PM has announced the Government's desire to set up an inter-departmental working party for interaction with the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development, to deal with the privatisation of Belinvestbank open joint

stock company.

"This is a real project now under consideration," notes Mr. Kobyakov. "The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is likely to become a minority shareholder, aiming to improve management and the state of the banking industry, helping attract western investments." The hope is that a powerful European bank will then come forward to operate in Belarus.

The PM believes that Belinvestbank's privatisation by the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is of mutual interest.

He explains, "Recently, Belarus received a visit from the EBRD President. During negotiations, the issue was raised of European banks needing a window through which to work on the banking market of Belarus. Belinvestbank may become such a window. It is currently state owned but doesn't yet occupy a major place in the economy (the banking sphere being dominated by Belarusbank and Belagroprombank)."

He added that the decision as to who will become a shareholder in the Belarusian bank isn't yet final

and will depend on negotiations relating to price, among other factors.

At present, Belinvestbank is an authorised bank servicing state programmes, accumulating state investment resources, conducting its investment policy and servicing credit lines for foreign investors. The core of its monetary-credit policy is investment of credit resources into projects aiming to raise the efficiency of the country's economy: export-oriented; import-substituting; launching new and high technologies; and enhancing goods' competitiveness.

More opportunities

By Anastasia Shoplya

National Bank allows residents of Belarus to receive currency transfers from transactions with foreigners

From March 1st, the National Bank of Belarus is allowing residents to receive non-cash foreign currency transactions from foreign individuals.

In its letter to commercial banks, the Bank notes that foreign currency may be received from abroad through bank transfer, with the exception of transactions via ATMs, info-kiosks and payment terminals in Belarus. The move aims to cover sales of goods, as well as sale of protected information, and the sale of exclusive rights to intellectual property, to individual non-residents. Foreign currency transfers may also be received for leased or sold property, and for a range of services.

Roadmap for entrepreneurs

By Yulia Davydova

Ministry of Finance working on a strategy for the development of small to medium-sized businesses

Speaking at the 16th Assembly of Belarusian Business Circles, Belarus' Deputy Finance Minister, Irina Kostevich, outlined a strategy for a roadmap to implement a development programme for small to medium-sized businesses until 2018. "The programme will contain special measures concerning the participation of small businesses in regional economic development," she explained.

Moreover, Ms. Kostevich emphasised that Belarusian businesses are welcome to join the discussion of the short and medium-term draft documents. "The draft programmes will be posted on the official website of the Finance Ministry in the near future. We invite everyone to study them, their suggestions will be given due consideration," she added.

Synchronicity for legislators

By Yelena Prusova

Experts from Belarus and Estonia discuss proposals for pension provision

Specialists from our two states recently gathered for a two-day meeting at the Ministry of Social Affairs of Estonia, in Tallinn, to share ideas on a mutual pension provision agreement between the Republic of Belarus and the Republic of Estonia.

A draft agreement has been reached on state obligations and payment of pensions, reflecting length of service within the territory of Belarus and Estonia. The agreement also details how such pensions will be paid. Personal data protection and the application of insurance legislation for work performed in Belarus and Estonia also came under discussion.



Victory Portraits take shape in game

World of Tanks military-historical compute game tournament devoted to 70th anniversary of Great Patriotic War victory launched in Brest

By Boris Svetlov

Virtual *World of Tanks* battles were preceded by a solemn ceremony hosted by the Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial Complex. Accompanied by a military orchestra, participants laid flowers at the Eternal Flame. Meanwhile, the Head of Brest garrison, Yevgeny Zaitsev, presented medals to mark '70 Years of Victory since the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War' to five Armed Forces veterans (present on the day). Mr. Zaitsev thanked the men for their faith in Armed Forces' traditions and for their enduring work to protect the spiritual and moral upbringing

of coming generations.

The *Victory Portraits* tournament was organised by Wargaming company (which developed the game), jointly with the Defence Ministry. The Head of the Vayar Military-Information Agency of Belarus' Armed Forces, Andrey Shubadrov, noted that computer games promotion has been part of the Defence Ministry's programme for eight years, aiming to encourage a patriotic upbringing. He commented, "Happily, we have our own Belarusian game, *World of Tanks*, which enables us to use a common language for communicating with young people. The game helps young

people understand the nature of the Great Patriotic War and the importance of preserving traditions fought for by our veterans, grandfathers and great grandfathers."

The tournament was hosted by Brest's Regional Centre of Youth Arts, the large building being crowded by gaming fans of all ages. In fact, around 140,000 *World of Tanks* gamers are registered in Brest (almost half of the city's residents).

There were team competitions and individual battles, with long queues for the 35 computers. A rich entertainment programme of contests and panel games kept everyone busy, while a field kitchen

served traditional soldiers' porridge.

In April, Minsk will host a final competition between the strongest teams from the capital, as well as from the Minsk, Mogilev and Gomel regions. Similar events will take place in Smolensk, Volgograd, Krasnodar, Voronezh, St. Petersburg and Tula, with the winners of eight regional tournaments and a team of professional cyber-sportsmen then competing online, for the Moscow finals, on the eve of May 9th. The winner will receive a ticket for eight people to visit French Saumur's Tank Museum.

Apple orchard is to blossom in the fortress

By Valentina Kozlovich

An apple orchard of 70 trees is being laid out on Pogranichny Island of Brest Fortress, in honour of the 70th anniversary of Victory. Decided by the Department of Internal Affairs of Brest Regional Executive Committee, the site is now being studied.

