

Belarusian Transport Week contributes to the development of transport and logistics of the country



Industrial tourism is a relatively new direction of the Belarusian travel industry



INTERNATIONAL

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Mutual benefit for good neighbours

Aleksandr Lukashenko paid a working visit to Zhitomir to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart Volodymyr Zelensky and take part in the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine. The meeting was the first between the two presidents. The heads of state discussed the prospects for bilateral co-operation in all areas — such as economic and geopolitical issues, joint ventures and new projects, common traditions and cultural dialogue. → **3**



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Moving towards a common goal

The President paid a working visit to Armenia: he arrived in Yerevan to participate in a session of the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. The summit — held at the state residence of the President of Armenia — is particularly notable for two points. Firstly, it was attended by Moldova's President Igor Dodon as the Head of the observer-state in the Union and the Iranian President, Hassan Rouhani, with Singapore's Prime Minister Lee Hsien Loon — as guests of honour. Singapore and the EAEU signed an agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone. Another important point for us is that, next year, Belarus will assume the chairmanship of the Eurasian Economic Union.

By Pavel Filatov

Speaking from the rostrum at the summit, Aleksandr Lukashenko called the further elimination of barriers within the EAEU the most important step for the future of the Union. "There are enough barriers within the Union. It is especially alarming when they are introduced in such sensitive areas as, for example, state procurement. It is time for the heads of state to consider the urgent issues and make a political decision," he said.

The President of Belarus urged his colleagues to take a broad look at the development of integration, "The EAEU is very 'young'. It is necessary to invest a lot of effort and money to create a comprehensive and effective economic union no later than 2025 or earlier, build common markets, form common sectoral policies and implement the provisions of the Treaty on the EAEU."

Another result of the summit was the approval of a concept of common financial market creation by the heads of state. Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the move will be a foundation for free movement of capital and services. He noted that the organisation of such a market should be related to digitalisation: this will make it possible to develop advanced financial technologies and make the whole range of such services more accessible. "We will certainly benefit from the mutual exchange of experience in this area," he said.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, much has been done towards the digital transformation of the economy, the creation of ecosystems for such sectors as trade and industrial co-operation, the development of transport corridors and employment, as well as to ensure the traceability of the movement of goods within the EAEU. "This direction is gaining momentum, and it's time to streamline it, to supplement it with the relevant norms of the Union Treaty. At the same time, it is necessary to pay



attention to the issues of information security, to develop common standards and formats of interaction," said the Head of State.

As for the general recognition of electronic digital signatures in the Union, Mr. Lukashenko believes this problem should have been settled long ago. Otherwise, it is impossible to talk about the digital future.

The concept — agreed by the heads of state — reflects the goals, principles, stages, criteria and main directions of the formation of the common financial market of the EAEU. The countries will have to agree on approaches to mutual recognition of licenses in the banking and insurance sectors, as well as to the cross-border supply of financial services in the securities market sector until 2025. The concept notes that, in accordance with the EAEU Treaty, a supranational body to regulate the financial market should be formed. In this case, its work will be determined by a separate contract. Mr. Lukashenko considers that, perhaps, in this context, it is necessary to strengthen the competence of the Eurasian Economic Commission and the EAEU Court.

In his speech, the Head of State touched on the international agenda of the EAEU. In his opinion, it should be expanded. "We need to pay special attention to the countries of the 'far arc' where our products and services are still little recognised. We offer the Eurasian Development Bank to join this direction. Our national development banks and other financial institutions should also look for closer interaction both within the Union and beyond," he stressed.

The Head of State praised the development of co-operation between the EAEU and third countries, including the development of an interim agreement on the establishment of a free trade zone with Iran, which will come into force in October, and a package of agreements with Singapore. "Your countries are very important partners for us, and the potential for increasing economic ties is huge. Having fixed the regime of preferences, it is important to push business and governments to more systematic interaction," Mr. Lukashenko addressed the Iranian President and the Prime Minister of Singapore who were present at the meeting.

The President also noted with satisfaction the readiness to conclude a

free trade agreement with Serbia and recalled that an agreement on trade and economic co-operation with China is coming into force in October. In June, the EAEU and China, to speed up the passage of goods through their borders, agreed to exchange preliminary information on goods and vehicles of international transportation crossing their customs borders. "The commission should work out a similar agreement with the European Union to make the land route from China to Europe through our countries the most attractive," the Head of State said.

Mr. Lukashenko also noted that the interaction of the EAEU with the Commonwealth of Independent States, the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation and the Association of Southeast Asian Nations has seriously intensified. According to him, integration associations have common interests in transport, industrial co-operation and digitalisation.

After Minsk assumes the chairmanship of the Eurasian Economic Union, our representative will head the EEC Board. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that the country is preparing for this period with all seriousness.

On the summit sidelines



Major interstate events are also a good reason for fruitful bilateral contacts. Aleksandr Lukashenko held a meeting with his Kazakh counterpart — Kassym-Jomart Tokayev — in Yerevan.

He noted while negotiating, "We aim for a serious strengthening of our relations. We have made a number of proposals not only for trade in sensitive goods between our countries, but also for your country to join the share capital of our largest companies, which — by their size — are among the leading businesses in the world. This indicates we have great confidence in you."

The Head of State hopes that his upcoming visit to Kazakhstan will mark the beginning of a new stage in bilateral co-operation, "I am very grateful to you for today's co-operation within the EAEU. We share a single position. Kazakhstan has a very constructive position and we are determined to develop our co-operation."

In turn, Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted that he has

long been watching the work of Mr. Lukashenko, calling him 'the most experienced' in the EAEU. "We are waiting for you for an official visit. Relations between our states, without any exaggeration, are strategic," the President of Kazakhstan said, adding that his country treats the Belarusian people in a special way — respecting their history, culture and mentality.

HIGH ON THE AGENDA

It is obvious that, during the chairmanship of the EAEU, Minsk will initiate the solution of some sensitive issues. Among them is the revision of the distribution of customs duties.

One of the most important issues for Belarus is the distribution of the amounts of import customs duties between the states. Work on the revision of the standards has been conducted since 2017, each country defends the most favourable option for itself. These issues were repeatedly discussed at meetings of the Council of the Eurasian Economic Commission, the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council and the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council. So far, however, countries have only succeeded in bringing together approaches to determining the methodology for calculating distribution standards.

A further concern is the elimination of exemptions and restrictions in the EAEU.

In total, the Eurasian Economic Union has recorded 52 exemptions and restrictions. Belarus has been struggling with them for years but, despite the adopted road map, only one exception has been eliminated. In addition, the number of barriers is growing: there are already 19.

Belarus is aggressively promoting consideration of the abolition of barriers, exemptions and restrictions at the next summit. According to Minsk, it is necessary to audit both the executed and unfulfilled agreements reached after the signing of the Treaty on the EAEU.

Mutual benefit for good neighbours

By Igor Platonov

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has paid a working visit to Zhitomir to meet with his Ukrainian counterpart — Volodymyr Zelensky and take part in the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine. It was the first meeting of the two presidents. It was noted that Mr. Zelensky met the Belarusian Head of State personally at the airport, and the presidents travelled together to the negotiations. They then discussed prospects for bilateral co-operation in all spheres — focusing on economic and geopolitical issues, joint ventures and new projects, common traditions and cultural dialogue.

For the good of the two nations

The agenda for the two presidents was full: initially, the talks were held in a general format and then continued in the plenary session. During the initial format, Mr. Lukashenko expressed the confidence that all agreements between the countries will be implemented. “I want to assure you that we will fulfil our agreements,” he said, thanking Mr. Zelensky — on behalf of the Belarusian delegation. The Belarusian President noted that almost five hundred people came to Zhitomir from Belarus, adding, “You have very astutely noticed that despite the political border we were forced to build up, there are no borders between our nations. We understand each other; although we speak different languages, they are close and understandable to our people.”

The President of Ukraine, Volodymyr Zelensky, began the negotiations by saying, “Hello, friends!” In his opening speech, he switched from Russian to Ukrainian, noting that even so the heads of state understand each other. “Our people are friendly and close. I am proud that we have such good relations and neighbours. Our countries really do not have borders. I’m primarily talking about the people,” he said.

