



Learning lessons of history against modern background
Page 4 – 5



Notes on guide's margins
Belarus is often mentioned as being attractive to international tourism, with almost 40 percent of Russians viewing our country as the best holiday destination and Western magazines and specialised editions paying ever more attention to our tourist infrastructure **Page 7**



Students, as well as lecturers celebrate alma-mater's jubilee with artistic reports
Page 9



BELTA

Bogdanovich brothers earn gold at European Games in Baku

First gold from Baku

Canoe sprint brothers Andrei and Alexander Bogdanovich claim first gold medal for Belarus at the European Games, winning the C2 1000m final race in 3:34.412 minutes, on Mingecevir's rowing channel. The Bogdanovich brothers held back until near the finish, pulling ahead of Russian Ilya Pervukhin and Alexei Korovashkov, and Germany's Peter Kretschmer and Michael Mueller, who took bronze. The brothers' gold is the first medal for Belarusian national team at the European Games in Baku.

A step towards Serbian President's visit

By Vladimir Khromov

Traditionally friendly Belarusian-Serbian relations to be further strengthened, notes President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko on meeting the President of the National Assembly of Serbia, Maja Gojkovic

The Head of State notes a number of issues are ready for discussion, aiming at enhancing and expanding Belarus-Serbia co-operation. He also emphasised that, over the past

five years, trade between our two countries has increased almost five-fold, with further potential for expansion. Mr. Lukashenko noted that trade between our countries is balanced.

Political dialogue between Belarus and Serbia boasts stable, positive dynamics, with visits regularly exchanged. In February 2015, a roadmap was signed to boost trade-economic co-operation. The Inter-governmental Belarusian-Serbian Commission on Trade-Economic Co-operation, whose

eight session was hosted by Belgrade in February, plays a co-ordinating role in our bilateral trade.

The President believes that, as far as the parliamentary dimension is concerned, the deputies of our two countries are doing their best to strengthen bilateral relations.

Mr. Lukashenko praised the results of the visit by the Head of the Serbian Parliament to Minsk, expressing confidence that it will help enhance Belarusian-Serbian interaction, while making good steps

towards the visit of the Serbian President to Belarus.

Maja Gojkovic stressed that the parliaments of Belarus and Serbia are working to enhance bilateral ties. "It's a great honour for me to receive an invitation from the heads of the two houses of Parliament to visit Belarus," she said.

Ms. Gojkovic views the visit as historic, being the first by the head of the Serbian Parliament to Belarus. She is keen to stress the importance of the exchange of visits at top level, noting the Belarusian President's

visit to Serbia. In her words, the visit opened a new page in the Belarusian-Serbian relations. "I'm glad that the parliaments of our two countries can follow this path and make their contribution to the development of bilateral ties," she commented.

She assesses relations between Belarus and Serbia as traditionally kind and friendly, believing that both sides are eager to promote liaisons.

The heads of both houses of the Belarusian Parliament met the Serbian parliamentary delegation: the Chairman of



Maja Gojkovic

the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikovich, and the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko, to discuss acute issues of Belarusian-Serbian inter-parliamentary, trade-economic and investment collaboration.

Each photo captures history and destiny

One Victory for All edition, by BelTA, awarded at 12th CIS International Art of Book Contest, in Almaty

By Anastasia Shoplya

The photographic album features about 400 unique shots from BelTA archives, including those by war correspondents Vladimir Lupeiko, Vasily Arkashev, and Mikhail Savin. Dmitry Zhuk, the Director General of BelTA



BelTA's *One Victory for All* photo exhibition in Brest

News Agency, whose idea the album was, tells us that the National Library and the Belarusian State Archive of Film, Photography and Sound Recording have been extremely helpful in fulfilling the project. He

notes that the Victory plays a special role for everyone living in Belarus, and is greatly inspiring.

One Victory for All highlights not only the war years but those from before the conflict began, and af-

terwards, during the restoration of Belarus. Unique materials include photo-stories of those who played their part: linked by the patriotic themes of Motherland, freedom, independence and peace.

Remembrance without limit

By Nikolay Velikhov

British Ambassador to Belarus, Bruce Bucknell, takes part in *We Remember* ceremony, near Trostenets memorial, after Friendship and Tolerance walkathon, in Minsk

"I'm not sure that I'm worthy to speak on this sacred site, as none of my countrymen or relatives died here. Those who fell didn't speak English and I didn't witness the tragic events of those days. However, on this day, I mournfully bend my head before those who survived this unimaginable nightmare, 70 years ago," notes Mr. Bucknell.



Bruce Bucknell at commemorative service in Trostenets

He thanked the four British citizens who represented London's Together Plan charity; alongside others, they covered 42km in the marathon. "Today,

guests from my country are present; they have arrived to see with their own eyes the place where the innocent died, and to learn more about this event, paying

tribute to their memory. I'm very pleased that they took part in the Friendship and Tolerance walkathon and I hope that they will help me in passing on details to our fellow countrymen, so that the terrible truth of war may be always remembered," noted the Ambassador.

The Friendship and Tolerance walkathon, dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War and the memory of victims of Nazism, set off from Yama (Pit) Memorial Complex. Besides the four British citizens, taking part were representatives of Jewish communities in Belarus, as well as former prisoners of Minsk ghetto and members of large families.



UIMP President Klaus Schormann makes high assessment

Chances are very high

By Anastasia Shoplya

President of International Union of Modern Pentathlon (UIMP), Klaus Schormann, who arrived for 2015 World Cup finals, notes at Minsk press conference that Belarus can bid to host the Olympic Games, if there is such interest

"The host of the 2028 Summer Olympic Games hasn't been chosen yet, so Belarus' application could be very competitive. Many other applicants without regard to the 2028 Games don't have a tenth of what Belarus can offer. The country has a corresponding infrastructure: roads, including towards the first-class sports facilities, high-level hotels, all of which are situated compactly," noted Mr. Klaus Schormann. He said that he is on friendly terms with President of the

International Olympic Committee (IOC), Thomas Bach, and has already raised this topic on many occasions. "When the discussions come to the place in Europe which could host the event, I always say that it's Belarus," stressed the UIMP President. "Every time the IOC raises this issue, I say that Belarus is able to organise competitions of the highest level. Countries that apply for holding summer or winter Olympics thus show their keen interest in the competitions, and this encourages them to move forward. I think that Belarus should think of bidding to host the Olympic and it has the chance to get the event?"

UIMP President Klaus Schormann emphasised that he and UIMP stand ready to support the initiative to hold competitions of any level in Belarus, regardless of whether or not the country applies for holding the Olympics.

Serious plans are quite real

Maria Astakhova

Sri Lanka to study Belarusian experience of animal breeding and crop farming

A Belarusian delegation recently visited Sri Lanka to present current opportunities in the sphere of establishing livestock breeding complexes and commercial dairy farms. The Sri Lankans showed great interest, hav-

ing serious plans to develop these agro-industries.

Other major projects of mutual benefit are being discussed in the spheres of joint agro-productions and petrochemicals. Belarusian exports to Sri Lanka currently focus on potash fertilisers, paper goods, and various control equipment, while Belarus primarily imports tea and clothes from Sri Lanka.

Event gives reason to speak about friendship and beneficial partnership

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko makes working visit to Azerbaijan