The Head of the Department of Information and Public Relations of Brest Regional Executive Committee, Sergey Duchenko, views the island as a good place for ecological and patriotic action. He tells us, "In

the first days of the Great Patriotic War, the island was defended by border guards and police, as well as soldiers of the 132nd separate battalion of the People's Commissariat of Internal Affairs, and driving school cadets. At the heart of the island is a monument to the cadets, which is where we plan to lay out our orchard, using seedlings from a Pruzhany District nursery. The Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences, and Brest City Executive Committee are supporting our idea. Planting day will be April 22nd and it will open to the public in May.



On Pogranichny Island

Before the war, Terespol Fortification was located on the island (called Zapadny Island at the time). 19th-20th century fortifications remain: powder cellars, barracks, and an earth mound with casemates inside. The former barracks, constructed under the direction of Dmitry Karbyshev, also remain, as does the road used by Hitler and Mussolini to reach the Citadel in August 1941.

Covering about 46 hectares, Pogranichny Island is currently closed to the public;

the state border between Belarus and Poland uses a parallel channel. Access is possible only through a signalling gate of Brest frontier post but excursions can be arranged.

President Alexander Lukashenko gave instructions to open the island to tourists in the summer of 2011, when renovated Brest Fortress opened. The site has been cleared of tall weeds and dense thickets, and information plaques established. By May, the garden should be in full bloom, for Victory Day.

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

How to avoid dangerous complications



I've begun to notice my blood pressure rising depending on the weather. What is hypertension and what can be done to treat its symptoms?

(I.Prokhorochuk, Gomel)

Hypertension occurs when there is a sudden increase in blood pressure, posing a possible threat to life or health. Both patients and their relatives should know how to render first aid where necessary and the 'crisis' may occur at different levels for different people.

It can be caused by forgetting to take certain medication or the body failing to respond to usual doses of medication, by situations of extreme stress, changes in the weather, too much coffee or alcohol, overeating, hormone disruption, or the use of some medicines.

Various levels of severity are possible. Light distress may be caused by a stressful situation (without prior symptoms and lasting anything from a few minutes to 2-3 hours). Such a crisis tends to begin suddenly, despite

to rest. An ice pack or cold compress may be applied to the head, while mustard plasters can be attached to the calves or the back of the head. Similarly, warm hot-water bottles may be placed on the feet and shins (for 15-20 minutes).

If medicine is prescribed, ensure it is taken: one tablet of nitroglycerine under the tongue (and call an ambulance). While waiting, take another tablet if needed, but no more than two, to avoid a dangerous drop in blood pressure.

Doctors recommend known sufferers keeping to hand antihypertensive preparations, such as captopril (capoten — 25mg dose) or nifedipine (corinfar or cordaflex — 10mg dose). Discuss their use with your doctor. If there is no change within half an hour, take another,



usual good health, marked by a sharp, pulsing headache, blurred or double vision or, even, temporary loss of sight. Such symptoms bring about excitement, irritation or extreme concern. It's common to experience warmth and dryness in the mouth, coldness in extremities and shivering all over. There may also be a feeling of the heart racing, as well as stabbing pains in the heart, and shortness of breath. Patients may display a red face, neck or hands, or they may become pale, with red patches — especially on the chest. Body temperature raises a little (usually no more than one degree) but perspiration increases.

If signs appear for the first time, consult a doctor immediately or call an ambulance. Usually, no medical aid is necessary but the 'crisis' may indicate longer-term illness. Keep the patient calm, since panic may exacerbate their condition. Offer a tincture of valeriana or leonurus and ensure that fresh air is available: open a window or ventilator. The patient may be put to bed but slightly propped up. Keep them warm and allow them

identical, dose, but no more! If another 30 minutes passes without the patient returning to their normal state, call a doctor.

Measure blood pressure every 20 minutes, to monitor recovery rate; if the condition of the patient stays the same or worsens, or if they experience chest pain or any other alarming symptoms, call an ambulance immediately.

In certain cases, the 'crisis' can be treated by intravenous or intramuscular preparations, administered by a doctor. If the case is complicated, and occurring for the first time, urgent hospitalisation is required, which patients should not refuse.

To avoid dangerous complications, a patient should monitor their blood pressure closely, recording the results in a special diary. Moreover, they should not forget to take any prescribed medication, since even a single omission can lead to a sharp increase in blood pressure, causing serious complications: cardiac infarction or stroke.

By Tatiana Zhukova
Doctor of higher category,
M.D. Ph.D.

Khatyn bells offer eternal reminder

On March 22nd, 1943, German Fascists destroyed the Belarusian village of Khatyn, burning 149 alive — not only women and the elderly but 75 children, including babies

By Vladimir Velikhov

Each year, the Khatyn Memorial Complex is crowded on this day, with many wishing to mark this sorrowful aspect of Belarusian history. Khatyn symbolises the torture and suffering experienced during the dark years of occupation. Young and old gather to remember together the awful events of 72 years ago. It may seem a 'lifetime' past but the horror witnessed by that small forest village and its residents continues to have the power to freeze our hearts. Hitler's soldiers are thought to have killed over 1.4m people across Belarus: via concentration camps, ghettos, burnt villages and bombed houses.

Celebrations last year marked the 70th anniversary of Belarus' liberation, including the release of two collections of archive materials. One is entitled Khatyn: Tragedy and Memory (part of the Archive. History. Memory series) — impressively uniting almost every document known on the destruction of the village and its residents. Meanwhile, Khatyn Nekropolis offers readers complete information on other Belarusian villages which shared Khatyn's fate. Published jointly by the Justice Ministry's Department on Archives and Record Keeping, the National Archives, the State Security Committee's Central Archives and Khatyn State Memorial Complex, the series has only a small issue, making the editions rarities. However, it is easy to argue that every university and school library should own a copy, helping our younger generation understand what has passed and aiding their own analysis.