Wide range of issues

The talks between the two presidents lasted more than two and a half hours, instead of the planned 45 minutes. The Belarusian President informed journalists that he proposed that Mr. Zelensky establish joint ventures with Belarus. “It’s not merely trade [co-operation between coun-

tries]. We’ve made a decision to begin an intergovernmental commission which will meet in Kiev that will make specific decisions on the creation of joint ventures: in Ukraine — there are nine significant companies operating here — and also in Belarus,” he said.

In addition, the President noted the interest in co-operation with Ukraine in the missile sector. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the Belarusian side is ready to invest and create joint ventures in Ukraine in the assembly of cars, tractors, heavy-duty vehicles and other equipment.

The two presidents also discussed co-operation in oil refining and oil supplies. Mr. Lukashenko commented, “We’re speaking openly. We’ve discussed

his confidence in the successful peaceful settlement of the conflict in Donbass.

Warm conversation

In turn, Mr. Zelensky noted that the negotiations in the narrow format were not just held in a constructive manner but turned into a warm conversation. “We’ve had a great talk. I am very pleased to meet you personally. The conversation was both warm and human. I appreciate this most of all. We also discussed relations between our countries,” the Ukrainian President said.

Addressing his colleague, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that trade and economic relations are the basis of co-operation. He said, “We agreed that our \$5.5bn or \$6bn turnover this year is noth-

economic sphere. These primarily include the fuel-energy and agro-industrial areas, industrial co-operation, transport and logistics.”

Stressing the importance of co-operation between the two countries, the President of Belarus said, “The multi-billion Dollar trade turnover between our countries is formed locally. This explains our close attention to the development of interregional contacts.” He then recalled that, in Nikolaev and Nezhin, MTZ tractors and Gomselmash harvesting machinery are being assembled. In Lutsk and Dnepr, trolley buses of Belkommunmash and MAZ are produced, in Vyshgorod — Mogilevliftmash’s lifts are made and MAZ vehicles are manufactured in Cherkasy. In the Kiev Region, a large trade and logistics complex of the Santa Group of Companies operates.

The Head of State concluded that the platform of the forum has confirmed its effectiveness. Perhaps, as the President noted, this forum should be held not once every two years, but annually. This proposal is supported in Ukraine. The parties agreed to discuss the issue and make an appropriate decision.

Ambitious plans

The Head of State said that Belarus and Ukraine can also apply together to hold major international competitions. He recalled that Minsk recently hosted the 2nd European Games and the Europe v USA athletics event. Ukrainian athletes took an active part in these competitions and were a success: for example, at the European Games, they were third in the team standings.

“I think our countries together could compete for the right to host high level international sports competitions. I am talking about the proposal of the President of Ukraine to think jointly about whether we should aim for the Olympics. It’s possible for the two states,” Mr. Lukashenko said.

He stressed that Belarus and Ukraine are not just neighbours: the countries are bound by ties that are stronger than any of the most effective economic, diplomatic and cultural relations. “These are the ties of blood and spiritual kinship, the ties of our Slavic unity. Today, these are supported by business contacts, cultural and educational projects, tourism and visits to friends and relatives. We appreciate our relations very much and greatly value the friendship between our peoples,” he concluded.



DIRECT SPEECH

Ukraine is one of the main trading partners of Belarus. Last year alone, we increased our trade by almost 20 per cent. However, this is far from the limit of our capabilities. Our common history and neighbourhood predetermine our priorities, including in the economic sphere. These primarily include the fuel-energy and agro-industrial areas, industrial co-operation, transport and logistics.

oil products, oil refining, alternative ways of oil supplies, common markets, factories, capital, joint stock companies and also electricity — emerging after commissioning of the nuclear power plant.”

Open border

The two leaders talked about difficulties on the Belarusian-Ukrainian border. Mr. Lukashenko said that the border between Belarus and Ukraine should not be an obstacle to the movement of people. “I don’t want to talk about ‘threats’ from Belarus and Ukraine... Remember, there, in the north [in Belarus], people are seemingly different but this is your nation too. These are your people. I treat Ukrainians in the same way: these are our people,” noted the Belarusian President.

Mr. Lukashenko also commented on the situation in Eastern Ukraine, speaking about

ing. Your proposal is that we can reach \$10bn. After all, we have enjoyed over \$8bn worth of trade in the past.”

Two-way street

After the talks, Aleksandr Lukashenko and Volodymyr Zelensky spoke at the plenary session of the 2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine. The Belarusian President stressed that our country is ready to carefully study all proposals of Ukraine to enhance bilateral co-operation, naming the priority as economic liaison between the two countries, “Of course, Ukraine is one of the main trading partners of Belarus. Last year alone, we increased our trade by almost 20 percent. However, this is far from the limit of our capabilities. Our common history and neighbourhood predetermine our priorities, including in the

Realisation to follow agreements

2nd Forum of Regions of Belarus and Ukraine — held in Zhitomir — brought together representatives of business, politics, science and culture of the two countries. The agenda of the two-day meeting included many projects for mutually beneficial co-operation in different areas.

The central part of Ukrainian Zhitomir — Cathedral Square — was transformed into a large-scale exhibition for two days, featuring the best examples of Belarusian and Ukrainian large equipment. Among the latter were dump trucks, tractors, excavators, buses, trolley buses and combines. Belarus was represented by 15 manu-

facturers and Ukraine — by ten.

On the fringe of the forum, there was a meeting of the bilateral advisory council for business co-operation, in addition to negotiations between representatives of Ukrainian and Belarusian companies, a meeting of the joint commission on co-ordination of issues of protection and sustainable use of the transboundary environmental area and an eco-forum.

Specialists discussed problematic issues of mutual trade turnover in terms of the use of veterinary and sanitary measures and an official meeting of the heads of the regions of Ukraine and Belarus with the Head of the Zhitomir Regional State Administration was organised. In

addition, a round table discussion — *Development of River Navigation on the Dnieper and Pripjat Rivers*, a forum and an exhibition of high technology, robotics, mechatronics and startups were held.

On the second day of the forum, a package of co-operation agreements was signed in the presence of the heads of state. In particular, the foreign ministries of Belarus and Ukraine signed a consultation plan for 2020-2021 and a programme of sci-tech co-operation for 2019-2021 between Belarus’ State Committee on Science and Technology and the Ministry of Education and Science of Ukraine was approved.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and



BELTA

Industry, Vladimir Ulakhovich, summed up the preliminary results of the forum regarding the conclusion of contracts between economic entities of the two countries. He said that agreements for the supply of Belarusian products worth more than \$542m were signed in Zhitomir, recalling that \$140m had been

agreed upon at the 1st Forum of Regions. “New directions have been opened, contracts have been signed. These include not only traditional petrochemicals and engineering but also the construction sector, light industry and food industries. We are thus expanding our export portfolio,” the official noted.

We should have a balanced relationship with everyone

Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei talks in an interview to RBC News Agency about the details of the programme of in-depth integration of Belarus and Russia, as well as other topical areas of Belarus' foreign policy

By Aleksandr Pisarev

The Minister noted that there were many 'conspiracy theories' around this programme. "I just want to say that, in our opinion, the programme itself does not carry any danger. Why? First, we clearly believe that the most important and unshakable thing for us is the preservation of the sovereignty of our states. In this case, we are talking about the sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus," he stressed.

According to Vladimir Makei, the programme is based strictly on the provisions of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State of 1999. "There is no deviation from this Treaty," he said.

He focused on the most important thing for us in this programme. "We can talk about strategic goals, but if we do not solve today's problems, we cannot talk about deeper integration," the Minister stressed. "What's the problem? This is a tax manoeuvre, the removal of obstacles in the supply of agricultural and industrial products, negotiations on the settlement of disputes related to gas and oil prices."

Speaking about the timing of the signing of the programme, Mr. Makei

noted, "The presidents agreed on the meeting on the occasion of the 20th anniversary of the Union Treaty and set a task for the two governments to prepare the respective road maps to address these problems."

The integration road map envisages, for example, work on the unified tax code. However, it looks more like a political goal today because, according to the Minister, the work on the unified tax code will continue to be carried out for at least several months.