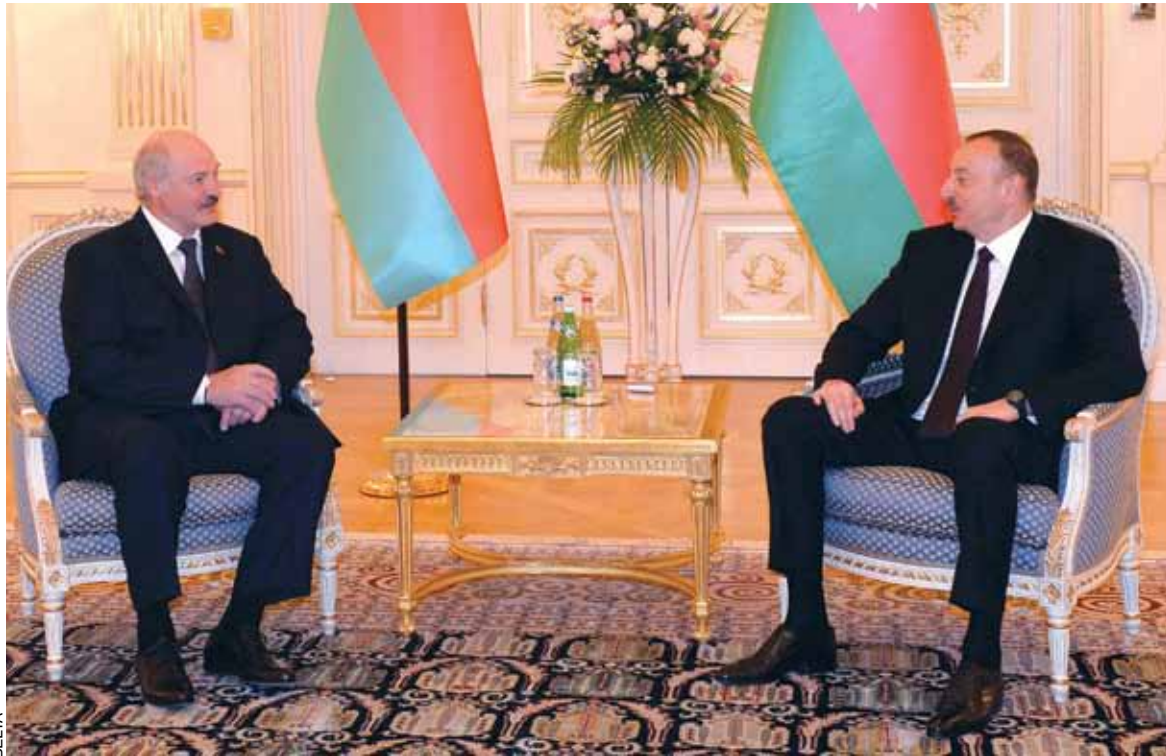
By Vasily Kharitonov

In Baku, the Head of State has taken part in the official opening ceremony of the first European Games and has conducted a range of bilateral meetings, as well as visiting sports facilities.

On arriving in Baku, speaking to official representatives at the airport, Mr. Lukashenko underlined the friendly nature of our relations: between nations and our countries' leaders. Belarus and Azerbaijan are close allies, enjoying robust bilateral relations, noted Mr. Lukashenko, on meeting his Azerbaijani counterpart, Ilham Aliyev.

The Belarusian Head of State praised the level of Azerbaijan's preparations for the first European Games, saying, "You had only two years to prepare. It would have been impossible if you had done nothing beforehand. We had no doubt that you would do everything to a high level. However, we didn't expect it would be so beautiful; this has truly amazed us."

The Belarusian President stressed that he felt compelled to attend the opening ceremony of this inaugural sporting forum. He had earlier



Alexander Lukashenko during his meeting with Ilham Aliyev in Baku

expressed his wish to see Olympic scale events within the European continent.

The first European Games will be held in Baku until June 28th, with the Belarusian team represented by 151 athletes and 53 coaches. Belarusians will take part in the following disciplines: acrobatics, boxing, freestyle and Greco-Roman wrestling, road cycling, beach volleyball, artistic gymnastics, rhythmic gymnastics, canoeing and kayaking, judo, swimming, synchronised swimming, platform diving, trampolining, archery, marksmanship, table tennis, the triathlon, fencing, badminton, karate, sambo and taekwondo.

The President of Azerbaijan, Ilham Aliyev, told Mr. Lukashenko that Azerbaijan highly appreciates and is proud of its level of relations

with Belarus. He noted that the leaders of our two countries maintain regular contact, bringing momentum to bilateral relations. "Belarus is a friendly and brotherly state. We highly appreciate our relations and take pride in the political and economic progress we have achieved over a short period of time, as well as in our joint projects. We see only positive dynamics across all areas," noted Mr. Aliyev. "Our relations are sincere, reliable and aim at the successful implementation of our tasks," he underlined.

Speaking about the first European Games in Baku, Ilham Aliyev noted that this event is a landmark for Azerbaijan and for all Europe. He noted that Belarus is represented by strong athletes, and wished our Belarusian sportsmen successes and victory.

Collaboration between Belarus and Azerbaijan is developing across all areas of mutual interest, with political dialogue at all levels. We are strategic partners constructively liaising within international organisations, including the UN and OSCE.

In 2014, trade turnover between our states totalled \$330.8m (including \$322.1m of exports). Last year, the major Belarusian export items to Azerbaijan were timber goods, tractors, components and spare parts for automobiles and tractors, milk and dairy products, engines, medications and goods from ferrous metal.

In 2014, Belarus imported from Azerbaijan oil products, acyclic hydrocarbons, clays, fruit and vegetable juices and ethylene polymers.

Greeting participants of Baku 2015 European Games

Each participant of the first European Games in Baku will write their name in the chronicles of sporting history, notes the President of Belarus and the President of the National Olympic Committee, Alexander Lukashenko, greeting athletes

"Belarus is among those countries which first supported the idea of holding this large-scale 'Old World' forum," reads the greeting. "In 2011, Minsk hosted a session of the Executive Committee of the European Olympic Committee to discuss the project. In 2012, it was approved by the General Assembly of the European Olympic Committee. The march of our delegation with the national flag across the Olympic Stadium in the hospitable capital of Azerbaijan, Baku, will be a solemn and pleasant event for us. Athletes will compete for European Games medals for the first time and the names of all participants will be inscribed in the chronicles of sporting history."

Since 2007 a range of joint projects have been implemented in the sphere of production co-operation, with assembly production of tractors, trucks, auto-cranes and lifts being set up in Azerbaijan. The leading Belarusian-Azerbaijani co-operation in the sphere of production co-operation is Ganja Automobile Plant. Projects are in the pipeline to set up joint productions of buses, detachable equipment, tractor trucks and medications.

The commodity distribution network of Belarusian manufacturers on the Azerbaijani market is expressed by three entities and 30 dealers, representing the interests of over 40 Belarusian exporters.

In common European sport family

By Alexander Pimenov

Alexander Lukashenko meets President of International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, in Baku

"We are members of the European family. Europe is our common home, so we — as a young and ambitious country — have to play our due role, including in sports. Moreover, sport is a priority in our country," notes Mr. Lukashenko during the conversation.

Mr. Lukashenko made a proposal so that the International Olympic Committee should pay more attention to the development of sport in those countries that are developing in

this direction. "Yes, we have dozens of recognised leaders in world sport, but we need to support the developing countries, too. I know that such ideas exist in the IOC. We're ready to work together with you in practice so this idea is given greater dynamism," said Mr. Lukashenko.

The issues of purity in sport were also discussed, with Mr. Lukashenko stressing that Belarus' principal position is that sport should be fair.

The President of Belarus thanked Thomas Bach for the role he plays in international Olympic movement and in international sport. "I'm very pleased that there's such a specialist



Participants of meeting with President of Belarus

in the IOC, as well as a person who wishes to develop sport and facilitates its development."

In his turn, Mr. Bach said that he was happy to meet the President of Belarus. "I'm sure that you and the Belarusian team will play an important role in the history and organisation of the first European Games," he said. The IOC President expressed gratitude that Belarus pays enhanced attention to the development of sport and this is especially important, including for national unity.

Implementation of the IOC's

Olympic Solidarity programme was also high on the agenda during the meeting, and it was noted that it's being successfully realised in many countries, including Belarus.

After the meeting Mr. Lukashenko awarded the IOC President the Order of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus for shining merits in the development of Olympic movement, mass sports and high-performance sport in Belarus, as well as for special merits in propaganda of ideals and principles of the Olympic movement and popularisation of sport and healthy lifestyle.

Co-operation for the sake of two countries

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on behalf of the Belarusian people and himself, congratulates the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, and all Russians, on the Day of Russia

"Today, a solid foundation has been created in the Russian Federation for further enhancing the level and quality of life for citizens, and efficient economic development," reads the congratulation. Mr. Lukashenko expressed confidence that, in future, multi-aspect collaboration between Belarus and Russia, which is an example of successful integration interaction, will fully meet the interests of both states.

Learning lessons of history

Minsk, and Belarus as a whole, is perceived by neighbours, from the West and from the East, as a unique European platform, gathering diverse nations in the search for solutions to geopolitical deadlock. Ten years ago, nobody would have guessed that Belarus would host a forum on learning from past war, while encouraging discussion on how to prevent present conflict. It is not a matter of especial expertise, but a desire to be a united centre, encouraging integration. Since the launch of the CIS, Belarus has positioned itself in this way, seeking constructive solutions. According to participants of the forum, this is the modern role of Belarus within the Eastern European region.

What critical issues stand before modern society and what solutions may the media offer? Why do we believe the media has power to offer any solutions? Aren't our politicians, diplomats, military and economists capable of tackling our problems? Of course, the public looks to the media for critical analysis of current events, via word and photograph. Minister of Information Lilia Ananich notes that media sources can be used as propaganda, and may not always present an accurate world picture National, confessional, political, social and economic problems can be presented in a fashion more destructive than constructive. We have only to look to events in Ukraine, where manipulation of facts, the wish to al-

locate blame and the aggravation of tempers have been more prevalent than objective media analysis.