Tragedy

On March 22nd, 1943, as two troops from the 1st squadron of the 118th police guard battalion were sent to restore a communication line broken by partisans, between Pleshchenitsy and Logoisk, they were ambushed by the Avenger partisan troop (Uncle Vasya's brigade). Besides wounding several men, the partisans killed Chief Commander Hans Welke-Hauptmann — a favourite of Hitler and an Olympic champion, alongside two policemen. As a result, SS-Sonderkommando Dirlwanger was sent to exact inhumane revenge, selecting Khatyn.



Day of Remembrance at Khatyn Memorial Complex

Witness statement

Iosif Kaminsky — a Khatyn villager, born in 1887; his four children and wife died in the fire:

...When I came to the barn, I saw ten people — including my family. I asked why they were undressed and my wife Adeliya and daughter Yadviga replied that the Fascists had taken their clothes. People were being brought continuously to the barn so that, in a short period of time, it was completely crowded; it was even impossible to raise a hand. The barn was 12x6m... From inside, we could see that many houses were already on fire. I realised that we would be shot so I told all those in the barn, "Pray to God, as everyone will die here..."

...Ordinary villagers were brought to the barn, including many small children and, even, newborns. Most were women and old people. With my 15 year old son, Adam, I stood by the wall: those killed were falling upon us while those alive tore around in waves. Blood flowed from those killed and wounded. The roof fell in, strengthening those terrible, wild cries. Those aflame cried out horribly and thrashed about under the roof such that all seemed to spin. I managed to crawl between corpses and burning people, to reach the door. A Fascist standing near the door shot me with a gun. My burning son, Adam, somehow ran out of

the barn but was brought down after about 10m. I was wounded and chose not to move, to avoid being shot again. Many people, dead and burnt, were evident near the barn. Some time later, I heard a signal for the Fascists to leave. After they had driven away, I heard my son Adam, who lay about 3m away, calling for me to take him out of a puddle. I crawled closer and saw that he was virtually cut in half by bullets. Adam asked me whether his mother was still alive and then, immediately, died.

Pain

Khatyn villagers were buried on the third day after the tragedy, their grave marked by three crosses. These remained long after the war, protecting and cherishing the memory of those killed. Later, the crosses were replaced by a simple obelisk in the form of a wooden pyramid, bearing a red star. In 1964, the Groaning Mother monument was erected and, on July 5th, 1969, Khatyn Memorial Complex opened, designed by Belarusian architects Y. Gradov, V. Znkovich, L. Levin and sculptor S. Selikhanov — a People's Artist of the BSSR.

Perhaps the first archive document on Khatyn was recorded by Kamenka Village Council, in the Minsk Region's Pleshchenitsy District. It details the burning of

Khatyn, reported by villagers from Selishche, and is dated March 25th, 1943. It states:

'Seven people from Selishche village prepared a report in the presence of partisans, stating that, on March 22nd of the above mentioned year, German monsters attacked the neighbouring village of Khatyn and burnt all its houses. 150 of its residents were savagely tortured and burnt.'

Other documents also throw light on Khatyn's bloody history.

Extract from the order of the Head of Reichskommissariat Ostland's Operative Headquarters. It details the launch of fighting against partisans in Belorussia's General Commissariat. November 18th, 1942, Minsk:

...Upon the order of the Reichsführer-SS plenipotentiary on fighting partisan troops, Obergruppenführer-SS gives heads of punitive groups permission to independently decide whether to burn down villages, or evacuate or kill residents... Take on this difficult police task with the desire to clean Belorussia's General Commissariat of partisan troops and bring peace to this area.

Standartenführer-SS, Dr. Pifrader

Several months later, Pifrader-style 'pacification' covered Khatyn with an eternal black veil. Nazi 'conciliation' was synonymous with death.

Express journey from Beijing

By Dmitry Ampilov

Late spring to bring direct route from China to Belarus

Airlineroute.net international aviation news portal has announced the launch of the Beijing-Minsk-Budapest-Beijing route, by Air China — one of the biggest Chinese air carriers. The Aviation Department of the Ministry of Transport and Communications confirms the news, telling us that the route will operate four times a week. It will be the longest duration flight into Minsk (without stopping). Commencing on May 1st, the flight will depart Monday, Wednesday, Friday and Sunday, using the Beijing Airbus-330. Setting off from China at 13.00, it will arrive in Minsk at 17.20 (local time), with return at 18.50. Sadly, as yet, the return flight won't be direct, requiring routing through Hungarian Budapest. Prices are yet to be announced.

Read more and better

By Galina Bratkovskaya

Orthodox believers celebrate traditional Day of Orthodox Books

The holiday is not purely one for the church, being also a public cultural celebration, rooted in a thousand years of Christian historical and spiritual traditions. Dating back to the publication of the *Apostle*, by printers Ivan Fiodorov and Piotr Mstislavets, on March 14th, 1564, the holiday programme is always extensive and diverse, involving every Belarusian diocese, in association with local libraries and avid readers.

The National Library hosted the main event, with senior Belarusian Orthodox Church representatives and those from state structures invited to view the latest publications. Musical groups provided entertainment and books were sold to raise funds for the support of orphanages, boarding schools, hospital churches and the renovation of monasteries.



Books attract

A unique exhibition of Orthodox manuscripts and older printed books was hosted by the Museum of Books at the National Library, featuring Gospels from the 16th-18th centuries, Orthodox collections of church psalms, Old Believers' manuscript documents, Orthodox editions from the 17th and 18th centuries (from Vilno, Kuteinsky, Mogilev, Suprasl and other printing houses), and the settings and artistic binders of communion table Gospels. Also on show was a treasure of 16th century Slavic writing, the *Communion Table Gospel*, published by Belarus' first printer, Piotr Mstislavets, in 1575, in Vilno.