At the same time, the introduction of a single currency and the creation of a single emission centre will not be discussed. Before we talk about the introduction of a single currency or the creation of a single emission centre, we must first establish normal trade and economic co-operation and remove all the barriers and obstacles that are present today, believes Mr. Makei.

Russian journalists were also interested in the opinion of the Belarusian Foreign Minister on how Russia perceives the emerging warming of relations between Belarus and the United States, as well as the intensification of co-operation with the European Union. Mr. Makei repeated what the Belarusian President

recently noted, "We have always said and will continue to assert that we are not going to be friends with someone at the expense of Russia, to the detriment of Russia or against Russia."

"We live on our territory, we live in the centre of Europe but we proceed from the fact that we must have balanced relations with all parts of the world — realising that, of course, the Russian Federation for us is extremely important. It's the most important. It's the main political, trade and economic partner, amongst other things," he stressed.

There were many questions about relations between the USA and Belarus. According to the Minister, there is nothing unusual in the fact that our country seeks to have normal, balanced relations with the leading states of the world. The USA is a capacious market for Belarus, so there is interest in establishing trade and economic co-operation. We are also interested in a normal political dialogue with the United States. Today,

there are many problems that require clarification of the situation. For example, the issue related to the withdrawal from the treaty on intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles.

Regarding participation in the peace settlement in Ukraine, the Minister said, "We must clearly understand that today, if there is a US interest, without the participation of the US, this conflict is unlikely to be resolved."

As for the theoretical meeting between the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, and Donald Trump some time in the future, the

Minister said, "Everything is possible. I am personally convinced that if there was an opportunity to hold a meeting of the leaders of both states, it would also greatly help to clarify the situation or eliminate those remaining problematic issues in our relations with the United States which, unfortunately, we still cannot overcome."



Vladimir Makei



Silk road for two

By Ilya Kryzhevich

Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park celebrates 70th anniversary of Communist China

The event began with a solemn flag raising of our country and China to the accompaniment of anthems as a symbol of friendship between the two countries. This was followed by a concert of representatives of Chinese companies operating in Belarus. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, Cui Qiming, attended the celebration.

The Head of Administration of the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park, Aleksandr Yaroshenko, believes that the celebration of the founding of the PRC on the site of the international project is a good demonstration of the unity of the two peoples. "China is our strategic partner and friend. The celebration of China's establishment

shows our solidarity in the construction of a common destiny, the implementation of the *One Belt, One Road* initiative. It's gratifying that our joint project — the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park — is becoming an exemplary pearl of the silk road," he said.

Mr. Yaroshenko recalled that, at the moment, 55 residents from 13 countries have joined the Park and are implementing their projects. The volume of declared investments exceeds \$1bn; of these, more than \$200m has been disbursed.

Speaking about the development plans for 2020, the official said that work is planned to attract investors. "We expect that there will be at least 80-85 residents in the Park. Most importantly, we are entering the stage of active construction and introduction of production facilities. This year, we expect that 20 companies will begin production here," said Mr. Yaroshenko.

Elections — 2019

The Elections 2019 information centre of Belarus' Central Election Commission (CEC) will open at Minsk's Palace of the Republic, CEC Chair Lidia Yermoshina says



The CEC information centre will host its first press conference at 10am on November 17th. It will be located in the small hall of the Palace of the Republic, as is traditional. As Ms. Yermoshina noted, the location is easy to find for the foreign journalists and observers for whom the information centre has been set up.

There is no accreditation for national observers to work at the centre. "We would have needed a stadium for this, as we have many thousands of national observers. More than 500 have already been accredited in election commissions," Lidia Yermoshina said.

The first information centre was opened at the Presidential elections in 2001.

The elections to the House of Representatives are scheduled for November 17th and the elections to the Council of the Republic are planned for November 7th.

TIMETABLE FOR PARLIAMENTARY ELECTIONS

 October 2nd Establishment of precinct election commissions	 September 8th through October 7th Nomination of candidates for deputies
TO HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES	TO COUNCIL OF THE REPUBLIC
October 7th* Submission of documents necessary for registration of a candidate for deputy at the House of Representatives to the corresponding district election commission	September 9th through October 8th Nomination of candidates for members of the Council of the Republic
October 8th through 17th Registration of candidates for deputies at the House of Representatives	October 9th through 13th Registration of candidates for members of the Council of the Republic
November 12th through 16th Early voting	
November 17th Elections of the House of Representatives' deputies	November 7th Elections of the Council of the Republic's members

* No later than
Source: Central Election Commission of the Republic of Belarus
BELTA infographics

Transport Week: being mobile

By Svetlana Savelieva

International co-operation in the field of passenger and cargo transportation, joint infrastructure projects of Belarus and its neighbours, digitalisation of the Belarusian Railways, and problems of transport interaction within the CIS were only part of the topics discussed as part of the Belarusian Transport Week. Its major focus this year, however, was the development of a national transport and logistics system based on innovative integrated solutions.

The event brought together specialised companies from eleven countries, while the programme included a number of conferences, round table discussions and seminars. The First Deputy Minister of Transport and Communications, Aleksey Lyakhnovich, emphasised, “Belarusian Transport Week is a business event that, over the years, has made a significant contribution to the development of transport and logistics of the country. The programme of the forum is filled with interesting events every year; colleagues from other countries come to share their experience. And this not only affects the development of constructive interaction, but also provides an excellent opportunity to improve the skills of our specialists.”

A special place in this year’s business programme was occupied by a discussion of the digitalisation of international container shipping, alongside problems and prospects of moving towards

electronic consignment bills. In May 2019, our transport workers got the opportunity to draw up such documents. Experts are now analysing how this opportunity has taken root in our country and what needs to be done to make the scheme more effective. As far as container transportation is concerned, the forum participants spoke about those information technologies that will help to improve the quality of intermodal transportation between China, Kazakhstan, Russia, Belarus and Europe.

Transport Week saw several interesting round tables held. One of them was devoted to the regulation of the taxi market. Furthermore, a discussion took place on the subject of training and advanced training of specialists in the transport industry. Smart technologies in education and the transition to University 4.0 have been high on the agenda.

Belarusian Transport Week also saw the *Transport and Logistics* international specialised exhibition, held for the thirteenth time. This year, enterprises from Austria, Armenia, Belarus, Italy, China, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Switzerland presented their stands.

Belarusian Railways traditionally presents not only new services and business opportunities, but also new projects for passengers. This year was no exception. The innovations include a new self-service terminal with expanded functionality, which has already begun to operate at the railway station in Minsk. During August, more than 46,000 tickets were bought using it. Such terminals will soon appear at all

19 railway stations in the country.

The exhibition also presented the innovation of the official website of Belarusian Railways, enabling the customer to now buy tickets for trains with unreserved seats, for both electric trains and trains of the city lines.

Our partners from Latvia and Lithuania have become traditional and long-awaited guests at the event. Mr. Lyakhnovich, noted, “We’ve recently had a meeting with the Lithuanian delegation to discuss a number of areas. We still have one main question that needs to be addressed in the field of transport: queues at the border.



Vitaliy Pivovarchik

There are several ideas: today we have a loan agreement with the European Investment Bank, with which we plan to modernise the checkpoint and increase flow as part of the reconstruction of the M-7 Minsk-Vilnius highway.

There is a common interest from the Latvian side, underlined by the Minister of Transport of Latvia, Tālis Linkaits, “We’re pleased with the flow of goods from Belarus and are preparing to improve our services, including the digitalisation of documents. We’re also ready to electrify the railway line in the direction of Belarus, enabling our service to be-



Vitaliy Pivovarchik

At Transport and Logistics international specialised fair

The Head of EBRD Belarus Office, Alex Pivovarsky, spoke about promising infrastructure projects. Over 27 years of work in the country, the organisation has invested about 2.5 billion Euros in various projects. Last year, for example, our country was among the ten most active, where the EBRD has projects: the volume of investments reached 360 million Euros.

The current portfolio of the bank for Belarus is about 800 million Euros, with a quarter of this amount being investments in municipal and road infrastructure. Mr. Pivovarsky recalled the public-private partnership project — the reconstruction of the highway — and said that this year it planned to sign another major project to modernise a series of bridges across the country and to partially finance the modernisation of the M-3 road between Minsk and Vitebsk. For the EBRD, this will be the largest infrastructure project in all the years of its work in Belarus. The total investment of the two projects will be 240 million Euros.

come faster and more convenient for both freight carriers and passengers by 2023.”