However, the problem is wider. The 'Partnership for the sake of the future: heritage of the Great Victory' forum aimed primarily to demonstrate the responsibility held by journalists to report fairly. Lilia Ananich is correct in stating that misrepresentation in the media can drive a wedge between brotherly countries and peoples. Belarus rejects such a policy and such aspirations. Our information field and national media must aspire to offer considered analysis of the most difficult challenges of our time, avoiding an information war.

Over the past decade, the Belarusian media has made good progress in promoting journalistic partnership. In the conference hall of the National Library, I met many who help shape public opinion in their home countries. Here again, in Minsk, they have sought out consensus and constructive solutions. As well-known Russian TV anchorman Leonid Mlechin, a keen historian, told me in the lobby, the Belarusian mentality is disposed to benevolence. By and large, our media forum is a form of 'civil society': a partnership of the media and journalists, to find solutions.

Partnerships are most effective when based on shared values. Accordingly, European politicians, and those in leadership across the Eu-



At the plenary session of the 10th Belarusian International Media Forum

ropean Union, tend to begin statements by declaring 'we, being based on European values... Perhaps, little remains of our old European values, but we'll discuss this later. For now, what values unite our partnership, for the sake of the future? The answer is the heritage of the Great Victory.

Throughout various heated discussions, in which passionate words were spoken, no one doubted that the Great Victory unites us. Why? Because this victory is not only in

the past: it lives on. The heritage of the Great Victory is an asset, showing that we are capable of winning. Who can ignore such a claim? Indeed, everyone wants to claim victory for their own country, inflaming passions and squabbles, notes Ms. Ananich. We know our part in that victory, to which we owe today's peace.

There are no simple answers, and I understand the bitterness of Pavel Smovzh, the Chairman of the

Council of Media Editors from the Kiev Region. His country is in the grip of conflict. In his mind, journalists must take sides, and speak their mind in support of one side or the other. Understandably, this inspired much debate on professional responsibility and the need to report facts. We all have our own version of the truth. The Director General of *Rossiyskaya Gazeta FSBI*, Pavel Negoitsa, advised compromise, suggesting that councils of experts be

PARTICIPANTS' SPEECHES



Lilia Ananich, Minister of Information:

New media, the Internet and social networks provide unlimited possibilities to quickly share huge volumes of information, and to rapidly receive commentary. At the same time, media negativity has the power to sway public opinion. It's vital today to establish and develop expert media platforms and information projects which are working for the sake of creation and which are generating constructive information flows. The Belarusian International Media Forum was planned as a uniting platform and we can say, with confidence, that it has fulfilled its task, continuing to develop effectively.

I feel sure that the media forum will inspire the creation of international projects, uniting creative and intellectual efforts by the global journalistic community. We can and should create new content: not from time to time, but systematically and purposefully, in constant creative interaction. Rather than the media being used for destructive purposes, it should encourage unity and professionalism. Fair and responsible journalism, observing the norms of professional etiquette, and corporate solidarity, would be a worthy reaction to the ideology of destruction. Today's world is closely integrated and interconnected, making it impossible to solve our shared problems without considering others' interests and through close liaison. Having consoli-

dated our efforts, we may effectively resist modern challenges and threats.

At times, the media is led down a path of reporting that brings social aggravation; nothing is sacred to those who initiate such manipulations, aiming to drive a wedge between countries and peoples. Modern history, unfortunately, gives us many such examples. Belarus rejects such a policy and such aspirations. Our information field, alongside the national mass media, mostly aspires to provide considered coverage of today's challenges. We'll do all we can to avoid Belarus' information field becoming an arena for an information war. We're compelled to find a new system of protecting the information field. It should be flexible, meeting modern requirements and, as a priority, protect citizens from falling victim to manipulative use of technologies. Meanwhile, we must uphold public access to information, as dictated by the Constitution."



Igor Buzovsky, Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration:

The structure of the modern information field has changed essentially over the last decade, as has become most apparent in the past year. Radio and print media, and television to a certain degree, have been overtaken by the Internet, as research carried out in Belarus tells us. This has been confirmed by media forum participants. Figures are impressive, especially

when analysed in practice, inspiring us to seek out ways of reorganising not only the media, but the spheres of economics, politics and social activity.

New conditions require a creative response. If the Internet has a certain advantage in its immediacy, traditional printing and electronic media sources should respond by focusing on analysis, as an 'antidote' to superficial sound-bites. While presenting the facts is crucial, the media also has a role to play in strategically directing our thinking: a more difficult and responsible task. It's nonsense to suppose that the role of the printed media, radio and television is reducing in significance. To achieve success, traditional media needs to synchronise its work to society, ensuring that it remains relevant.

It's vital that we create forums in which we can communicate directly, without translators, promoting the values significant to us, in an atmosphere of open discussion, supportiveness and constructive help. Our views will differ from time to time, since we bring our own perspective and experience, and this is valuable in itself. If the media space extends and develops, it can only be a good thing.



Igor Kotlyarov, Director of the Institute of Sociology, at the NAS:

Sociology is the fundamental science helping shape our state. It helps

reveal a huge number of problems and offers solutions. Sociology studies the efficiency of the media, revealing public opinion and electoral behaviour, as well as identifying regional features of development. We live in a time of acute political aggravation, worldwide, proceeding from the global economic crisis. Sociology offers some answers to pressing questions, and confirms that media in our country is fulfilling its role at a high level. Traditional media sources are experiencing various problems: primarily, a notable decrease in the quantity of good-quality analytical material. Nevertheless, I am convinced that the future belongs not to the Internet, but to traditional media outlets (if the media fulfils its role at an appropriate level). *Sovetskaya Belorussiya* is a doubtless leader and guide regarding analytical reporting, as confirmed by our research. I hope that it will continue so.



Ilgar Ismailov, Deputy Editor-in-chief of the newspaper Bakinsky Rabotschi (Azerbaijan):

My impressions of the Minsk forum are positive. The mood is excellent, bringing together real professionals of pen, radio and television. In our modern world, it's essential that we stay united. Current commemorations of the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory have the power to unite us. The forum offers much practical sense, and has been

attended by people able to defend our historical truth professionally. Across the whole post-Soviet territory, Belarus provides a competent patriotic education for young people, making it an ideal venue for this event. It's logical that Belarus has become seriously engaged in peacemaking, since true connoisseurs of peace grow from true patriots. It's vital that your country continue this work. Belarus' peacemaking efforts could replace those of the OSCE in post-Soviet territory.



Sergei Mikhailov, Chairman of CIS Information Council and General Director of Russia's TASS News Agency:

At present, we're observing attempts to downgrade the role of Soviet peoples in the victory over fascism and distort the Great Patriotic War history; this happens in some countries, including those which experienced losses during the war. On the year of the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory voices are heard and people come who are trying to rewrite the history — naming black white or vice versa and producing wishful thinking. This is a part of our reality now and we are facing certain information challenges and threats. In my view, it's simple to build up a reasonable information work in this case: we just need not to forget to tell the truth. We can recollect millions of those killed during the war

against modern background



Participants of 10th Belarusian International Media Forum in Minsk

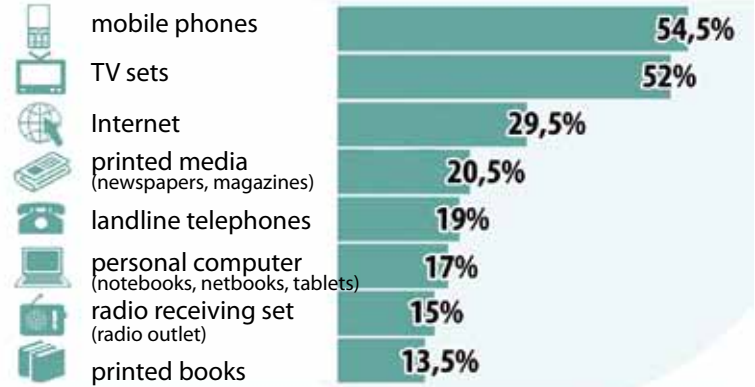
ALEXANDER RUZHICHKA



ALEXANDER RUZHICHKA

MASS MEDIA AND INTERNET IN BELARUSIANS' ASSESSMENTS

Sociologists determined without what Belarusians don't imagine their usual day:



According to the received data, **64.5%** of citizens above 18 are Internet users (against 62.5% in 2014):



Among those who log on almost daily young people (aged between 18 and 29) account for **41%**

Regular Internet audience is online*



used to help newspapers come closer to the truth. Attaining objectivity is no easy task.

