

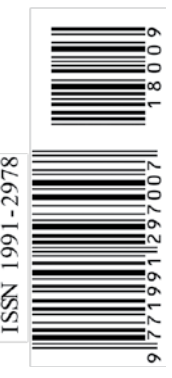


Multi-polar world must
be built together → 3



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 9 (727) ● THURSDAY, MARCH 1, 2018 ● WWW.SB.BY



How our biathletes surprised the whole world

Belarusian women's relay team wins Olympic gold in PyeongChang, following an incredible winning race! All the favourites finished behind our Belarusian quartet, who appeared as a coordinated team with a single heart and common dream. → 10-11

Partners from north Africa are sending good signals

Belarus and Algeria have agreed to co-operate at higher level

By Vladimir Khromov

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has met with the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Algeria, Abdelkader Messahel, asserting, "It's evident that the existing level of Belarusian-Algerian relations is far from ideal, especially against the backdrop of the fall in trade-economic ties." His guest admitted, "The goal of my visit is to establish more intense economic ties between our countries."

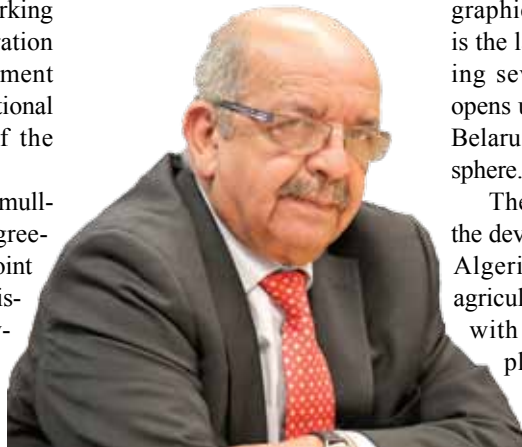
This is the first visit of the Head of the Algerian Foreign Ministry to Belarus, although diplomatic relations between Belarus and Algeria were established on October 24th, 1995. The presidents of our two states met in 2000 at the Millennium Summit in New York and, in 2006, at the Non-Aligned Movement Summit in Havana. In various years, Algeria has been visited by Foreign and Defence Ministers of Belarus. In November 2003, Belarus received a visit by the Algerian Foreign Minister, and our Foreign Ministry heads have met many times at international

venues. Meanwhile, a working group promoting co-operation with the Algerian Parliament was established at the National Assembly of Belarus of the sixth convocation.

At present, Algeria is mulling over bilateral draft agreements on the creation of a joint inter-governmental commission, as well as those governing mutual protection of investments, military-technical collaboration, and visa-free trips for citizens with diplomatic and service passports. Interaction in the spheres of science and technology, education, veterinary science and agriculture is also under negotiation.

The President of Belarus emphasises that bilateral trade between Belarus and Algeria used to exceed \$200 million annually, and is convinced that this level can be restored.

The low level of Belarusian-Algerian trade is attributed to Algeria's prioritising trade with European Union countries, where the state enjoys some zero tariff rates. In 2015, Belarus' exports to Algeria fell significantly, when the Algerian



Abdelkader Messahel

government took measures to reduce imports, in view of the economic slowdown caused by the fall in world oil prices. In 2017, bilateral trade reached just under \$2 million, with Belarus' major exports to Algeria being potash fertilisers and stationery, while our major imports were medications and fruit.

During talks, it has been agreed to advance bilateral co-operation to a new, higher level, drawing upon past experience of interaction, with Belarusian and Algerian business circles actively involved.

Belarus' interest in Algeria can be explained by its geo-

graphical location. This state is the largest in Africa, bordering several countries, which opens up vast opportunities for Belarus in the trade-economic sphere.

The greatest prospects for the development of Belarusian-Algerian co-operation are in agriculture and manufacturing, with Belarus ready to supply foodstuffs (Algeria is interested in dairy products and grain) and technical equipment, as well as setting up assembly facilities. Algeria is also eager to develop military and technical liaisons with Belarus, which has expertise in security.

According to the Algerian Minister, Belarus and Algeria enjoy a good level of political relations, while economic potential is largely untapped. Our two countries have signed an agreement to set up a joint committee on development of co-operation. "We'll need a legal instrument to provide the necessary framework for our interaction," he added. "This agreement will allow our two countries to develop all-round economic interaction."

Mr. Lukashenko responded, "We're ready, with your will and assistance, to work in the spheres of industry and agriculture, using our technologies. We're ready not simply to supply goods but to create facilities together, in Algeria."

At present, Algeria imports large volumes of agricultural produce manufactured in Belarus. "With an eye to diversification, we're seeking our fortune in the People's Republic of China, Venezuela and even further. From a logistical point of view, Algeria looks rather attractive," asserted the President.

The Head of State hopes that the heads of foreign political departments will agree on concrete steps for the development of collaboration. "We've managed to agree with Egypt; why can't we agree with Algeria?" the President of Belarus mused. "As far as industry and our automobile building, tractor building and agricultural machine building is concerned, Algeria is a huge country and opportunities for our construction companies and other enterprises are considerable. We're open and ready for any co-operation with your nation."