Business circles in Latvia and Belarus are already discussing new freight train routes between the two countries. Another driver of growth in traffic between Belarus and Latvia is the Great Stone Industrial Park.

“In the context of the Great Stone Industrial Park, we see great potential for extending the new Silk Road to the region of Northern Europe on the basis of trilateral co-operation between Latvia, China and Belarus,” added Mr. Linkaits.



First experience of participation in IEMA

National exhibition of the Republic of Belarus has recently taken part at the International Engineering and Machinery Asia Expo in Lahore, Pakistan



By Natalia Yemelyanova

The exposition showcases products of leading Belarusian enterprises, including BelAZ, Minsk Automobile Plants, Minsk Tractor Works, Mogilev Metallurgical Works, and companies affiliated with the Belneftekhim petrochemical concern: Belshina, Naftan, and Polotsk-Stek-

lovolokno. The Belarusian Education Ministry showed off the best Belarusian universities, and the National Academy of Sciences demonstrated cutting-edge research-and-development products.

The opening ceremony featured the Belarusian Ambassador in Pakistan — Andrei Yermolovich, the Provincial Minister

of Punjab for Industries, Commerce and Investment — Mian Iqbal, the Secretary for Trade Diplomacy of Pakistan’s Ministry of Commerce — Javed Akbar, heads of chambers of industry and commerce of the cities of Pakistan and the Punjab Board of Investment and Trade, as well as members of the Belarusian delegation. The national stand aroused great interest among business circles.

The Belarusian exposition was organised by the National Centre for Marketing at the Belarusian Foreign Ministry. Our country was taking part in the largest expo in South Asia for the first time. A Belarusian-Pakistani business forum also took place as part of the event. Belarusian enterprises held negotiations and signed a number of agreements as part of the exhibition and during the business forum.



Important support from World Bank

By Olga Korneeva

A team of specialists from the World Bank pay a working visit to Minsk in relation to implementation of the technical assistance project aimed at support of the Belarusian private sector development financed by the EU’s trust fund

Representatives of the World Bank have held meetings with representatives of the Economy Ministry and the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation — which are the main partners of this programme — and also other stakeholders from the public and private sectors: the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, the Ministry of Housing and Utilities Services, the Health Ministry, the Development Bank and the Minsk City Executive Committee. On the agenda were issues related to the implementation of current infrastructure projects and consulting projects of

the World Bank, as well as priority areas for further co-operation.

Following the meeting, the Minsk Regional Executive Committee expressed its readiness to liaise with consultants of the World Bank and the National Agency for Investment and Privatisation and to continue pursuing a balanced policy based both on the internal interests of the region and the country, as well as the priorities of the World Bank. The current portfolio of the World Bank in the Minsk Region includes the implementation of a number of projects in the field of education and housing and communal services to the amount of \$85m. It was agreed with the Health Ministry and the Ministry of Housing and Utilities Services to focus on promising avenues of development for public-private partnerships in the relevant areas. In addition, potential projects that can be implemented in this format were outlined.

Partners in higher education

The first Belarusian-Turkish Inter-University Forum was held in Minsk, aiming to strengthen contacts between universities of the two countries and determine the prospects of bilateral co-operation in the fields of education and science

By Natalia Yemelyanova

Representatives of Selcuk University, Gebze Technical University, Karabuk University, Istanbul University and Medeniyet University took part in the event from the Turkish side. The delegation of university rectors was headed by the President of the Council of Higher Education, Yekta Sarac. Belarus was represented by the Belarusian State University, the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radio-electronics, the Belarusian State Polytechnical University, the Belarusian State Technological University, the Belarusian-Russian University, the Minsk State Linguistic University, Grodno's Kupala State University, Mozyr's Ivan Shamyakin State Pedagogical University and Polesie State University.

The meeting of the business council of higher education institutions of Belarus and Turkey discussed the issues of training, recognition and equivalence of diplomas, academic exchanges and development of joint educational programmes.

During the forum, an exhibition of the scientific achievements of our do-



mestic universities was organised. In addition, the Turkish delegation visited Minsk's universities to learn about student training and organisation of the educational process.

The Belarusian State University signed memorandums of understanding with three Turkish universities: Karabuk University, Istanbul University and Istanbul Medeniyet University. The Belarusian State Ped-

agogical University named after Maxim Tank signed a protocol of intent with Selcuk University.

The parties also signed a programme of co-operation in higher education between Belarus and Turkey for 2020-2021. The document was signed

by Belarus' Education Minister Igor Karpenko and the President of the Council of Higher Education, Yekta Sarac.

"At present there are 45 direct agreements between higher educational establishments of Belarus and Turkey. During the forum, we've signed a number of new inter-university agreements that envisage academic mobility, staff and student exchange, joint research, including under the European Union programmes and Erasmus+ in particular," Belarus' Education Minister Igor Karpenko said.

More than 140 Turkish nationals are receiving education in Belarus at present. "The Turkish language is taught at the Minsk State Linguistic University as the first, second and third language. We hope that the visit of a delegation of rectors of Turkish universities, headed by the President of the Council of Higher Education, Yekta Sarac, will intensify our inter-university exchanges and co-operation," Mr. Karpenko said.



Plaster models, 'bunnies', exclusive exhibits



By Veronika Malyshchits

The National Bank of Belarus, the National Archives, Belarusbank and other organisations joined efforts to prepare the show. A leading researcher of the National Archives, an Associate

Professor, a Candidate of Historical Sciences — Anatoly Veliky — explains, "This is a landmark event for everyone. Displays of our banknotes — kept at the National Archives — are being presented for the first time. The Rouble is not a mere means of payment; it's the most

The Belarusian Rouble: A Quarter of a Century exhibition has been officially launched at the Museum of Modern Belarusian Statehood — featuring for the first time displays of banknotes and commemorative money. All exhibits reflect the chronology, the years in which the Belarusian Rouble and the monetary system as a whole have been formed and developed.

important attribute of our country's independence. Both the National Bank and the established financial system ensure and support the stability and stable development of our country."

He believes that the exhibition will cover the journey our state has taken. Development and production of coins is a difficult job. The working drawings, plaster models and original tools used in the creation of commemorative coins are also presented at the exhibition.

"Along with the diplomatic course, the foreign policy vector, the army and the national language, the national currency is a powerful factor in state development. The 25th anniversary is per-

ceived by us through the prism of certain achievements. This project is a cultural, educational and ideological event. The variety of documents, commemorative coins, valuables and artefacts gives an interesting and iconic view," notes the Director of the National Historical Museum, Pavel Sapotko.

On October 19th, there will be the 25th anniversary of the adoption of a resolution by the Supreme Council of the Republic of Belarus which legislatively fixed the Belarusian Rouble as a single legal payment means in the country. That decision was the final stage for the Belarusian Rouble in the process of acquiring the status of the national currency.

Autumn beauty of Minsk



Minsk leads in the ranking of Commonwealth of Independent States' most popular cities for travel and recreation in autumn among Russians

By Irina Sergeeva

Astana (Kazakhstan) is second in the list and Yerevan (Armenia) takes third place. Next is Almaty (Kazakhstan) and Baku (Azerbaijan) is placed fifth.

Tashkent (Uzbekistan), Chisinau (Moldova), Bishkek (Kyrgyzstan), Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and Ashgabat (Turkmenistan) are also among the

top ten most popular cities for travel.

According to TurStat, tourists spend from \$40-100 per day on accommodation and food for autumn trips when travelling in the CIS. They mostly come to Minsk and Yerevan to spend weekends and prefer Astana and Baku for shopping.

The list is based on analysis of the cities' tourist popularity.



Open Enterprise Day

By Lilia Khlystun

Would you like to take part in assembling a would-be tractor on a factory conveyor? Or get involved in the magical process of moulding designer molten glass? Or maybe take a selfie against a 450-tonne heavy-duty dump truck equal in size to a five-storey building? All this is possible thanks to the relatively new direction of the Belarusian travel industry — industrial tourism, which is rapidly gaining momentum. Experts quote an annual 15 to 20 percent increase in this area.