It is a pity that many overestimate the power of the media to change our world. The Editor-in-chief of *SB. Belarus Segodnya*, Pavel Yakubovich, laments that 'truth silently sobs'. To avoid ambiguity in news reporting, we need to answer difficult questions, focusing on what our fathers battled for and with what they entrusted us. The Associate Professor of MGIMO, Kirill Koktysh, shared the same thought, noting that our national identity defines our moral compass. The goal of the media must be to guide us to wise opinions and judgements, based on fact.

PARTICIPANTS' SPEECHES

and that the Soviet Union was, no doubt, the key creator of the Victory. We'd produce a possibility for anyone wishing to say it's not truth to study historical materials. Any information war must be won!



Leonid Mlechin, international observer and anchorman, Russia's Honoured Worker of Culture:

Partnership — media in this case — is again discussed in Minsk; this fact is a merit of your President who's taken on a difficult yet important role in the complicated situation. This year, your President has become a key figure of the European politics and the mission he promotes is of major significance. Someone should have done this. Any efforts leading to stopping the conflict in the centre of Europe are extremely important. The result is evident: people who could have failed to meet in a different situation and different countries find possibilities here to talk and search for compromises. I think the reason is rooted in your mentality and the mental field of your state — which is much sympathised abroad. Belarusians' tolerance and judiciousness ability to make reasonable decisions create comfortable conditions for establishing partnership.

Importantly, the present Media Forum is dedicated to the Victory's 70th anniversary. In my mind, the

Great Patriotic War is not yet fully studied. Sadly, the famous slogan — 'Nobody and Nothing are Forgotten' does not reflect the reality to the full. I think of conventionalism of our approaches with sadness: new generations — who have not witnessed the war — demonstrate a kind of ritual, transforming the war into a holiday, computer games or blockbusters. However, a war is a tragedy and tears. Minsk's Forum makes it possible to remind of this again.



Roman Shkolin, Chairman of Eurasian Choice International Public Organization and co-ordinator of Eurasian Youth Parliament's initiative group:

Minsk's Media Forum creates positive impressions from the first minutes of its work. Serious participants and attendance of top media representatives enhance the Forum's practical significance and do credit to its organisers. The event's humanistic and even historical aspects are also important: as almost all participants and experts have mentioned, the more time passes since the Great Patriotic War, the more attempts are made to rewrite our common history. With this in mind, we aim to consolidate — not simply to preserve our historical memory of grandparents who died for the sake of our present peaceful sky

— but to be always ready to counterattack falsifications of the kind.



Begench Geldymamedov, Departmental Head of Yashlyk TV and Radio Channel (Turkmenistan):

Journalists should not allow corruption of the Great Patriotic War history. The media community aims to cover it accurately, ensuring that peace is preserved. 2015 is the Year of Peace in Turkmenistan and, with this in mind, I cannot but note Minsk's role in settling the Ukrainian conflict. Belarus acts as an efficient venue where it can be solved. We fully support these initiatives.



Kirill Koktysh, Associate Professor of Political Theory Department at Moscow's State Institute of International Relations:

Belarus is also searching for constructivism rather than trying to quarrel. Its assistance in settling the Ukrainian crisis has enabled Minsk to become a broker of the peaceful process in Eastern Europe. I think that all residents of this territory — especially those in Ukraine — are interested in peace. A war destroys the sense, economy and life itself. Expansion of the peaceful process

can become a kind of Belarus' specialisation which would be supported not only by Eastern Europe but the whole world.



Mikhail Gusman, First Deputy General Director of TASS News Agency:

This is the 10th International Media Forum hosted by Minsk and attracting journalists from the CIS and beyond. It long ago moved beyond the Commonwealth's borders, creating a wonderful opportunity to share experience and voice most topical problems of modern journalism. Interestingly, this year, it's devoted to a significant date: the 70th anniversary of victory in the Great Patriotic War. It's especially symbolic that the Media Forum is hosted by Minsk: a hero-city and a capital which was first to face and fight against the tragedy of fascist aggression. Several days after the beginning of the war, Belarusians demonstrated true heroism. Here, at the Forum, we are talking of the lessons and results of this war to avoid its repetition in the future and corruption of its history. Moreover, the issues of professional co-operation are in the focus of our attention. Journalists have topics for discussion, taking into consideration modern challenges. They need also to outline how mass media should work against speedy Internet development.



Franke Peter, Editor-in-Chief of Wostok magazine (Germany):

For us, recollections of WWII are the most precious at this Forum. We'd love to pass this knowledge to a growing generation and understand that this should be done right now. Taking into consideration the fact that information — including about the war — is covered biased by mass media in Germany, the moment can be lost. I hope I'll manage to talk to foreign colleagues, sharing our experience.



Natalia Koneva, daughter of USSR Marshal Ivan Konev and Chair of Victory Commanders' Memory Fund (Russia):

While revealing the theme of war, journalists must preserve names. Apprehension through a personality and individuality produces a warm and sincere understanding of what happened then and what is going on at present. I'd love mass media to cover this in details. Pleasingly, many heirs and descendants of those who fought in the war wish to preserve this memory. This mood was in the air in Moscow when thousands of people participated in the Immortal Regiment event.

Fuelling economy of bright impressions

Unique *Belarus N* project (its 'N' standing for 'New') launched by Belarusneft Production Association, through its fuelling stations, and a communication agency — aiming to enhance Belarus' tourist attractiveness

By Dmitry Makhotkin

On visiting a fuelling station, we often grab something to eat, or buy a souvenir. Moreover, there's usually some information available on local attractions, guiding us towards an agro-mansion, for example, or sites where we can see local folk crafts, ethnographic, culinary or architectural traditions and natural beauty. Agro-mansion owners have been developing this path with specialists from Country Escape Association of Agro- and Ecotourism, liaising with company heads and representatives of local authorities and recreation sites. If properly organised, revenue could rival that of the mining industry!

Belarus N envisages the launch of the first tourist Internet portal (initially in Russian and, later, in English), with ratings of thematic routes and recreation sites, in addition to a system of online booking and payment. Additionally, a mobile application is being developed, as well as a souvenir paper catalogue (to be distributed via Belarusneft network stations). The advertising campaign should inspire agro-tourism, as well as bringing trade to the hotel and restaurant business, and pushing forward small businesses' original ideas and initiatives.



Belorusneft working to enhance the country's tourist attractiveness

The project is based on direct state interest, with growing exports of tourist services guaranteeing new jobs, business development in rural areas and, eventually, tax revenue. "Initially, we planned to organise advertising support for agro-mansions situated near Belarusneft stations," comments the Director of NEF Group, Oleg Romanov. "However, growing interest inspired us to reconsider, taking a wider view. We're planning 'Syrny' (cheese), 'Pivnoy' (beer), 'Rytsarksy' (knight), 'Vodny' (water) and 'Banny' (washing) routes:

15 promising avenues at the initial stage. All *Belarus N* tours begin from a Belarusneft station, aimed at all ages and devised to a certain standard. Our 'Syrny' route envisages visiting the Cheese Museum and Myshiny Dom (Mouse House) agro-mansion, as well as taking lessons in cow milking and enjoying an open air fondue. Further excursions are planned by an entrepreneur, who will take responsibility for development."

As the Deputy General Director of Belarusneft Production Association, Sergey Kamornikov, tells us,

the project launches this autumn, with 50 fuelling stations becoming starting points in the first year of operation. Overall, the company runs 546 stations countrywide and, by the end of the year, another 16 will have opened, unified by the same working rules.

The *Belarus N* programme also envisages professional monitoring of recreation sites and thematic routes, with a rating applied, to guide tourists in planning their excursions; there will even be special awards for branch leaders, to recognise their efforts.

No museum without fire

By Artem Kiryanov

Brest rescuers to open own multimedia museum

Two halls inside the Centre of Propaganda and Public Relations, at the Brest Regional Administration of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, are to house the exhibition. The Border Together for Safety international technical assistance association is helping organise the event, having helped with two similar museums: in Polish Biala Podlaska and Ukrainian Lutsk.

Sergey Mashnov, the Press Secretary of Brest's Regional Administration of the Ministry of Emergency Situations, notes that the museum aims to show the development of the Brest Region's fire service, featuring over 200 exhibits. Insignia, clothing and protective equipment are on display alongside copies of historical documents, awards and gifts from foreign colleagues.

Mr. Mashnov tells us, "One of the most valuable exhibits is the *Pozharny* (Fireman) journal from 1895, with a special report on the 'Brest disaster': a fire which nearly destroyed the city. Our staff have helped create the museum, designing displays and seeking out documents from archives. We haven't just focused on the history of fire-fighting but on modern capabilities and the training of young people."

He adds that the museum has already welcomed some 'trial' tour groups. Visitors can enjoy films relating to fire prevention and can take part in evacuation training (with a smoke machine adding realism). In addition, the new museum is equipped with touchscreen information terminals, where visitors can check their retention of knowledge.