Umbrellas are held by robots produced by KUKA Robot Group, at the *CeBIT* trade fair in Hannover

Digital business makes big inroads at *CeBit*

‘Digitalisation’ is the big topic at this year’s *CeBIT* technology fair, in Hannover, Germany. China is this year’s partner country.

The term, digital economy not only applies to an increasingly connected business community but also the transition of *CeBIT* from a consumer to a business fair.

A traditional German agricultural company is putting a digital spin on farming machinery. This ‘smart’ tractor from Claas comes with intelligent navigation and obstacle detection, which can help farmers manage their

crops more effectively. The tractor prepares even a yield map, telling the farmer exactly how much grain he harvested from each sector of his field.

German bike manufacturer, Canyon Bicycles has joined forces with Deutsche Telekom to build a smart bike with a strong focus on safety.

Wilfried Huelsmann-Tenhoff of Deutsche Telekom explained, “The bicycle is equipped with a so-called

On-Board-Unit, a small device which is built into the bicycle frame. With this On-Board-Unit, we can basically make bicycle maintenance and riding a lot easier for the consumer. By using a smartphone application, we can see the extent of wear and tear on the bicycle chain for example. And via this app, we can inform the user, when he should change his bicycle chain.” he added.

Furthermore, sensors on the bike can tell if it has fallen over, and can then call the emergency services when necessary. The GPS tracking enables ambulances and hospitals to detect injured cyclists. And if riding isn’t for you then perhaps a sensory shower is. The ‘Sensory Skyatt’ shower can be programmed to reproduce different weather conditions inspired by nature.



New Chernobyl shelter in focus

The building of a new structure to contain radiation from Chernobyl in Ukraine and make it safe is into its final stage

The shelter, more than 100 metres high, will house the nuclear reactor damaged in the 1986 disaster, and the old concrete structure built to cover it which is approaching the end of its life. The safe confinement is expected to reduce radioactive emissions drastically. But the 30-kilometre exclusion zone will remain contaminated.

“The area of exclusion zone will not be free of nuclear waste because

there is the intention to have the nuclear waste storages in the exclusion zone, so there will be a permanent waste management operation,” said Vince Novak, Director of Nuclear Safety at the European Bank for Reconstruction & Development (EBRD).

Once ready, the shelter will be pushed onto rails to cover the reactor. It is hoped to become operational by the second half of 2017. Experts say it will be another 300 years before it’s safe to live in the area.

The cost of the shelter is 2.15 billion Euros.

Tunis counts human and economic losses

Tunisia is riding the shock waves following recent attack at the Bardo Museum in Tunis in which at least 20 tourists and two Tunisians were killed, as well as the two gunmen

An official statement was made identifying the foreign dead as Japanese, Italian, Colombian, Spanish, Australian, Polish, French and British.

President Beji Caid Essebsi, visiting hospital, where more than 40 wounded are being treated, said the country is at war against terrorists, “May God forgive those who caused this. We must not cry over our fate. Tunisians must show solidarity and give priority to our security forces to defeat terrorism.”

When gunmen in military uniforms stormed the heavily guarded parliament compound in the heart of the capital, visitors fled into the national museum which is a part of it. The two unidentified extremists then took hostages.

In a counterattack two hours later, according to a government



A Tunisian policeman

spokesman, security forces killed the militants and freed the captives.

Hundreds of Tunisians gathered to pay their respects for the victims and to condemn the attack. Makeshift signs said ‘terrorists are cowards and the Tunisian people will not be disgraced’. The demonstrators expressed deep misgivings about the blow to the country’s stability.

Tunisia has battled to keep extremism at bay since the 2011 Arab Spring uprising.

Greece PM commits to providing list of reforms ‘within days’

Greek Prime Minister Alexis Tsipras has committed to providing a list of specific reforms within the coming days

European leaders have been frustrated at the slow pace of progress in exchange for their help in keeping Greece solvent.

Speaking after a late night meeting with EU officials Tsipras said he felt ‘more optimistic’ about what he called ‘a new deal’ for Greece.

“There was a reassurance of the willingness of all sides to work so that the financing capacity of the Greek economy recovers as soon as possible,” Tsipras said after the three-hour meeting.

FIFA moves 2022 World Cup in Qatar from summer to winter

FIFA has confirmed that the 2022 World Cup in Qatar that was originally planned to take in the summer will be moved to November and December of that year

Football’s world governing body said the decision had been taken to protect the health of players. The recommendation was made by a FIFA task force.

“I can confirm the executive committee, based on the proposal of the task force, decided that, yes, we are going to play in November and December and, yes, the final is going to be played on December 18th,” said FIFA spokesman Walter de Gregorio.

Remains of *Don Quixote* author Cervantes ‘identified’ in Madrid

It is set to become a shrine for literary pilgrims worldwide

For underneath a 17th century convent in Madrid, investigators believe they have found the remains of Miguel de Cervantes, the author of *Don Quixote* and considered the father of the modern novel. There is no DNA proof yet but the man leading the search is convinced that this is a landmark discovery.

“Having looked at all the historical, archaeological and anthropological evidence, we can consider that some fragments of Miguel de Cervantes were found in the ground of the crypt at the Trinitarians convent,” Francisco Etxeberria said.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Native images against bright background of love for Homeland

National Art Museum introduces substantial exhibition of personal works by People's Artist of Belarus Vladimir Stelmashonok

By Victor Mikhailov

Works by Vladimir Stelmashonok aren't only on show at the museum but inside the stations of Moskovskaya and Ploshchad Pobedy, within the Minsk metro. The graphic artist, painter and set designer, also known for his monumental works, died two years ago; the National Art Museum's exhibition honours the memory of his diverse creativity. It features canvases from the family collection and from state archives.