Take a ride on a tractor

Tourists from Germany — Christoph Toliki and Igor Kirchner — planned a trip to Minsk Tractor Works during one of their five days in Minsk. Christoph admits that learning about the history of the enterprise, a walk through its picturesque site — a kind of a city within a city, and a visit to the assembly line where tractors from 50 to 210HP are assembled, as well as a museum, will be remembered for a long time. “Once I used to work at the Volkswagen production plant, but I have never seen how tractors are assembled. I’m very impressed. I will definitely recommend this tour to my friends and acquaintances. We took advantage of the opportunity to come to Belarus without a visa.”

MTZ opened its doors to tourists almost three years ago. Since then, the company has been visited by over 10,000 people from 62 countries. Most often, in addition to residents of our own country, the tour is taken by tourists from Russia, Estonia, Germany, Latvia, Lithuania, and France. But there were also travellers from distant countries such as Algeria, Mexico, Ghana, Argentina, Venezuela, Iceland, Australia and North Korea. Since 2017, when the company opened to visitors for the first time, the total number of foreign tourists was almost 2,500. On a working day, MTZ organises up to 4 excursions. According to Sergey Sidorovich, the Deputy Head of the MTZ Industrial Tourism Centre, the tour is not only one more opportunity to advertise products; the sale of souvenirs and expanding the range of tourism and services bring additional profit for MTZ.

“Six months after opening the study tours, we added a ride on the energy-efficient powerful tractor ‘Belarus’ and participation in tractor assembly. It’s tempting to work on the factory conveyor, putting on a corporate suit like a real tractor manufacturer and knowing in advance where your tractor will go. Tourists over 18 are allowed to assemble parts on a conveyor belt. They, like our employees, are given a couple of minutes to complete the operation, since every 5 minutes an assembled tractor leaves the conveyor. Motivation, emotions and new experiences are guaranteed. Not everyone decides to have a go, but about 220 people have already taken the opportunity,” he explained.

Among the tourists are many schoolchildren for whom an excursion to MTZ is a type of career guidance. For the first time, many will find out what a modern working specialty looks like today, and it may help determine their choice of profession.

Routes for the curious

Are there many enterprises, like MTZ, that warmly welcome tour-

ists? The Ministry of Sports and Tourism says that at least 120 factories are actively developing industrial tourism. The major thing is to find a feature, a twist that is interesting to people. Vitaly Gritsevich, the Deputy Director of the Tourism Department and Head of the Planning and Organisation of Tourism Activities Department of the Ministry, noted, “Jewellery, food enterprises and glass manufactures

are ready to welcome both individual tourists and groups. One of the pioneers of the movement, BelAZ, has been successfully working in this field for several years. Who would not be interested in a ride on a 450-tonne heavy-duty dump truck and in uploading a photo? The company has found the ‘wow effect’ that works well for its image, while raising interest in its products. Large tour operators offer an excursion to BelAZ as a must-see.”

The Neman Glassworks in the Lida District also began to actively welcome tourists in 2014. Yelena Nagulevich, a specialist in tourist visits at the business, said, “We show our guests the production processes and the museum, while also introducing them to our rich history and we also give everyone a gift. Many purchase products in the factory store; tourists receive a memory and the company benefits. Last year, the production facility was visited by almost 16,000 diverse people: from our closest neighbours — Lithuania and Poland — to China and the USA.”

Mr. Gritsevich believes that the potential of industrial tourism is far from exhausted, “Companies have felt the



economic effect and are striving to develop this area. For example, last year, an interesting ‘oil’ route was opened in the Gomel Region, where there is an oil field and processing facility. Soligorsk, with its salt hills, could become a very popular route — an ideal place for unusual photos. And if tourists are given an opportunity to go down the mine...



Christoph Toliki and Igor Kirchner during their visit to Minsk Tractor Works



To mark Machine Builder’s Day, traditionally celebrated in Belarus on last Sunday of September, BelAZ invited everyone to its Open Enterprise Day. The guests were able to see an exhibition of the legendary Belarusian giants and visit the factory assembly lines.

THE MT REFERENCE

In the first half of 2019, the export of tourism services in Belarus amounted to more than \$112 million — up 13 percent against the same period in 2018

having opened the potash production for visitors, it would be possible to include the entire south of the Minsk Region on the tourist trail, such as Slutsk with its famous belts and Uzda.”

In turn, tourism will give an impetus to the socio-economic development of the regions, as well as catering and other aspects of the service sector. There

are good prospects for the development of industrial tourism in eleven cities, whose accelerated development was required by the President. All have industrial enterprises and, for example, the well-known BelGee Plant in Borisov would be definitely interesting for tourists, especially if it was included in a single route with BelAZ.

INSIDE

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World's biggest airport just opened

President Xi Jinping inaugurated a second international airport for the Chinese capital with the world's biggest terminal

Beijing Daxing International Airport is designed to handle 72 million passengers a year. Located on the capital's south side, it was built in less than five years at a cost of \$17 billion.

The main Beijing airport, located in the city's northeast, is the world's second-busiest after Hartsfield-Jackson Atlanta International Airport and is nearing capacity.

Daxing, designed by the late Iraqi-British architect Zaha Ha-

did, includes a terminal billed as the world's biggest at 11 million square feet. Despite that, its builders say travellers will need to walk no more than 2,000 feet to reach any boarding gate.

The vast, star-shaped airport is about 30 miles south of downtown Beijing. It has four runways, with plans for as many as three more.

Given the distance from central Beijing, the new airport

required a lot of investment to connect it to the capital. When you add the cost of new road and rail links and other infrastructure, the total cost of the project hit a whopping \$63 billion.

Bai Henghong, the Director of the Beijing Daxing International Airport project, noted, "It is the world's largest integrated transportation hub. The terminal building is also the world's largest built with a seamless steel struc-

ture, boasting the world's first design of double-deck departure and double-deck arrival platforms."

Carriers including British Airways and state-owned China Southern, the country's biggest airline by passengers, plan to move to Daxing from Beijing Capital International Airport.

The capital has a third airport, Nanyuan, for domestic flights, but the Government says that will close once Daxing is in operation.

EU unemployment drops to lowest level in almost twenty years

The unemployment rate in the European Union has dropped to its lowest level in more than 19 years, Eurostat announced

According to the EU's official statistics agency, unemployment in the bloc stood at 6.2 percent in August, down from 6.3 percent the month before and from 6.7 percent in August 2018. That amounts to more than 15.4 million men and women out of work.

"This is the lowest rate recorded in the EU28 since the start of the EU monthly series in January 2000," Eurostat said in a statement. "Compared with a year ago, the unemployment rate fell in 24 member states, remained stable in Luxembourg, while it increased in Denmark (from 4.9 percent to 5.0 percent), Lithuania (from 6.1 percent to 6.6 percent) and Sweden (from 6.3 percent to 7.1 percent," it added.

Czechia recorded the lowest rate of all member state at just 2 percent. It was followed by Germany and Malta with 3.1 percent and 3.3 percent respectively.

At the bottom of the table is Greece where the rate stood at 17 percent in June — down from 19.2 percent in June 2018.

The rate was higher for the Euro area — 7.4 percent, its lowest level since May 2008 — and for young people with youth unemployment recorded at 14.2 percent for the entire bloc and 15.4 percent in the Euro area.

Vatican sculpture dedicated to migrants was unveiled

Pope Francis has unveiled a monument in St. Peter's Square dedicated to the world's migrants and refugees



The 'Angels Unaware' boat by Canadian artist Timothy P. Schmalz depicts 140 migrants ranging from a Jewish man escaping Nazi Germany to a Syrian refugee fleeing the civil war.

The 20-foot sculpture was unveiled during mass on the 105th World Day of Migrants and Refugees. Depictions of Christ's parents, Mary and Joseph, have been included in the piece.

Pope Francis once famously likened the journey of Joseph and Mary to Beth-

lehem to the migrations of millions of refugees fleeing wars.

Mr. Schmalz said that the piece was inspired by the passage: 'Do not forget to show hospitality to strangers, for by so doing some people have shown hospitality to angels without knowing it'.