Security always comes first

By Alexey Fedosov

On the eve of February 23rd, on which Fatherland Defenders' Day is marked, President Alexander Lukashenko praised all whose duty has been to uphold the safety of Belarusian society.

Contemporary challenges and threats

Because of its geographical location and openness, Belarus has felt the harsh heel of global political events, enduring major re-division of the world, which undermines state sovereignty. Colossal power in the hands of the few has increased, and many fear it may result in war. The intensity of events has prompted the united armed forces of western countries to multiply their presence on our borders.

Military efficiency of Belarusian army

According to Military Doctrine, Belarus adheres to a policy of peace, avoiding military conflict, and following the principle of peaceful settlement of disputes, knowing the price of war. At the same time, we are ready to defend our national interests via military

President attends solemn ceremony at Palace of the Republic, to mark centenary of Armed Forces, coinciding with Fatherland Defenders' Day, commanding nationwide respect for the heroic deeds of past and present generations



Continuing glorious army traditions

force. Our army is equipped with all that's necessary, being compact and mobile. In training our troops, we place the greatest emphasis on training soldiers and officers in modern techniques of fighting.

Modernisation of Armed Forces

The world has embraced high-precision weapons and rockets. Lacking such technologies, Belarus approached its friends but they failed to

help in equipping our army. Instead, our Chinese partners came to our aid. On behalf of the Belarusian nation, I bow deeply to the Chinese leadership, and to those military men who've assisted us in domestic

production of high-precision weapons within 18 months. Our Belarus-made 'Polonez' multiple-launch rocket system is the prototype of such weaponry. Last October, as part of tests, we confirmed the new rocket's abilities, showing that it can hit targets over 300km distant.

A new domestic medium-range air defence missile system has been created, able to destroy moving, air-borne targets, including pilotless aircraft and winged missiles. A range of Belarusian lightly-armoured vehicles has also been produced. Production has launched on Belarus-made 'Caiman' combat vehicles and work continues on the design of armoured, unmanned aircraft systems

Military spirit

Passing through serious tests of world wars and having endured them, Belarus is ready to stand its ground. We've no desire to inflict weapons on the world, but others should know that we're ready to defend our land, our families and our independence. We'll continue enhancing our state military efficiency and will keep our powder dry. Today, we can confidently say that the troops of Belarus can fulfil any task they are assigned.

Multi-polar world must be built via joint efforts

President of Belarus meets UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed

By Vasily Kharitonov

The guest arrived in Minsk to take part in the National Coordinators' Regional Forum on Sustainable Development Goals. This major event was conducted upon the initiative of Belarus, and brought together delegations from over fifty countries: from across Europe and Central Asia. The task has been to share opinions and outline common approaches towards achieving global goals, as announced by the UN. By 2030, it's hoped to move further towards the eradication of poverty and hunger, while achieving greater gender equality, and economic growth. It's generally agreed that Belarus is a leader in achieving these targets, with experience interesting to partners from around the world.

Welcoming Amina Mohammed, the President of Belarus noted that the global Sustainable Development Goals, as well as the principles of UN activity, chime with Belarus' own goals. Mr. Lukashenko asked his guest to convey his warmest and most



Alexander Lukashenko and Amina Mohammed share opinions on global problems

sincere wishes to the UN Secretary-General, António Guterres.

"I'll be glad to meet with him once our schedules permit. He's a very kind, warm-hearted, and cordial person," stressed Mr. Lukashenko.

Ms. Mohammed responded that it's likely that such a meeting will take place, and conveyed returning warm greetings from the UN Secretary-General, adding, "He's told me a lot about your personal contact, and was quite envious of my going to Belarus while he was unable to do so."

Regarding major issues from the international agenda, the position of Minsk is clear. "We're

firmly convinced that the reason for all troubles, including the biggest problem — terrorism — is the unequal development of states, primarily caused by poverty. We adhere to the formula that those with employment will never take up a gun."

The President assured his guest that the United Nations Organisation will always find support from Belarus.

"I personally respect the current UN Secretary-General. The UN is a venue where we can openly speak about our problems. We're all working to liquidate unequal development and poverty, and to create a true mul-

ti-polar world. A time may come when this multi-polar world will be presented by more than three to five countries. Rather, by all states globally, since each person on the planet has the right to be at the centre of this multi-polar world. In settling these complex problems, Europe should play a key role," emphasised the President.

As Belarus proposed the initiative to conduct the Regional SDG Coordination Leaders Forum in Minsk, Amina Mohammed responded, "Your leadership is needed today as never before: the leadership and the voice for multipolarity, for the

multilateral settlement of problematic issues, which Belarus raises in the international arena. There are too many conflicts in the modern world, and they are all very different. We categorically lack tolerance for different situations and manifestations. Therefore, I'd like to again thank you for your leadership."

Answering journalists, Ms. Mohammed called the meeting with the President of Belarus an interesting and exciting event. "As a leader, he is greatly inspiring. He truly believes in what he's doing, while his voice is heard on the international arena."