His last, symbolic, work was a huge canvas depicting the men of his family; it remained unfinished at his easel. The theme of family life was one he explored tirelessly, repeatedly painting intimate portraits of his parents — well-known doctors, his art critic wife and his children, who followed in his footsteps as artists.

In the 1960s, he gained recognition for his depiction of national heroes (being one of the first to do so). Such were Vladimir's talents that he even made his frames by hand: in natural materials rather than fine gilding. In this way, they added to each painting, reminding us that heroes are also simple folk, used to working with their hands.

Mr. Stelmashonok was involved greatly in public life, working for some time as a deputy in President Gorbachev's Supreme Soviet of the Soviet Union; he headed a commission on culture.

His parents were from a humble village, while Vladimir grew up in Minsk, born in 1928. He successfully finished his first year with the Architectural Department of the Minsk State Polytechnic Institute before unexpectedly taking a place at the Vera Mukhina Higher School of Art and Design in Leningrad. He then transferred to the Leningrad Art School's Theatre and Decorative Art Department.

Much influenced by Vera Mukhina and Kirill Kustodiev, he painted sets for various Leningrad theatres, and attended evening classes at the Academy of Arts. In 1957, he finished his studies at the I. Repin Leningrad Institute for Painting, Sculpture and Architecture. Within the Pictorial Department, under Boris Ioganson, he defended his thesis work, entitled 'Young Builders of Minsk'. On graduating, he returned to



Belarus, where his creative career bloomed.

His enthusiasm was enchanting and he, too, was drawn to those with energy and imagination, who felt the pulse of time. Inspired by those possessing a strong personality, such as academician P. Alsmik, and the People's Artiste of the USSR G. Shirma, he created his first truly original work: a portrait of People's Poet of Belarus Yakub Kolas.

Throughout his student years, while the poet was still alive,



Vladimir had the chance to sketch the great man, using these drawing to inform his portrait, which he began in 1966. The image of the Pesnyar in the portrait acquires width of generalisation while social motifs are also apparent. The work shows the indissoluble con-

Vivid exhibition at National Art Museum reveals multi-faceted talent of People's Artist of Belarus Vladimir Stelmashonok

nection of the poet with his native land: Yakub Kolas is depicted in the open air, within a generalised image of his Motherland. A road, both dark and golden, symbolising life's path, runs across a field, behind the figure, uniting him with his environment.



folk songs, and headed the State Academic Choral Choir of Belarus. The figurative portrait derives from the painter's comprehension of folk songs. Vladimir went on to paint Shirma, linking his visual image to the melodies he so loved. Set against a background of white embroidered rushniks (a beautiful national ornament of Belarusian folk art) Shirma is an integral element. He appears in an enlightened and lyrical mood, as if immersed in folk music. In this portrait Vladimir Stelmashonok actively uses semantic meaning of the colour. Vladimir's use of white (characteristic to Belarusian folk art) evokes an atmosphere pure and poetic.

Mr. Stelmashonok's talent expressed itself not only through painting but monumental art. The width of creative interests and professional culture enables the painter to work with various materials: glass, mosaic and marble. His classical stained-glass windows, wall paintings and carved plaster sculptures are a sight to behold. One of his stained-glass windows depicts Yanka Kupala: created for the Literary Museum in his honour, sited in Minsk.

Vladimir's legacy includes scenography, easel painting, monumental art and graphic works. Generous in nature, benevolent and unselfish, he loved to paint portraits over all else, although watercolour landscapes and drawings prevail among his graphic works. His sharp observations and easy style bring forth images we can believe. His early works were traditional and realistic but, by the 1960s, had become more monumental and decorative, intertwined with white and Belarusian folk ornamentation. Seeking new means of expression, he combined painting with woodcarving, appliqué and collage.

Vladimir Stelmashonok devoted his last 20 years to studying archival materials, creating a series of portraits and compositions on the theme of the historical past of native Belarus.

Vladimir often created simple, unshaded drawings where the figures appear as if cut from the cardboard against the flat surface: his portrait of G. Shirma is one such. Shirma dedicated his to life to collecting precious folk songs, publishing several collections of

Berin's native land

Famous conductor Arkady Berin, who has worked in Belarus for many years, celebrates his 70th birthday with a Minsk concert

By Eleonora Skuratova

Arkady, we congratulate you. You lived in Germany for a long time, and have successfully toured Europe, so why have you held your birthday gala-concert in Belarus?

I'm glad that I managed to organise the concert in my homeland. So many of my friends and colleagues were in the hall; it was lovely to see them and exchange memories. Last summer, at the 'Slavianski Bazaar', I heard Sergey Volchkov and thought he sounded like a Belarusian Muslim Magomayev! Accordingly, I decided to invite him to sing at my concert. Nature has bestowed Sergey with a unique voice. He was born in Bykhov, and gained an excellent musical education in Moscow. He finished his performance with a rendition of 'My Native Land' — by Igor Luchenok. For Sergey and for myself, Belarus is our native land, so it was natural to want to celebrate my birthday here.

How is your life in Germany?

In Dortmund, I've established the Internationale Symphoniker Deutschland Orchestra, which performs in the best halls across Germany and Europe. It has played at the Yuri Bashmet Festival, and at ballet and opera gala-concerts alongside Bolshoi Theatre soloists, as well as at a concert dedicated to the Great Victory — held at Berlin's Konzerthaus.



Conductor Arkady Berin always pleased to meet enthusiastic audiences

I love being a conductor and have been lucky in performing with such outstanding musicians as Jose Carreras, Yuri Bashmet, Giora Feidman, Daniel Müller-Schott, Nikolai Petrov, Alexander Ghindin and Arkady Volodos.