"I wanted a sculpture that would be inclusive of every migrant experience... over the centuries," Mr. Schmalz said from Rome. "Every time you look at it you get that visual message instantly that migration is something that humanity has always had. All cultures, all races, all religions."

As well as refugees fleeing Nazi Germany and Syria, there are dozens of other depictions including a boy fleeing the Irish Famine of the 1840s.

Mr. Schmalz, whose past creations include 'Homeless Jesus Christ' — depictions of Jesus sleeping rough on benches outside cathedrals — said his latest piece took a year of working 'obsessively, from 4am in the morning'.

'Angels Unaware' is facing in a direction intended to portray the boat sailing towards St. Peter's Basilica, he said. "It's one thing to say you're being welcoming but to show it with a piece of bronze artwork in St. Peter's Square is really powerful," he said. "This is not a museum here."

The sculptor said Pope Francis made his appreciation clear.

Tourists must pay \$1,000 to enter 'dragon island'



The Indonesian island of Komodo, home to the Komodo dragon, will not be closed to tourists next year — but a \$1,000 membership scheme will be introduced, the authorities have said

It reverses a July announcement that the island would close in January to protect the dragons and their habitat.

It was due to re-open after a year — but the Government has now said a membership scheme will be introduced. Currently, tourists pay around \$10 to enter the island.

In 2018, 176,000 people visited Komodo, up from 44,000 people in 2008. In July, the local Governor said the island needed to be closed to stop tourism from interfering in the mating and hatching processes of the komodo dragon population.

The island would re-open after a year but as a more exclusive destination, the Governor said.

"People will have to become members and pay \$1,000 [£790] to enter for a year," said the region's Governor, Viktor Bungtilu Laiskodat. "I think that's cheap."

The Ministry of Environment and local Governor agreed that the island would not close, and that a membership system will now be introduced, at a cost of \$1,000.

Conservation efforts to protect the dragons will be increased and the 2,000 residents of Komodo — who would have been relocated for a year — will also be allowed to stay.

Komodo dragons are the world's largest lizards. They can grow up to 3m long and have razor-sharp teeth and a poisonous bite. Most of them — around 1,700 — live on Komodo Island, and around 1,000 more live on Rinca, another island in the national park.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Castle renaissance

Almost all the ancient castles and palaces in our country are to be found in the Grodno Region.

The area carefully preserves the past and looks to the future: it revives the most valuable historical heritage. Consequently, over the past two years, the Old Castle in the very centre of Grodno has undergone considerable changes, since a large-scale reconstruction of the royal residence is underway. We've been to the large construction site and touched on a centuries-old history.



New Castle view

This observation ground boasts incredible views of Grodno, the New Castle and the Nieman River



Yan Khvedchhin

The first model of the castle's restoration is kept at the museum

By Yulia Popko

Pearl of the region

The Old Castle has a long and complex history. The fortress appeared on the banks of the Nieman River back in the 11th century. Since then, much has changed: over a thousand years of its existence, the castle has gone through several transformations. At the turn of the 14th-15th centuries, the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Vytautas, rebuilt it in the Gothic style. At the end of the 16th century, it became the residence of the King of Poland and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Stephen Báthory, who also rebuilt it. During the Russian-Polish War of the mid-17th century, the palace was destroyed, but it was later restored. During the Northern War in the early 18th century, the Swedes burned the castle, after which it was repaired but never held its former significance. In the 19th century, the castle housed a barracks and a hotel. Now the main exposition of the Grodno State Historical and Archaeological Museum is located in the building.

It is almost impossible to recreate just one of the castle's significant periods. "The outline of the project was developed by the Minsk architect, Vladimir Bachkov. It was based on an engraving by Tomasz Makowski from the early 17th century," said Yuri Kiturko, the Director of the Grodno State Historical and Archaeological Museum. "After the reconstruction, the castle will look as it did under Stephen Báthory."



Work is in full swing at the construction site

We carefully examine a photograph of the engraving that has miraculously survived until now. If it's possible to complete everything that's planned, the castle will rise and become unusually beautiful. In the meantime, the pearl of the region does not look very presentable: a large-scale reconstruction is in full swing. Almost four dozen builders work on the site, and heavy equipment is involved. To get there, we pass the oldest bridge in the country. Mr. Kiturko comments, "This is the entrance gate, the main entrance to the castle. During the reconstruction, the walls were carefully fortified."

I look around and notice that the new masonry stands out with a lighter brown colour. But the old brick won't be removed: I touch the masonry from the time of Stephen Báthory, examine a fragment of the Vytautas wall — it will be enclosed with glass and will be exposed.

I follow the work of the bricklayers. They mount mascarons, various emblems and external cornices, which will give the castle

its special charm. While experts add the decorative elements to the castle, others are carrying out construction and installation works.

Recreating history bit by bit

First of all, the entrance and middle towers are being erected from the side of the Nieman River, and the fortress wall with the gallery will be restored. Then I find myself in the former royal chapel, located above the entrance arch. A large window immediately captures the eye: it's the same size as it was in the 16th century. Mr. Kiturko continues, "Here they discovered the remains of a 400-year-old

fresco and gave it to Belrestavratsiya company. Specialists will restore the picture, and we will find out what patterns and colours adorned the chapel."

We climb the spiral staircase and get to the would-be observation area, which offers incredible views of old Grodno, the New Castle and the river. The scenery is breath-taking! Yuri Kiturko remarks, "In winter, the floor will be heated so that the snow melts and tourists don't slip."

We climb down. A strong wind is blowing through the unfinished castle — there are still no stained-glass windows. In some places it can be seen that critical sections of the walls are fastened with special metal brackets. Specialists conducted a great deal of work on pillars that reinforce the ceilings in order to continue adding to the superstructure of the walls. They also reinforced the soil of Zamkovaya Hill with the help of underpinning. The work was dangerous, difficult and a huge responsibility, since the builders worked on a cliff, in cramped conditions. But it was impossible to do without supporting piles bored into the cliff: they not only strengthen the soil of the mountain, but also help with the further construction of the castle.

It's very noisy, with equipment rattling and workers shouting. To continue the conversation, we go to the royal palace, where the main exposition of the museum is located. It is open as usual. Tourists do not experience any particular inconvenience: a

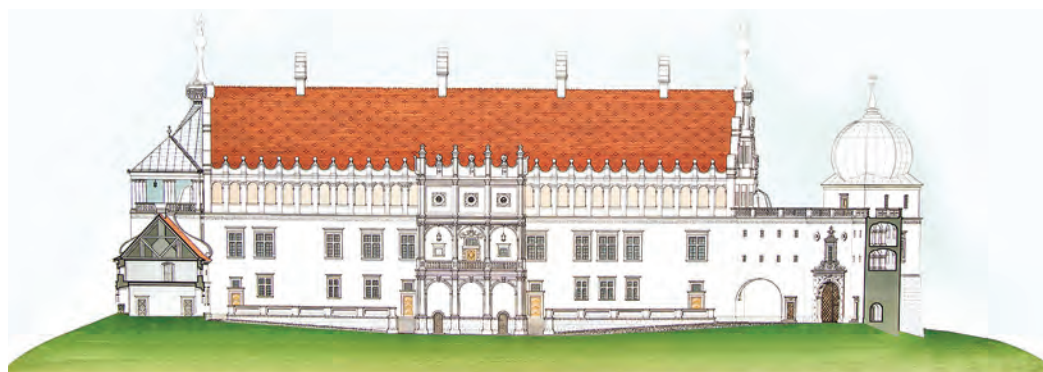
temporary pedestrian bridge was built allowing them to get inside the building bypassing the construction site. Mr. Kiturko invites us to take a look at the new mini-exhibition, showcasing the valuable finds discovered by archaeologists who worked side by side with the builders during the reconstruction of the castle.

"During the excavations, many interesting items made from iron, ceramics, and leather were found," says Mr. Kiturko. The shop window displays the most interesting exhibits of the 13th-14th centuries. "For example, rings, bracelets, pendants, glass jewellery, as well as arrowheads, a razor and even a children's leather boot. Just look, it's so tiny!"

One more valuable item also attracts the view: a chess piece, which is made from the horns of an animal, most likely from the 14th century.