Making wheels free of dirt and dust

By Anastasia Shoplya

Your bonnet, bumper and body of your car may shine but ecologists are more concerned by the cleanliness of your wheels

Heavy vehicles leaving construction sites have a tendency to take dust and dirt with them, which then dries and fills the atmosphere. It's a particular problem in the warmer months, and in Minsk.

We all like to breathe clean air and Belarus generally boasts good air quality, notes the Deputy Chair of the Minsk City Committee of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Natalia Aleinikova. However, monitoring stations record increased concentrations of



Ecologists fight for clean transport

dust in the air during dry weather, explains Ms. Aleinikova. She tells us, "One reason for this phenomenon is dust accumulating on roads. In dry weather, each car speeding past raises a cloud of dust. Of course, we recommend that Belremavtodor water the streets more often in hot weather, but this just deals with the 'results'. One of the main causes of the problem stems from vehicles leaving construction sites; they should be washed but it doesn't always happen."

Ms. Aleinikova is convinced that other major Belarusian cities experience similar problems from trucks leaving construction sites in dry weather. One set of tyres can carry around 5kg of sand and clay and each site may have hundreds of

large vehicles arriving and leaving, transporting dirt on their wheels as they go. Sooner or later, this ends up in our lungs.

Ecologists working under Ms. Aleinikova have examined more than 200 construction sites and found that about one third of them are either not equipped with posts for cleaning wheels or simply don't use them. She comments, "A number of other organisations are concerned about this issue and we've been instructed to bring the situation under control. We'll re-inspect problematic sites to see what has been done and what remains to be achieved. We can say already that the situation has moved from a dead point, as city administrations have taken up the issue."

World Wide Web unfolds more than ever before

By Alexander Novikov

Over the past 15 years, the number of Internet users has increased almost seven-fold, BelTA learns from UN News Centre

Unprecedented development of information and communication technologies has opened up colossal opportunities for socio-economic development worldwide, with 3.2bn having access to the Internet. Of these, 2bn reside in developing states, according to a new report by the International Telecommunication Union (ITU).

The report also notes that, this year, the number of mobile subscribers has exceeded 7bn worldwide (against 738m in 2000).

ITU Secretary-General Houlin Zhao notes, "This new data testifies



Houlin Zhao

to current rapid technological progress while reveal those who remain outside our quickly developing digital economy, and those spheres urgently needing investment."

Between 2000 and 2015, the number of Internet users has risen from 6.5 percent to 43 percent of the world population. Nevertheless, 4bn people in developing countries lack access.

Notes on guide's margins

Belarus is often mentioned as being attractive to international tourism, with almost 40 percent of Russians viewing our country as the best holiday destination and Western magazines and specialised editions paying ever more attention to our tourist infrastructure. A Belarusian language guide (now in its third edition) has a special role to play, authored by Nigel Roberts.



Mir Castle

By Roman Dubovets

Nigel, tell us about yourself and your guide to Belarus, which is proving a great success in English-language Europe...

I worked as a lawyer in England for 30 years and am now travelling and writing my impressions. I first visited Belarus in November 2001 and, after three short trips, I wondered why no guides existed in Europe. I decided to become the first to compile one, and the first edition was ready in 2008: 405 copies sold. In 2011, the second edition was released, with the same circulation, and also sold successfully. Not long ago, the third edition was published and is now the primary guide to Belarus in the English language. I hope my book will become a window through which foreigners may view your country. You really have sights worth visiting.

Nigel, there is another guide to Belarus published in the EU, compiled by Michel Renaud: a French journalist and founder of Association Il Faut Aller Voir (France's Association of Travellers). Belarus is explored alongside Russia and Ukraine. Your guide differs in being fully devoted to Belarus. Can you tell us the reason?

I wanted to present Belarus as a unique country. When I came here for the first time, I was reminded of the USSR, which I visited in the early 1990s. However, I soon realised that Belarus has its own zest: much can be seen here which exists nowhere else — including Russia. No doubt, such a country deserves its own guide. Belarus is changing and I'm getting to know it better over time. Its tourist infrastructure has also improved.

There are other indications that foreigners are demonstrating increasing interest in Belarus. Not long ago, British Business Insider compared Belarusian restaurants and cafes



favourably with Italian. Do you agree?

Partially: many Belarusian cafes and restaurants worthily rival those in Europe. Of course, some lag behind, as happens everywhere — including in Paris, London and Berlin. However, I should stress that the standard in Belarus is high.

What should be done, in your opinion, to enhance Belarus' attractiveness to foreigners?

From my own experience, it's necessary to provide open and accessible information to the rest of the world: literature devoted to the country, facts on museums and historical sights, and all sorts of brochures. You do have some but more are needed. Much information can be found online but you should look at how IT has promoted tourist infrastructure for other countries, learning from their example.

The High-Tech Park in Belarus is home to companies developing technological solutions to spheres of public life: Minsk's public transport system is now completely automated, offering passengers detailed information on routes and transport schedules. Do you think we need a similar high-tech system for tourist infrastructure?

That's a great idea. Modern tourists always want access to the latest information.



English-language guide to Belarus

Walking along the street, they use their phone to locate what's available nearby and the opening hours. My book offers general information on these places; found on Google and my publisher's site. However, we often need more information and IT is a great help.

Mr. Renaud, whom I knew well, loved to say that he appreciated the 'spirit of the country' today more than cold stones of historical buildings. This can be

felt not only in Minsk but in remote Belarusian districts. In recent times, our Government has focused on developing agro-tourism. Do you see good prospects in this field?

Definitely. I love Minsk but like the Gomel Region even more. After a five-hour train ride to the region, I felt that I'd arrived in the heart of the country. In improving tourist infrastructure, you need to be careful not to lose your unique atmosphere.



From my own experience, it's necessary to provide open and accessible information to the rest of the world: literature devoted to the country, facts on museums and historical sights, and all sorts of brochures.

Vetka, near Gomel, is an ordinary provincial town but has a world-class museum, with a rich collection of icons, old books and rushniks. Many interesting things can be found beyond large cities and I hope my guide will help tourists in this respect. Meanwhile, monuments also play their role. The cover of my recent edition features Brest Fortress: perfectly symbolising the spirit of the Belarusian nation.

One of the High-Tech Park's tasks is to promote Belarus as a country with advanced technologies, moving along a path of knowledge development. Our achievements in this field have been recognised by many high-tech companies. Do you think others beyond business circles may believe this image?

Belarus does some things better than elsewhere globally — including the European Union. It's vital to spread the word with wise media coverage. This can greatly influence how you are treated. With this in mind, I'm happy to hear that high technologies are successfully developing in your country. I'm convinced that your achievements will be recognised.

You are among those who reveal the real image of our country. As your guide is now in its third edition, we can assume it's popular in the UK. Are prospects for closer co-operation opening up between our country and the EU?

I'm convinced that this is the case. One of the aspects really enhancing Belarus' reputation in the West is the role played by your country in aiming to reach a peaceful settlement for the Ukrainian situation. Having provided Minsk as a venue for talks between participants of the conflict and the region's leaders, your President topped world politics. Such recognition of the leadership's significance benefits the country. It's now vital to build upon this success, allowing foreign investors to participate in joint projects and jointly develop promising avenues for mutual benefit.

We may need to publish business guides...

This would be beneficial, especially if available online.

Athens protest warns Greek government against its debt deal

With Greece under constant international pressure to make more cuts and reforms to secure bailout money — at home there was a strong warning not to cave in

This time, here were demonstrators — led by Communist-affiliated trade unions — afraid that the anti-austerity Syriza government is about to copy them.

“The government is ready to make a deal that will pave the way for an agreement with lots of unpopular austerity measures,” said Dimitris Koutsoubas, General Secretary of the Greek Communist Party.

“This protest sends a message showing our determination to fight against all new measures aiming to continue the austerity,” another



Thousands of people demonstrate against the Greek government's austerity policies

male demonstrator added.

Greece wants a cash-for-reforms deal from international creditors — who are thought to be insisting on more movement on labour reform,

taxes and pensions.

In spite of sporadic protests like this one Mr. Tsipras' radical left-wing government still enjoys high rates of popularity among the

voters. The question is whether his popularity will continue if the new agreement with the country's international lenders contains more austerity.

African free trade agreement to be signed in Egypt

The leaders of 26 African nations have been laying the groundwork for an African Free Trade Union in the resort of Sharm El-Sheikh in Egypt

Behind closed doors ministers of the three African economic blocs: the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA), the South African Development Community (SADC), and the East African Community (EAC) have been discussing the deal that is expected to be signed on June 19th.