You have so many creative ideas. What's your programme for the Minsk audience?

In the Palace of the Republic, we're holding a creative evening with People's Artist of Russia, composer Maxim Dunayevsky. He has written music for

30 films and is now also 70 years old. We decided to unite our creativity. Dmitry Kharatyan, Larisa Dolina and Mikhail Boyarsky will perform, accompanied by the State Symphony Orchestra of the Republic of Belarus; they joined forces with great success in Dusseldorf, joined by the Zud West Orchestra. German musicians had never played Dunayevsky's music but they were inspired and did a wonderful job. When Mikhail Boyarsky went on stage and sang 'It's Time to be Glad in Our Lifetime',

the whole audience stood and began to sing with him. I hope that Belarusian audiences won't be disappointed by our creative evening with Maxim Dunayevsky. We'll try to meet all expectations.

All your concerts are sold out; is Belarus a special audience?

I've performed before various audiences and can say with full confidence that ours is unusual, being kind, emotional, and sincere in their feelings. I always await such meetings with great joy.

I managed to organise Belarus' first 'Nemiga' State Brass Band, which I led for four years. Then, at the Belarusian State Academy of Music, I created the 'Fanfares of Belarus' brass band. In 1998, it won the Grand Prix as the best youth orchestra in the world, at an international contest in Luxembourg, held by UNESCO. It toured European cities with huge success, finishing with a concert at the Millennium-Centre in London. In Minsk, they still remember me well.

Three days to view rarities

By Svetlana Vetrova

Brest Regional Local History Museum conducting series of three-day exhibitions, entitled Unique Exhibit, as part of Brest — Cultural Capital campaign

The museum hopes to surprise and delight visitors by exhibiting single items never before displayed to the public, due to extreme historical, artistic and memorial value. Each rarity will be on show for three days only before being again hidden for decades, to ensure safety.

The Unique Exhibit project will commence on April 3rd, with a truly rare item, over seven centuries old. Its exact nature will remain undisclosed until the last moment, to preserve intrigue. Unprecedented safety measures are to be taken, alongside the assurance of necessary climatic conditions.

The presentation will take the form of a theatrical performance: the symbolic meeting of two city chiefs — from medieval Berestie and contemporary Brest.

Three such exhibitions are planned this year.

Bracelet easily transformed into a brooch

Elza Gavryushko, of the Belarusian Union of Masters of Folk Crafts in Bead Weaving and author of two books on her craft, presents pieces at exhibition hosted by Mogilev

Elza has mastered bead weaving, bead embroidery and bead knitting, using traditional folk motifs and colours to create original pieces. Self taught, she makes various accessories, interior items, souvenirs, decorations and icons. She recently began making transforming pieces: bracelets which can become a brooch, earrings or a belt, varying in size and colour.

Vitaly Rozhko setting trends for stage fashion

By Alexander Pimenov

Grodno student designs and produces dynamically lit costumes

Vitaly Rozhko is a fourth year student at the Yanka Kupala Grodno State University's Physico-Technical Department. From early childhood, he has been keen on ham-radio and now studies the creation of molecular spectroscopy devices and microprocessor control units (used for automation). His application of such devices for stage fashion has resulted in dy-

namically lit costumes for stage performance.

Each costume takes around a month to create, with an algorithm being used to create a control unit plate. Fabric is then sewn with LED strips and individual light-emitting diodes. Of course, soft cabling and comfortable connectors are essential, enabling costumes to be changed with ease.

Two experimental samples have been created and tested with success, and work is being conducted on a third. The dynamically lit costumes have featured



Dynamically lit costumes from Vitaly Rozhko

at several dance shows at the university, as well as at Grodno Youth Theatre and on the stage of the Republican Youth Student Forum.

Vitaly plans to improve his development, using multi-coloured effects and

a wireless system to synchronise several costumes, controlled by computer. This will enable more complex LED effects to be achieved, linked to the rhythm and character of a musical piece.

Dazzled by local treasures

By Sergey Golesnik

Vitebsk exhibition reveals territory's hidden history

Vitebsk's Regional Museum of Local Lore, History and Economy (home to one of the country's largest coin collections) has set up an exhibition at Vitebsk's Town Hall; there are 38 treasures, including 18-19th century Arab dirhams, from the Dobrinsky dig, in the Liozno District.

Most of the museum's exhibits date from the 16th and 17th centuries, and originate from the days of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and Rzecz Pospolita. Curator Nadezhda Varlamova, who heads the Scientific Ex-

position Department, tells us that, in 2014, porcelain tableware made in the Russian town of Msta in the 1930s arrived at the Vitebsk museum: it's most recent acquisition.

Besides marvelling at ancient coins, jewels and weaponry, visitors can also read fascinating legends connected with treasures: that of the Princess of Zamkovaya Mountain (Mountain); and about Napoleon's carriages and sleighs loaded with gold, supposedly sunk in Dvina River area lakes.

Tekhnomuzey LLC has been responsible for the technical equipment and artistic lighting of the exhibition, working the same magic as it did at Minsk's Museum of Great Patriotic War History.

Darya Domracheva earns her first Big Crystal Globe

Triple Olympic Champion and twice World Champion finally receives trophy lacking in her collection

By Yegor Glebov

Russia's Khanty-Mansiysk recently hosted the women's biathlon season final, with the major prize of the Big Crystal Globe due to fall to either Darya or her Finnish rival, Kaisa Makarainen, through the sum of the year's results. Darya Domracheva was placed third overall in 2014, and before this she was ranked second twice, so the prize is one she has long coveted.