The history of the Old Castle is inextricably linked with the history of Grodno. By the beginning of the 12th century, a whole city had grown from a small settlement on Zamkovaya Hill. Today this castle is the only preserved royal residence in our country. It's important not only for us, but also for neighbouring Poland and Lithuania.

The castle is gradually transforming. Of course, there's still quite a long wait ahead. In 2020, it's planned to complete the first stage of a large-scale reconstruction, with two more lying ahead. The builders are literally restoring our history bit by bit.



CULTURE

Indian cinema at Belarusfilm

Indian action film *Squad* shot at National Belarusfilm Studio



Film director Nilesch Sahay

BELTA

By Irina Sergeeva

The *Squad* action movie, which began filming in Belarus at the end of September, is a large commercial project of an international scale where the National Belarusfilm Studio acts as the general contractor for the shooting and is mostly involved in the process, said Belarusfilm's Director General, Vladimir Karachevsky.

"This is a significant, expensive and complex project. The shooting involves considerable resources of our film studio, including a significant team of specialists: from stage directors and cameramen to costume designers and technical groups. In addition, outside contractors were also involved in the form of military personnel, military equipment, helicopters and planes. A large group of Belarusian stuntmen is also working on the film, he explained. "Investors from India and other countries have come to us. We

need to shoot a large amount within a month, so the shooting lasts not 8 hours, but 14-16 hours daily."

According to Mr. Karachevsky, the Indian project is interesting and important both from the point of view of the economy, as well as international contacts and future prospects. "For us, the shooting of this film is a big event, because filmmakers from India have never come to us before. This is the first test. We see great interest both from Indian and Belarusian filmmakers," he added. "We expect that the same company will come to us next year with a new project. Furthermore, we plan to present our film studio in December in Mumbai. We're promoting our country and hope that, in the future, we will make a joint Belarusian-Indian picture."

Film companies from the two states have been negotiating for several years. The Honorary Consul of Belarus in Mumbai, Lalit Chokhani, accelerated this process, and has been enthusiastic

about the idea of showing Belarus to his compatriots through a national film. As Charge d'Affaires of India in Belarus, Vishav Pal, noted, the shooting of *Squad* doesn't only help strengthen cultural ties between the countries but, in the future, watching it will increase the inflow of tourists from India to Belarus. "I have been to many countries of the world, but Belarus is something special. Here, any place, even in the city, is beautiful. And it's worth showing off," he said. "The blockbuster director Nilesch Sahay is the first of his kind to film here, but I think others will follow him to Belarus soon."

Before bringing his team to create this two-hour action movie, about a man from a special forces squad who saves a little girl, Nilesch Sahay visited all the shooting areas of Belarus four times.

The main characters — Bim and Aria — are professional soldiers who, together with the special squad, must save 7-year-old Mimi. Each character has their own story, which will be shown in the beginning of the film. There is also a romantic story, as well

as the traditional Indian dances that will be performed by Belarusians.

"In the film, I'm a good guy and a special forces soldier. My task is to save the girl held hostage by an army of soldiers from different countries," said Rinzing Denzongpa. "This girl's grandfather was a scientist who discovered the formula for creating a universal soldier; he suddenly disappeared and the trials failed. But the enemies want to capture these developments, for which they are trying to find the scientist's granddaughter, in order to exchange her for the formula."

Special effect supervisor Vishal Talkar stressed that the unusual scenes will amaze viewers. "There are a lot of explosions, fires and tricks in the picture. For example, in Belarus, we'll shoot a scene in which a person will jump from one helicopter to another; we've already shot a tower explosion with the addition of special effects," he said.

Filming of the Indian film *Squad* at Belarusfilm will last until October 25th. The action movie is scheduled for launch in India and Europe in April 2020.



During the thriller's shooting

BELTA

CULTURE



The London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra

By Kristina Khilko

"The festival's peculiarity is rooted in the incredible unity of the audience, the best musicians, legendary composers, world premieres, master classes and projects that attract a wide audience and have a particularly warm atmosphere," says the Artistic Director of the festival, Belarusian pianist Rostislav Krimer. "Over the last fourteen years, our forum has become one of the most important cultural events not only in Belarus, but in the world."

On the first day, at the grand opening, Minsk residents heard a performance by the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, at the Large Hall of the Palace of the Republic. Eighty musi-

cians performed masterpieces of world classics by Beethoven, Liszt and Brahms. The audience received the concert with great applause.

"I have heard a lot about your rich culture and traditions. It is a great honour for me to open the largest music forum," said Rafael Payare, the guest conductor of the Royal Philharmonic Orchestra of London. "Music unites. I believe experiencing great art gives the Belarusian audience inspiration and hopefully unforgettable memories."

The gala concert of soloists — *21st Century Artistes* — was held at the Upper Town concert hall, featuring winners of major international competitions. Those attending could enjoy

Under a starry sky

Minsk hosts 14th International Yuri Bashmet Festival — featuring the London Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, classics in the subway and a youth concert. The musical forum is adorned with a constellation of amazing artistes from countries both near and far.

world classics in virtuoso performance and get to know young Belarusian musicians who have already reached considerable heights. Violinists Eva Bindere from Latvia and Lorenzo Tranquillini from Italy, cellists Sevak Avanesyan from Armenia and Mikhail Radunsky from Belarus, Italian Ruggero Mastrolenzi and Belarusian Aleksandra Ivanova (alto) performed.

Musicians from around the world perform in the best concert halls of the Belarusian capital. In addition to classical music stars and Grammy Award winners, the festival includes world premieres and crossover projects in an unusual format. One of the most unusual concerts was

held right on the subway platform. At night, the East-West Chamber Orchestra — conducted by Rostislav Krimer — performed under the starry sky of Petrovshchina metro station. The acoustics in the subway stations are special and music sounds fantastic

against the concrete walls and the sound of trains. This year, the format has been slightly changed: the performance was opened by a laser show, and then Belarusian models joined the orchestra to present a fashion show of Belarusian designers.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, sends greetings to participants of the 14th International Yuri Bashmet Festival. It reads: 'Having received permanent residence in the hospitable Belarusian land, this forum has become an integral part of the cultural life of our country and one of the best musical projects of our time. Traditionally, festival days give people an opportunity to join in masterpieces of classical art, enjoy the performing skills of outstanding artistes and discover the creativity of bright young talents.'

Footprints in the sand

IAAF World Athletics Championships finish in Doha



Alena Dubitskaya

By Tatiana Pastushenko

The world athletics event is over. The tournament, held for the first time in the Middle East, didn't bring any medals to Belarusian athletes but will certainly remain one of the most memorable in history.

Qatar tried everything possible to ensure the athletes feel comfortable while competing in conditions of unbearable heat and high humidity. A unique cooling system was installed at the Khalifa Stadium, maintaining a comfortable temperature in the arena. However, it was impossible to create such conditions for the marathon runners and walkers and their events consequently turned into real battles for survival: in the women's marathon, for example, the first participant left the track in the 17th kilometre and little more than half the runners reached the finish line.

One of the main stars of the Belarusian national team — Olga Mazurenok — was the first of the European athletes to cross

the finish line but was fifth overall. She later admitted, "I feel exhausted. Fifth place is definitely not a failure: we should look at the situation objectively. There was no certainty that I would win a medal at either the World Championships or the Olympics. However, I still have hope in my heart. I'm not frustrated with the lack of a medal here. I understand that the strongest wins, but there are special competitions, desert marathons and three-day races in Malaysia for such experiences. If we are talking about a high achieving sport, it would be better to treat the organisation of it more professionally. There is a feeling that the season has been in vain. Perhaps it would have been better to conserve my strength. Although, on the other hand, it is a good lesson since, in Tokyo, I think there will be something similar."

Humid weather provoked the unpredictability of results in other programme events: many top athletes failed to show their potential. In the pole vault, the famous French athlete, Renaud Lavillenie, failed to reach the finals and discus thrower Christoph Harting also watched the final from the stands. The favourite, Kevin Mayer, didn't manage the decathlon finals. At the same time, the IAAF World Athletics Championships also registered some outstanding achievements. Shelly-Ann Fraser-Pryce won the 100m race, securing her eighth championship title. The subsequent victory by the US team in the mixed relay was even more impressive. Given the debut of that type of programme, the result was unique, especially as Allyson

Felix won her 12th championship title as part of the American four — more than the legendary Usain Bolt! In the high jump, Maria Lasitskene became world champion for the third time in a row; a result that no other athlete has previously achieved.