The merger of the three groups will see a trade zone that expands from Cairo to Capetown representing 60 percent of the continent's GDP and 52 percent of its population.

Francis Mangeni is the Director of Trade, Customs and Monetary Affairs for COMESA, notes, “This is a landmark. It's a milestone in the history of Africa; and the reason why is because you now are going to have a free trade area, a single economic space covering half of Africa, so that's unprecedented.”

Once signed a timetable for implementing the agreement will be decided at a later meeting. Access to economic integration between African countries still faces many difficulties, notably the readiness of the infrastructure of these countries.

Poor growth forces out Twitter CEO

Wall Street's lost faith in Twitter, causing CEO Dick Costolo to announce his resignation

Investors are worried about the social media giant's slow user growth and its inability to compete for advertising with the likes of Facebook. The company's shares jumped nearly 8 percent on the news as co-founder Jack Dorsey agreed to step into to the role temporarily. Twitter says it'll search for a replacement inside and outside the company.

First Atlantic locks flooded in new Panama Canal

The new Panama Canal is near 90 percent complete, and a test stretch on the Atlantic coastline was flooded for the first time

Testing of the Agua Fria locks will then follow over the next few months with the end of all works scheduled for the end of next April. The expansion project began in 2007 and is two years behind schedule after a number of setbacks, but it should significantly increase the canal's current 320 million tonnes a year freight capacity, or five percent of the world's maritime trade. The upgrade will also more than double the size of ship the canal can handle.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Restarting of the Large Hadron Collider

Large Hadron Collider ready to embark on an unprecedented voyage

They have been waiting for this moment for 27-months; it's a breathless, anxious wait as scientists scan screens searching for the smallest of signals

Recently CERN Large Hadron Collider (LHC) started providing new physics data after a two year shutdown for improvements.

The LHC is now initiating collisions at a record energy of 13 TeV, the highest collision energy reached in the history of physics.

Scientists believe this will open a new scientific chapter and more importantly a deeper understanding of our universe.

Rolf Heuer is the outgoing director general at CERN, “I think we are living a fantastic moment, a great moment collision at 13 TeV for physics.”

The team are searching for the smallest building blocks of matter, as well as explaining existing phenomena such as dark matter, an invisible form of matter that makes up 27 percent of the entire mass of the universe.

Seoul takes economic actions to cushion the impacts of MERS

The respiratory infection known as MERS has parts of South Korea verging on paralysis

One village, Jangduk, 280 kilometres south of the capital Seoul, has been under quarantine for more than a week — with sentries and road-blocks — after an elderly widow returned from a hospital for unrelated treatment but then tested positive.

Now Koreans are even afraid to go to hospital. The Samsung Medical Centre where most of Korea's MERS cases are being monitored has seen a 40 percent decline in patients, and many appointment cancellations.

Public transport in Seoul has a fraction of its usual commuter load. The subway normally carries some 4.5 million passengers per day. The company said that fell to two million. Official Kim Kwang-Heum



Panic mounts over MERS virus

went further, “After MERS hit, the number declined to 10 percent, which is 450,000 per day. We usually fumigate trains once a week, but Seoul Metro has started doing that every day, to prevent the spread of MERS and protect passengers.” Entire economic sectors have felt the impact of MERS, notably leisure activities. Jamsil baseball stadium has been almost half empty, for games of Koreans' favourite sport.

Students, as well as lecturers celebrate alma-mater's jubilee with artistic reports

The Republican Art Gallery in Minsk hosts exhibition devoted to 70th anniversary since the establishment of the Belarusian State Academy of Arts

By Veniamin Mikheev

The show continues the Academy's tradition of preparing an artistic report on its activity for the Belarusian public, in connection with landmark dates. As a rule, exhibitions — including the present show — demonstrate the achievements of the Art Department and the Department of Design and Decorative and Applied Arts. This November, there will be an artistic report of the Theatrical Department and the Department of Film-making.

At present, the Belarusian State Academy of Arts is one of the country's leading artistic higher educational establishments. Unsurprisingly, staff at national art schools and institutions of fine arts and design tend to be Academy alumni; they also account for most members of the Belarusian Union of Artists and the Belarusian Union of Designers.

Among the Academy's lecturers are the best masters of Belarus' fine arts: People's Artist V. Tovstik, as well as V. Zinkevich, A. Finsky, P. Tatarnikov, A. Artimovich, V. Slauk and other highly professional teachers. They have all made great contributions to the development of national fine arts and design. As a result of their lecturing, they've shared their expertise and diverse artistic approaches with students; through their work, they have gained international recognition for their academic mastery and conceptual experimentation.

Owing to the efforts of qualified lecturers, many talented students have been inspired to follow their own path, even without completing their academic courses. The mosaic decorations on the façade of



Diversity of genres at exhibition marking Academy of Arts' jubilee

Minsk's All Saints Church were created under the guidance of D. Chubukov, as were the church paintings in the village of Barkolabovo, in the Mogilev Region's Bykhov District. Young teacher K. Kostyuchenko designed the Gates of Memory memorial composition, on the site of the former Trostenets concentration camp. The present show at the Palace of Arts features his work: as previously showcased at the 2011 International Biennale of Arts in Venice.

The show features works by representatives of the Art Department and the Department of Design and Decora-

tive and Applied Arts, created over the past five years. The Art Department — which launched in 1953 — presents modern easel painting, theatrical-decorative art, fine solutions for films, easel and book graphics, as well as the best educational drawings, pieces of monumental-decorative art, works by student-restorers and sculptures. In addition, works by department lecturers are on show, by such acknowledged masters



as V. Zinkevich, V. Tovstik, Y. Khilko and P. Tatarnikov. There are also works by members of the young generation: A. Vyryva, K. Kostyuchenko, V. Malakhov, V. Melnik-Malakhova, A. Skorobogataya and A. Yaroshevich.

The Department of Design and Decorative and Applied Arts — founded in 1976



of works, from traditional decorative and applied arts to the latest developments in the field of design. Among them is a model for a new passenger car (made by an Academy student during his internship at a German car company). There is also a decorative fountain, devoted to legendary Lake Svityaz (often mentioned in our domestic poetry) and an interesting clothing collection, influenced by traditions of Belarusian folk material-and-art culture. There are collections of artistic glass and metal and samples of furniture, in addition to projects of diverse interiors, and a series of posters and video films devoted to topical events in Belarus' modern life and history. Overall, the exhibition leaves

a bright and vivid impression of our achievements in decorative and applied arts and the state of modern design in Belarus.

Among the department's alumni are winners of Republican and international contests and

— is a unique school uniting seven chairs: of decorative and applied arts; of costume and textiles; of industrial design; of graphic design; of interior and

equipment; of theory and history of design; of drawing, painting and sculpture. These train specialists across ten specialities and seven specialisations.

The exhibition presents diploma and course papers by department students, enabling anyone to gain acquaintance with a wide range

Olympiads, as well as scholarship holders of the Belarusian President's Special Fund for the Support of Talented Youth. Students of the Virtual Environment Design course have included D. Kornienko, I. Yukhnevich and R. Myazitov: all winners of the Youth Delphic Games of the CIS (2005, 2008 and 2010).

The high quality of training offered by the Art Department and the Department of Design and Decorative and Applied Arts is confirmed by their alumni's popularity at such leading companies as BELAZ, Amkodor, Atlant, Vityaz, Belkommunmash, Minsk's Wheel Tractor Plant, Neman Glassworks, Belarusfilm National Film Studio and the National State TV and Radio Company.

Festival action to beat of polonaise

The 11th *Polonaise-2015* Festival, hosted by Slonim, has welcomed amateurs and connoisseurs of fine art traditions, with guests in costume gathering near the city's public garden for a fancy-dress procession, accompanied by drums and brass band, through the historical centre to the Palace of Culture, for a concert

By Katerina Charovskaya

The *Polonaise* has long since become more than a provincial folk festival, involving local residents and authorities in promoting the creative legacy of one of the best known historic figures of Eastern Europe, Michał Kleofas Ogiński. From its origins as a 'low-budget' provincial festival of Polish culture, the holiday has become a notable cultural event of international significance, as noted by the Chairman of the Slonim District Executive Committee, Oleg Targonsky.

Greeting visitors of the festival, Mr. Targonsky could not resist declaring, "In its years of existence, the festival has hosted hundreds of unforgettable works from its stage. Noble gentlemen have been creating an incomparable atmosphere since time immemorial, dancing with their chosen ones, with great

feeling. This is a real holiday, uniting deep respect for the present and the past, in our Slonim District."