From the start, the triple Olympic Champion took the lead, which she held confidently for two shooting ranges, hitting every target from the prone position. Having defied the wind and her excitement, she reached the standing position stage as a leader. However, there, Darya was thrown into third place and made a further error in her final 'standing' lap. Fortunately, Ms. Makarainen also failed to shoot accurately, making five mistakes and finishing 13th.

On receiving the Big Crystal Globe, at Khanty-Mansiysk's Winter Sport Centre (named after Alexander Filipenko), she declared joyfully, "I've done it! I'm happy to win the Big Crystal Globe! I concentrated psychologically and won. I loved today's race, despite only coming fourth," noted Darya after the final race of the season.



Darya Domracheva — winner of the Big Crystal Globe

"The struggle was tough. I'm grateful to all those who supported and believed in me and I'm happy to have met their hopes. I have no words to explain how I feel! Most of all, I want to rest now, relaxing after the hectic season. Modern biathlon is rich and unpredictable, with so much passion. The struggle for points and prizes is intense.

Biathlon is a super-sport!"

President Alexander Lukashenko sent a greetings telegram to Ms. Domracheva on the occasion of her 2014/15 IBU World Cup win. It reads: 'Dear Darya, accept my congratulations! You are great, having yet again presented us with cause for celebration and confirming your title as the world's

greatest biathlete. All Belarus has followed your performances, hearts aflutter. You've not disappointed us. In your determination towards this goal, you've demonstrated supreme mastery and true fighting spirit. Thank you for these unforgettable moments of happiness and pride! We await you in your Motherland.'

Encouraging home game

Tsmoki beats Russia's Krasny Oktyabr 89:84 at home, during regular VTB United League championship match

By Kirill Karin

Plot

The last Minsk match of the season between the basketball rivals was full of thrills and action, including two sessions of overtime, finally resulting in a 113:112 win for the Russian host team. As the season begins, squads are eager to prove their strength. The struggle went into an additional five minutes (with a score at 92:88 just beforehand).

Despite being equally matched, Tsmoki had lost its previous three games to Krasny Oktyabr, which inspired a certain frisson to the meeting. No doubt, the Belarusians wished to settle accounts with the Volga team on home ground. Meanwhile, the guests needed victory to secure their place in the play-offs.

Initially, the hosts held the initiative for some time, receiving huge support from the stands. Rashaun Freeman and Alexander Kudryavtsev attacked hard, taking the squad into the lead straight away. After a 'time-out' of one minute, Krasny Oktyabr then rallied, reducing the gap 23:15. Tsmoki continued to battle, widening the gap (including with three point throws) to coach Igor Grishchuk's delight. The Russian squad failed to match such play, with all four of their long distance attempts missing the hoop and leader Randy Culpepper blocked by our defence. As a result, Tsmoki confidently led at the close of the first half — 48:33.

Outcome

Minsk's quick succession of 13 points early in the third quar-



Rashaun Freeman (centre) — one of Tsmoki-Minsk leaders

ter somewhat demoralised Krasny Oktyabr, leaving them 25 points behind. However, the Russian team pulled themselves together for the final quarter, when Randy Culpepper and Willie Din struck hard, meeting some ineffective

defence. Krasny Oktyabr managed 10 points but the Belarusian team handled the penalty area almost faultlessly, allowing Tsmoki to break its unsuccessful run. Krasny Oktyabr still has a chance to reach the play-offs.



Vladimir Gorokhovik's finish

20 year old Belarusian wins Sochi Cup

By Igor Leshin

Vladimir Gorokhovik takes gold, earning first rating points for Minsk road cycling squad, while leader Alexander Kuchinsky comes fourth

The Sochi Cup one-day 150km cycle race experienced weather conditions of cold, rain and strong winds: of 161 athletes, only 26 crossed the finish line. Two Minsk team members were among them: Alexander Kuchinsky and Konstantin Klimenkov.

Kuchinsky took the lead from the start, alongside Belarusian Vladimir Gorokhovik and Russians Igor Kuznetsov and Andrey Solomennikov. The four increased their advantage throughout the race and, by the finish, were almost two minutes ahead of their closest rivals.

Just 300m before the finish line, the Russians, who had been watching experienced Kuchinsky for the pace, were left surprised by young Gorokhovik's sudden breakthrough. The Belarusian completed the race in front of all other cyclists, followed by Kuznetsov, then Solomennikov and Kuchinsky (who came fourth). Fellow Minsk team member Konstantin Klimenkov finished 25th.

The Sochi Cup has brought Belarus 52 points in the UCI ratings, with Gorokhovik claiming 40 and Kuchinsky scoring 12 (his first rating points for the Minsk squad).

Sadly, there were no Belarusian victories in another single day road cycling race — the Grand Prix of Sochi Mayor — held in Russia under the aegis of the International Cycling Union (UCI). However, our racers managed a worthy place among the top twenty.

Atletika Award goes to best athletes

Belarusian decathlete Andrey Kravchenko and 800m runner Marina Arzamasova — gold medallists at 2014 European Athletics Championship held in Zurich, Switzerland — receive special Atletika Award from Belarusian Athletics Federation: bestowed upon top athletes and coaches

Last year, Andrey Kravchenko won the decathlon gold with 8,616 points — one less than his personal record: 95 points ahead of silver medallist Kevin Mayer, of France. Meanwhile, Marina Arzamasova finished the 800m in 1:58.15 — a new personal record.

The Atletika Award also went to their respective coaches: Igor Sivodov and Natalia Dukhnova.

Musicians of the week



Minsk and guests of the capital listen to Bach's music, performed by professionals in metro subways

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 30th March. *Da Vinci Inventions*

Until 3rd May. *Mater Dei.*

Iconografia di un Amore

Until 31st July. *Art at Finger Tips*

NATIONAL HISTORY

MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 29th March. *Alternative*

Photography of Belarus:

Link of Times...