The Belarusian athletes did not arrive in Doha in the best shape. For them, the present season has turned to be extremely busy. Our athletes performed at the 2nd European Games, the European team championship, top youth tournaments and the Match Europe v USA. Most of the Belarusians couldn't keep their energy levels high enough



Tatiana Kholodovich

up to the World Championships: among the best results of our athletes were fourth place from Maksim Nedosekov in the high jump, fifth place by Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova in the long jump, sixth position by Alena Dubitskaya in the shotput and the sixth place of Tatiana Kholodovich in the javelin. After the



Maksim Nedosekov



Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova

competition, Belarusian athletes said the tournament could hardly be called a failure. Their main event will take place next year, in the Olympics in Tokyo, and they have time to correct mistakes and eliminate all the errors that prevented them from winning medals now.

Maksim Nedosekov is among those preparing for the Olympics. He admits, "True, I want to win an Olympic medal. I'll participate in the Olympics where I intend to perform to the full — physically and psychologically. I know that, if everything turns out the way I want, neither I nor my fans will be disappointed."

Courageous performance from hockey juniors

By Natalia Yemelyanova

Belarus' junior ice hockey team wins representative tournament in Beijing

On the first day of the 2019 Ambassador Cup Hockey Tournament in Beijing, Belarus' junior team defeated their peers from the United States 5:0 (2:0, 1:0, 2:0).

From the first minutes the teams attacked each other's gates, but in the final stages of each attack Dmitry Shulga's trainees were more precise. In the first period, thanks to goals from Andrey Loshko and Daniil Bourosh, the Belarusians led 2:0. Zakhar Polshakov later scored, as well as Vyacheslav Gramovich, who made a double.

Dmitry Shulga, head coach of Belarus U17, noted, "A long flight, an unfamiliar environment, an unknown opponent — it was hard for the boys, and at the beginning of the game there was some tension. But after the first pucks were scored, everyone calmed down and began to play more confidently."

After two missed goals, the Americans began to liven up, playing more actively. Naturally, this affected discipline, but our guys did well: they did not succumb to provocation but stood up for themselves.

On the second day of the tourna-



ment, the Belarusians faced teams from Russia and Latvia. In Beijing, the Belarusians lost to the Russians in a series of penalty shootouts — 0:1.

Commenting on the game, Dmitry Shulga said he was pleased with his trainees. "They had more than double attempts compared to their opponent (26:12), but could not score, although there were enough chances. At the same time, they allowed hardly anything to be created at their gates," said the head coach. "But in general, I'm pleased with the game. The only thing the guys lacked was confidence."

After a poor defeat on shootouts from the Russians, Dmitry Shulga's trainees scored seven goals against the Latvian squad. Anton Astashevich and Daniil Bourosh scored twice each, while Ilya Morozov, Yegor Ignatenko and Vyacheslav Gramovich scored once.

On the third day of the youth tournament in Beijing, the Belarusian team could not beat their Finnish peers (2:3 PSS). However, having once again defeated the USA squad (2:0), our team was in the leading position in the tournament standings.

The first place in the tournament was decided in a duel between Dmitry Shulga's trainees and their peers from Finland. To maintain the lead, they needed to achieve victory by full time. Despite the missed puck at the beginning of the match, Belarusians managed to seize the initiative and achieve a major victory — 7:1.

During the current event, the Belarusians played twice against the USA (5:0, 2:0), Russia (0:1 PSS, 1:4), Latvia (7:0, 1:0) and Finland (2:3 PSS, 7:1). Second place went to the Russians, who defeated the Americans — 4:0

September laureates

By Arina Novikova

Belarusian Football Federation names leaders of first autumn month



The best player of the Supreme League of the Belarusian Championship in September was the forward of Minsk's Energetik-BSU, Ilya Shkurin. The 20-year-old striker scored 4 goals in a winning match with Minsk (6:1) on September 27th to lead the scorer's, with 13 goals. Mikhail Gordeichuk (Dinamo, Brest), Igor Kuzmenok (Torpedo-BELAZ, Zhodino) and Danilo (Dinamo, Minsk) are also nominees.



The coach of the leader of the national championship — Dinamo Brest, Czech Marcel Licka, has been recognised as the best coach. Among his competitors were Sergey Tashuev (Shakhtyor, Soligorsk), Aleksey Baga (BATE, Borisov) and Sergey Gurenko (Dinamo, Minsk).



Interestingly, in the Russian Premier League, the Belarusian coach of CSKA Moscow — Victor Goncharenko — has been recognised as the best coach of September. He was unanimously supported by the League's experts and fans. In September, CSKA won four matches to earn 25 points and lead the standings of the Russian Championship. Apart from Mr. Goncharenko, the list of nominees included Yuri Semin (Lokomotiv, Moscow), Vadim Yevseev (Ufa), Aleksandr Tochilin (Sochi) and Vladimir Fedotov (Orenburg).



Fest of the week

The festival of Chinese culture — Confucius Institute Day — was held in Minsk's Upper Town

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 Karl Marks Street
Until 15th October. *Moisey Nappelbaum: Portrait of the Epoch*
Until 6th November. *Old and New: 18th Century Russian Jewellery Art*

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street
Until 20th October. *Space Pilgrim*
Until 19th January. *Oman: Pearl of the East. Handicraft Legacy*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 17th October. *City and Time*
Until 7th November. *September 17th 1939: You Are From Western and I'm From Eastern Belarus*
Until 10th November. *Doll Stories*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 19th October. *Space of Sculpture*
Until 19th October. *Limitless Possibilities*
Until 19th October. *Awakened Angel of Valery Deviskib*

LOSHITSA ESTATE

8 Chizhevsky Lane
Until 27th October. *Belarusian Diamond in Crown of Palladium Orthodox Icons*

TROITSKY SUBURB

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 12th October. *Best Toys from USSR*
Until 12th March. *Robo Art*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 M. Bogdanovich Street
Until 24th October. *Caucasus Works by Lev Tolstoy*

VLADISLAV GOLUBOK PARLOUR

14 Starovilenskaya Street
Until 24th November. *Football is Game of Millions*

YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 12th October. *Border Crossed Near Minsk: 1921-1941*

MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street
Until 23rd October. *Walking in Grey. A Poem*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 13th October. *Minotaur's Mystery*
Until 19th January. *Lady's Articles*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
10 and 11.10. *Sleeping Beauty*
12.10. *Turandot*
13.10. *Laurencia / Golden Collection of Ukrainian Vocal Music*
15.10. *Prince Igor*
16 and 17.10. *Corsair*

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
10.10. *Wind in the Poplar*
11.10. *Wisdom Measurer*
13.10. *Serezha*
15.10. *Concrete*
17.10. *Medea's Syndrome*

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
10.10. *Local Cabaret / Paulinka*
11.10. *Tolerance*
11 and 17.10. *Inspector*
12 and 17.10. *Prudok Radio*
12 and 13.10. *Black Lady of Nesvizh*
13.10. *Pinsk Gentry*
15.10. *ART*
16.10. *People on Marshes*

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
10.10. *Three Sisters*
11.10. *A Dog on Hay*
12.10. *Inspector*
17.10. *Star Time*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

33 Mashеров Avenue
10.10. *Macropulos' Means*
11.10. *Battlefield*
12.10. *Midnight Robbery*
13.10. *Even a Wise Man Stumbles*
14.10. *Master and Margarita*
15 and 16.10. *Mechanical Man*
17.10. *Abduction of Yelena*

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
12 and 13.10. *My Dear Friend!*
16.10. *Wedding Bazaar*
17.10. *I Want Your Husband*

NEW DRAMA THEATRE

16 Liza Chaikina Street
13.10. *Mad Money*
17.10. *Live Until Premiere*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
10.10. *The Fool*
11.10. *Rich Brides*
12.10. *It's Not Invented by Us*
13.10. *Trickster Club*
15.10. *Caught by Love*
16.10. *Man, Singular*
17.10. *A Man from Podolsk*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Okiyabrskaya Street
15.10. *On Strings of Rain*