In 2004, when the first festival was held, it had a narrower scope than today, explains Leonarda Revkovskaya, the Chair of the Slonim Department of the Union of Poles in Belarus, who initiated the foundations of the holiday. She recollects with a smile how she paid the expenses of the event, nurturing the festival to life. She explains that, these days, street traffic is stopped for the celebratory procession. Originally, those few parading simply used the pavements, manoeuvring between passers-by. No longer so modest, the event is popular with guests from Poland and Belarus, as well as others from abroad. This year, 22 participants joined the festival, including those from foreign nations. She tells us, "I'm very grateful to regional and district ex-



Festival in Slonim bright and colourful in every fashion

ecutive committees for having supported the idea, and for undertaking the lion's share of expenses and organisational efforts. We, Poles of Belarus, now have a good platform from which to develop our culture."

Visitors from Polish Bielsk Podlaski fully agree, having received a great ovation for their *Vasilechki* folk group. Participants have been acquainting Poles with Belarusian culture for the past 50 years and believe it to be no less important to popularise Polish culture in Belarus. The Art Director of *Vasilechki*, Nikolay Fadin, is convinced that neither diaspora should forget its roots. He underlines, "We are rep-

resentatives of the Belarusian diaspora in Poland, with a repertoire of Belarusian songs. On receiving an invitation to the festival of Polish culture, we didn't hesitate, performing a Polish song at the combined concert, while reserving the rest for our solo concert."

Recently, Ms. Revkovskaya received an invitation to go to Warsaw, for the first Polish polonaise festival. The Warsaw dance group comes to Slonim every year, so its participants decided to organise a similar activity in Poland. "It turns out that Slonim not only learns from Warsaw, but Warsaw learns from us," smiles Leonarda.

Knights in gold, silver and bronze

By Eduard Ponomarev

Belarusian cinematographs earn three awards at 24th International Zolotoy Vityaz Slavonic Film Festival, hosted by Sevastopol

Irina Tarasova's *Spoon for the Soldier* animated film has been awarded the Golden Knight statuette by the jury. The Silver Knight in the same nomination went to *Rondo Capriccioso*, by Igor Volchek, while Yelena Turova received the Bronze Knight for her children's film, *The Kindervileyka Ghost*.

Belarusian filmmakers also received special prizes. Irina Tarasova's *Spoon for the Soldier* was named best animated film for children while Yekaterina Makhova was awarded for her *Father Herman*: a documentary dedicated to a man finding his faith. Igor Vasiliev received a special prize for preservation of national literary tradition for his debut, *The In-Laws*.

Kusturica expresses attitude to war in *Underground*

By Anastasia Shoplya

Emir Kusturica to shoot film on Belarusian partisans

"Everything in Yugoslavia has been destroyed by time and war," notes Emir. "Only ruins remain of our magnificent medieval Serbian civilisation. I want to restore the connection with ancient times so I've constructed the city of Andrićgrad. Our Slavic Film Academy invites talented documentary filmmakers from Russia and Belarus to study."

Is it difficult to be successful in the world of cinema these days?

Yes, it's like suicide! It is hard work. Whoever thinks that shooting a film is a simple matter is mistaken. I'm glad that you've visited Andrićgrad. The city was born as a phantom, to inspire new ideas. Recently, I completed a serious film, entitled 'On the Milky Road'.

What is it about?

It's about the love of a man for a woman, set against the background of the Balkan War. I act in it with Monica Bellucci; she's a great friend and a wonderful actress. Her heroine sacrifices all for love; it's a theme I've long wanted to explore. Monica plays a woman half Italian and half Serbian, in love with a soldier, but speaks in Serbian for the film. It will be shown at the Cannes International Film Festival. Many years ago, Monica and I met there.

What inspired your film about guerrilla warfare?

They endured many hardships: cold, hunger, illness and wounds. Serbs and Belarusians have much in common and I make a film when I feel there is occasion to do so. My education is based on Russian literature. I also have a book entitled 'Death is an Unverified Rumour'.

When will you begin shooting?

As soon as I finish editing 'On the Milky Road' and have shown it in Cannes.

Museum exhibition treasure trove

By Artem Kiryanov

Founded in 1926, Museum of Belarusian Polesie in Pinsk moves into magnificent former Jesuit Collegium

Last autumn, Pinsk welcomed the *Dozhinki* regional festival, its town centre altering beyond recognition. Residential houses were reconstructed in the central square and a section of Lenin Street (close to the square) was brought into order. Moreover, the town's Culture House was completely renovated and part of Pervomaiskaya Street became pedestrianised.

The former Jesuit Collegium building also changed its appearance, with more than Br1bn spent on repairing and painting facades, and having new external illuminations fitted, ensuring that it sparkles through the night. Its grounds have been landscaped, making them an inviting gathering place for young people on a warm evening.

The 70 *Victorious Years* exhibition marks the 70th anniversary of the Great Victory, with the museum hosting a gallery of partisan glory,



Exhibitions at Pinsk museum

and a permanent exhibition entitled *Pinsk Land in the Years of the Great Patriotic War*. Its *Childhood Burned by War* displays, aimed at school students, feature multimedia and sound equipment, ensuring great interest from younger visitors; their number increases year on year.

The Pinsk museum is a treasure box of rare, diverse and fascinating items: a Varangian fork, an amphora fragment, a 12th century ceramic tile, woolly rhinoceros bones, a royal

charter, an 18th century Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, even, a wooden bicycle. Displayed by theme or period, a walk through these exhibits is both inspiring and overwhelming. History almost seems to assail us.

Certain simple pieces stand out — such as a calendar left open on June 22nd, 1941. However, without their own individual cabinet and special illumination, it's easy for such items to 'disappear' among the mass

of artefacts. Some 'redesigning' is necessary to make the most of particular pieces.

Although its 'external face' is already finished, and well-polished, the interior layout, with its numerous halls and exhibits, needs an urgent 'reload', to ensure maximum enjoyment for visitors. A cohesive artistic concept is needed, taking into account the architectural features of the Jesuit Collegium. Individually-tailored show-cabinets and special illumination, as well as general design, are vital to creating an attractive museum space. Such work comes at a price (at least Br1bn) but such funds are unlikely to be available any time soon. The Deputy Chairman of the Pinsk City Executive Committee, Alexander Kanevsky, explains that, since last year, the Collegium grounds have been under development and landscaping. Of course, it will take time to achieve change at the Museum of Belarusian Polesie. It took five years to partially update Brest's Regional Local History Museum. As the Pinsk building is much bigger, it is likely to take far longer. However, all good things are worth waiting for.

Losing with minor margin but leaving bright impressions

Belarusian footballers lose to acting champions of the continent — Spain — in a selective match of 2016 European Championship

By Alexander Grishin

The Belarusian national team's coaches failed to send the strongest line-up to the match against Spain. Due to different reasons, Timofey Kalachev, Maxim Zhavnerchik, Sergey Balanovich and some other footballers of the key line-up did not attend. Nevertheless, the Belarusian players gathered at overcrowded Borisov-Arena to fight severely against their more experienced rivals. In the first half, Spaniards fully led the initiative but Alexander Khatskevich's trainees skilfully performed in defence, while goalkeeper Andrey Gorbunov well coped with his task. However, in the last minute of the first half, Andrey made a mistake in a side attack and Spain's experienced forward David Silva immediately used the situation. After the break, Belarusians demonstrated a more active game which was really unexpected by their star guests. The hosts several times confidently attacked the goals of 'red fury' — defended by goalkeeper Iker Casillas; sadly, they failed to equalise the score.

After the match, journalists at the press centre voiced a view that the game truly lacked Timofey Kalachev who secretly left the team on Saturday. Moreover, Alexander Hleb demonstrated not his best performance and Sergey Kornilenko —



A moment of match between Belarusian and Spanish national squads: Alexander Hleb in action

who celebrated his 32nd birthday of June 14th — was probably too much excited. However, all those facts were not so much important.

Our team is unlikely to rise

higher than the fourth place in the table, although it is to play against Ukraine, Luxembourg, Slovakia and Macedonia. However, its fans applauded in standing for around

ten minutes after the match against 'red fury' — crying: 'You are great!' With this in view, it's possible to assert that not only Spaniards won the Borisov-Arena match on June 14th.



Playing against Bosnia and Herzegovina handballers

Beneficial outcome

By Igor Leshin

Away match against Bosnia and Herzegovina ends in 22:22 draw, with Belarusian handballers' place in European Championship finals riding on last match of group stage

The match in Bosnia's Zenica could have guaranteed Belarus' ticket to the finals. The away match draw followed a 25:25 home draw: clear victory in either would have paved the way to immediate qualification, with the same true for the rival. Sergey Rutenko made a final attack on the Bosnian net less than a minute

before the whistle, without success, and the rival team made repeated attempts at Belarus' goal, saved by Ivan Matskevich. Meanwhile, the final match of the 2016 European Championship selective tournament was performed by Belarusian handballers at a high level, leaving no chance to their Lithuanian rivals — 31:24. In the parallel match, the group leader — Dutch — defeated Bosnians in a tough struggle. That outcome was to Belarus' benefit: our country has preserved the second position in the tournament table, receiving a pass to the 2016 European Championship.