Until 4th June. *Nikolya*

Chocolate Museum

NATURE AND ECOLOGY

MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 23rd March. *Magic Insects*

Until 9th June. *Exotic World*

MINSK CITY HISTORY

MUSEUM

10 Revoljutsionnaya Street

Until 29th June. *From Me:* exhibition

by sculptor Vladimir Zhanov

FIRST RSDRP CONGRESS

HOUSE-MUSEUM

31A Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 12th April. *Vikings and*

Balts: The Northern Saga

WANKOWICZ

HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet*

of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz.

Illustrations and Medals

ZASLAVIE HISTORICAL

AND CULTURAL

MUSEUM-RESERVE

4 Rynkovaya Street, Zaslavl

Until 5th April. *Mistress Doll:*

a Book of Fairytales

MIR CINEMA

4A Kozlov Street

Until 30th April. *Childhood*

as a Moment

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

27.03. *Giselle, ou les Willis; Towards Height of*

Mastery 28.03. *Eugene Onegin; Three Little Pigs*

29.03. *Creation of the World* 31.03. *Nabucco*

01.04. *La Sylphide* 02.04. *Aleko. Bolero*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

27.03. *Women's Paradise: Tours of the Daugavpils*

Theatre (Latvia) 28.03. *Buratino.by; Shalom*

Aleichem! 29.03. *Red Riding Hood. Generation NEXT;*

The Bat 30.03. *Dubrovsky* 31.03. *Blue Cameo*

01.04. *Once in Chicago* 02.04. *The Nutcracker*

MODERN ARTS THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

27.03. *Love and Doves* 28.03. *Comedy*

about Penny Pincher 29.03. *Looking for*

a Man; Prostokvashino Holidays

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL

ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

27.03. *Evening* 28 and 29.03. *Paulinka*

31.03. *Pinsk Gentry*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC

DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

27.03. *Russian-Style Cabbage* 28.03. *Pane Kokhanku*

29.03. *The Magic Rings of Almanzor; Uncle's Dream*

31.03. *Woe from Wit*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

27.03. *No One Ever Said Life Would Be Easy;*

Robbery at Midnight 28 and 29.03. *An*

Unnamed Star 30.03. *Master and Margarita*

31.03. *The Battlefield* 01 and 02.04. *#13*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE

OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

27.03. *Feint-Kruaze* 28.03. *An Uninvited*

Guest; All Mice Like Circus 29.03. *I'm not*

Ashamed!.. Three Giselles 30.03. *ARTISHOCK*

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

March of decades and centuries past comes to life

March 27th. In 1940, Ferdinand Gaiduk — a Belarusian scientist in the field of psychiatry, a Doctor of Medical Sciences, a Professor and an Honoured Figure of Medicine of Belarus — was born in the village of Shalkovshchina (Shchuchin District).

March 28th. In 1959, a pop singer and Honoured Artiste of Belarus — Yakov Naumenko — was born.

March 28th. In 1963, Yuri Chizh — a key Belarusian businessman and the Chairman of the Belarusian Fighting Federation — was born in the village of Soboli of the Bereza District.

March 29th. In 1900, Belarusian cameraman Vladimir Korsh-Sablin was born. He was among the founders of the Belarusian cinematography.

March 30th. In 1899, a geologist and researcher of gold mines in Kolyma — Sergey Rakovsky — was born in Mogilev.

March 31st. In 1971, a famous hockey player and a world hockey star — Pavel Bure — was born in Minsk.

April 2nd. In 1949, Alexander Rashchinsky was born in Logoisk — a Belarusian composer, choir conductor, teacher,

publicist and collector of Belarusian dance and song folklore.

March 27th. In 1940, the second bus route was launched in Minsk — connecting Tovarnaya station and the park of culture and leisure. Until then, a single bus route operated in the city.

March 27th. In 1961, the International Theatre Day was established by the 9th Congress of International Theatre Institute (Vienna) — celebrated in Belarus since 1962.



March 28th. In 1989, Minsk-2 International Airport (now known as Minsk National Airport) welcomed its first passengers.

March 28th. In 1958, Belarus established its UN Permanent Representation.

March 29th. In 1931, the Yanka Kupala Literature Institute, at Belarus' National Academy of Sciences, was established.

March 29th. In 1948, the Belarusian Republican Branch of the All-Union Society for Distribution of Political and Scientific Knowledge was established — known as Znanie (Knowledge) Society.

March 29th. In 1996, an agreement on Customs Union of Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan



and Kyrgyzstan was signed in Minsk, in addition to a document to strengthen integration in economic and humanitarian branches.

March 30th. In 1945, Minsk's network node was established.

March 31st. In 1923, a venereology treatment clinic was opened by the Belarusian Red Cross Society.

March 31st. In 1989, the History Museum of Belarus' National Academy of Sciences opened.

April 1st. In 1950, the Chief Military Orchestra of Belarus' Armed Forces was established.

April 1st. In 1951, the Narodnaya Asveta Publishing House was founded in Minsk.

April 1st. In 1962, the first branded Minsk-Moscow train was launched — known as Belorussiya.

April 1st. In 1966, Brest's State Technical University was established.

April 1st. In 1967, the first issue of the Minsk Automobile Works' newspaper — *Avtozavodets* — was out.

April 2nd. In 1952, the Russian Drama Theatre was named after Maxim Gorky.

April 2nd. In 1968, the Lėtapis Association of Documentary Films was established as Belarusfilm's artistic branch.

April 2nd. In 1981, a decision was made to establish the Maxim Bogdanovich Literary Museum.