Knights of five qualities

By Kirill Karin

Minsk hosts finals of Modern Pentathlon World Cup, with teams from ten countries competing for medals in mixed relay on first day

Belarusians took the lead after the first programme event of fencing, with 26 match wins. In the swimming and horse riding, Yekaterina Orel and Ilya Polozkov both finished sixth but, in their sum of points across all events, remained at the top of the tournament ratings.

In the combined event of running and shooting, Belarusian pentathletes came third, but gained enough points to celebrate their first ever win in the World Cup mixed relay finals.

After the awards ceremony,



Yekaterina Orel and Ilya Polozkov

Yekaterina Orel and Ilya Polozkov admitted, "We were delighted to have managed a secure leadership from the first event until the last. We performed well in fencing and that motivated us to carry on, making further events easier. The Irish were among our strongest rivals, having many times confirmed their lead in mixed relays. We're glad to have surpassed them. Of course, our fans helped us. It's also been an advantage to have performed at home in such a high level competition. This has been the best ever tournament for us as regards organisation."

First games of Old World

Baku's National Stadium hosts opening ceremony of 1st European Games

The scenario of the European Games' opening ceremony was based on Azerbaijan's unique culture and history. The ceremony took place at the National Stadium, featuring famous Azerbaijani singer — Alim Qasimov. Around a thousand of dancers created a carpet (a national symbol of the country) in the centre of arena. Lightening of the first European Games' flame was also bright and spectacular. A torch was brought to the stadium by a famous Azerbaijani Paralympic sportsman, Ilham Zakiyev, and a taekwondo winner of Nanjing 2014 Youth Olympic Games, Said Guliyev. The fire — symbolising an element of Azerbaijan — was placed into a special capsule in the centre of arena, to be distributed into improvised cracks of soil. During the ceremony, it was moved to a stone disk and raised beneath the roof of the National Stadium.

Competitions then began and, on the first day, our Belarusian Greco-Roman wrestlers captured bronze and silver. Victor Sosunovsky and Soslan Daurov were awarded medals. In the small finals, Victor defeated a two time world champion among military — Ukraine's Alexander Shishman — to win bronze. Silver went to Soslan. Becoming the first Belarusian medalist at Baku's Games, Soslan virtually irradiated confidence that the Belarusian team would further please its fans. He proved to be fully correct. Next day, weightlifter Iosif Chugoshvili won bronze for his performance in the 130kg category.

The beginning is promising and we hope the success would be further continued.

Playing Czechs to win pass

By Igor Leshin

Swiss Nyon hosts draw for European Mini Football Championship's play-off matches, with Belarus to face Czechs

In its fight for a place in the continental event finals, the Belarusian team will play the Czech squad twice. Vladimir Ignatik's trainees are to play their first match (away) on September 15th and, on September 22nd, will meet their rivals on the home field. In the group stage of the European Championship-2016 selection round, Belarus played in the third qualification group, in Polish Krosno. There, our guys smashed Finland (2:0), drew against the Poles (0:0) and lost to the Italians (1:2). In the fifth qualification group, the Czech team beat France (5:3) and Norway (4:0), but lost to Slovenia (1:3). The final stage of the European Mini Football Championship will be hosted by Serbia's Belgrade, in February 2016. It will gather the top twelve teams from Europe. So far, eight are known: Serbia (the host), Spain, Italy, Ukraine, Portugal, Russia, Slovenia and Croatia. Each has a direct pass, as a result of the major qualification round.

Evening of the week



Alumni of secondary schools from Kostyukovich District festively parade through streets of district centre

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 28th June. *I'm Simply in Remote Trip...*

Until 13th July. *Touch of Britain. 18th-19th Centuries British Art*

Until 31st July. *Art at Finger Tips*

Until 6th September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*

Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*

Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 28th August. *Boletus: Beauty is their Family*

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

Until 31st August. *Feeling of the Colour*

WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

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

NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 31st August. *Feeling of the Colour*

ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

121 Kalinovsky Street

Until 30th August. International festival of sand sculptures

MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE

5 Muzykalny Lane

Until 31st July. *Ballad About White Cherry* exhibition

MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street

Until 1st December. *Maxim's Garden*

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

19.06. Ballet Summer at Bolshoi Theatre: Laurencia; Musical Evenings at Bolshoi Theatre: Tenors against Bass Singers

21.06. Ballet Summer at Bolshoi Theatre: Romeo and Juliet

22.06. Ballet Summer at Bolshoi Theatre: Giselle, ou les Wilis; Opera Masterpieces

23.06. Ballet Summer at Bolshoi Theatre: Who am I?; Six Dances

24.06. Ballet Summer at Bolshoi Theatre: a gala-concert

25.06. Night of Romance

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

19.06. The Torchalov Passion

20 and 25.06. Lend Me a Tenor

21.06. An Incident in Dark Room

22.06. Casting

23.06. Leonardo

24.06. Cradle Song for Hamlet

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

21.06. The Dinner Game

22 and 23.06. The Seagull

24.06. Pinsk Gentry

25.06. The Boor

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

20.06. Love Circle

21.06. A Husband Leaves His Wife

24.06. Tricks of Khanuma

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

19 and 20.06. A Very Simple Story

21 and 23.06. No One Ever Said Life Would Be Easy

25.06. The Makropoulos Case

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

19.06. Artichoke II

22.06. Dzed

23.06. A Two Dogs' Tale; Three Giselles

24.06. The Sea Wolf; The Contract

25.06. Five-finger exercises

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

June of decades and centuries past comes to life

June 19th. In 1955, a Belarusian architect (Minsk's Chief Architect in 1994) — Anatoly Nichkasov — was born.

June 20th. In 1939, Valery Raevsky — a Belarusian film director, teacher, Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus and People's Artiste of Belarus — was born.

June 23rd. In 1920, a USSR Hero — Pavel Krivonos — was born in the village of Alkhovka of the Klichev District. On June 27th, 1944, he shielded the commander's tank with his own vehicle.

June 24th. In 1900, Belarusian writer Kuzma Chorny (Nikolay Romanovsky) was born in the village of Borki (now located in the Kopyl District).

June 25th. In 1940, an operatic singer and Honoured Artiste — Victor Strelchenya — was born in Gomel. Since 1974, he was a soloist at the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre.

June 19th. In 1952, construction of an academic building of the Radio-technical College and a hostel for lecturers began.

June 19th. In 1954, the

Football School of Youth was set up at the Physical Culture Institute.

June 20th. In 1637, Ruzhany (now a town in the Pruzhany District) received the Magdeburg Right.

June 20th. In 1922, the first pioneer brigade was formed in Belarus.



June 20th. In 1923, first alumni graduated from the Minsk Belarusian Pedagogical College.

June 20th. In 1926, the emergency medical aid was established.

June 20th. In 1948, a branch of the Literary House-Museum opened in Yanka Kupala's homeland: the village of Vyazyinka, in the Molodechno District.

June 21st. In 1910, E.D. Reiman's Alexeevskaya private (with governmental rights) eight-grade gymnasium for girls opened.

June 21st. In 1921, a new dental ambulatory opened in Minsk's 36 Nikolaevskaya (now known as Kropotkin) Street.



June 22nd. In 1934, the Culture and Recreation Park was renamed into the Chelyuskintsev Park of Culture and Recreation to honour the rescue of the Chelyuskin ice-breaker expedition (led by Otto Schmidt).

June 21st. In 1930, the Belarusian State University's Medical Department was reorganised into Minsk's Medical Institute.

June 22nd. In 1941, warriors of 33 Soviet nationalities were first attacked by fascists, with the heroic defence of the Brest Fortress beginning.

June 22nd. In 1959, designs for building up Minsk's Masyukovshchina residential district were approved.

June 23rd. In 1932, the Union of BSSR Architects was established.

June 23rd. In 1949, a monument to Yanka Kupala was solemnly unveiled in the Central Park.

June 23rd. In 1995, Orsha's Mill Ethnographic Museum welcomed its first visitors — becoming a branch of the Museum Complex of Orsha District's History and Culture. It's placed in the city's historical centre, between the rivers of Dnieper and Orshitsa, in the building of water mill (which is an early 20th century monument of industrial architecture).

June 25th. In 1924, the Belarusian Book Chamber was established in Minsk.

June 25th. In 1965, Vitebsk's Technological Institute of Light Industry was founded — known as the Vitebsk State Technological University since 1995.