Important issues of global agenda are under discussion in Belarusian capital

By Vladimir Velikhov

Belarus has many times hosted major international events, showing its desire for dialogue and co-operation

The truly global agenda gathered high-ranking representatives from dozens of countries, to discuss the sustainable development of our planet, as embodied across seventeen goals adopted by the UN in 2015. Last week, the Regional SDG Coordination Leaders Forum opened in Minsk, with Belarus initiating the first such discussion worldwide.

The UN Deputy Secretary-General, Amina Mohammed, arrived from New York to take part, offering her support for Belarus' idea of creating a new format for interaction and experience sharing in the sphere of sustainable development. She thanked Belarus for this important step for the future of our planet.

"I'm very grateful for the organisation of this forum. My first visit to Belarus has impressed me greatly," Ms. Mohammed



During the work of the forum

commented. "Belarus has launched from a good platform in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, having successfully fulfilled the Millennium Goals. I appreciate the progress reached by Belarus in its development. It's important that you share your experience in the region and internationally."

Belarus has actively joined in realising the Sustainable Development Goals,

adopting its national strategy of sustainable socio-economic development until 2030. According to the National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, the Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic, Marianna Shchetkina, each country has its own conditions and starting position, so it's vital to share experience and support one another.

"The Sustainable Development Goals

are universal but it's impossible to achieve them alone. The development of the economy is vital to raising incomes and standards of living. However, investments are not enough for economic development; we need innovative production, alongside science, and joint projects. This is only possible in partnership. We've created our own system of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals — the national architecture of management, and we're delighted to see it arouse interest among colleagues from other states," noted Ms. Shchetkina.

The slogan of the UN global agenda on achieving sustainable development through until 2030 is one of unity, embracing every participant. Raising every global citizen's standard of living is an ambitious task: one that's impossible without concord, peace and security, as Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, asserts. Participants of discussions also shared their impressions of the forum and ideas on how to achieve the goals set before the world community.

Recycling for evident profit and ecology

Minsk's first and only PET-packing processing line launched

By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

The number of plastic bottles used for carbonated drinks, beer and mineral water is growing phenomenally. Thinking of the environment, it's important to use materials which can be recycled or which degrade, while still being light and convenient. Minsk's Ekores enterprise had launched a PET bottle processing line, with our *MT* correspondent in attendance during the launch.

No place for oil or metal

The newly-painted workshop at the waste-processing enterprises still smells from its refurbishment. Piles of pressed bottles are waiting near the door, for the water to warm to the necessary temperature. Denis Volokha, the section supervisor, gives everyone earmuffs before turning on the line, since the process is rather noisy. At last, the water reaches 80 degrees and it's all systems go!

The room is filled with the roar of motors and a mechanical loader sends the pile to the receiving table, where a worker cuts the wire binding it. The raw materials hit the conveyor, spacing out naturally, and passing through a vibrating sieve, to get rid of sand, debris, bottle caps and fragments of labels

The conveyor belt doesn't move fast, and can be stopped at the press of a button. A magnetic separator catches such items as paper clips or coins; we watch a demonstration with a bunch of keys.

Major laundry

The PET bottles go to the grinder along an almost vertical conveyor belt, where stationary and rotatory knives, placed on the walls and in the spindle, grind everything into small fragments. Their size is controlled by the grating, installed beneath, which has holes of 14mm diameter. Everything smaller goes to the lower auger conveyor, while the remainder are cut to the necessary size. These polyethylene flakes — an intermediary raw material — can be further processed, for production of padding polyester, chemical fibres, synthetic threads, some construction materials and packing for technical liquids.

The centrifuge, which works like a washing machine, uses cool water to rinse away flakes of sand and labels. Because of the centrifugal force, flakes rotate and rise, while rubbish sinks, into the purification system. The water is on a closed cycle, being purified before returning to the line. "We add washing detergent,"



YURI MOZOLEVSKY

At PET-packing processing line

notes Denis Volokha, taking a bag. "Sodium carbonate at the moment; I can't tell you what else, as it's a secret. Flakes rub through the spindle's blades at a very high rotating speed, to clear remaining glue."

One more drying, rinsing and blowing cycle and we have pure produce, ready for the customer.

Big potential

The PET bottle processing line has cost Ekores \$280,000 Euros. Being automated, it only needs one operator, three sorters

and a general labourer to produce 500kg flakes per hour (or up to 2,500 tonnes annually).

The enterprise foresees no difficulties, with the line working one shift five days a week. When planned volumes are reached, an alternate shift schedule will be introduced, saving time and costs for heating of water.

The enterprise plans to recycle around 60-70 percent of raw material into profitable goods, while the partial processing of synthetic waste will help the environment.

Attractive conditions for foreign investors

By Vladimir Khromov

Almost \$10 billion injected into Belarusian economy last year from abroad

The National Statistical Committee of Belarus notes that companies from Russia, the UK and Cyprus are taking the lead, but that other foreign capital is expected to grow with coming years, as will the number of investors. The launch of the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park is helping in this respect, explained Kirill Koroteev, First Deputy Director General of the Industrial Park Development Company, speaking at the official launch of its key infrastructure.

"Previously, we had no electricity supply, with the first residents having to use diesel. Now, all electricity is connected," said Mr. Koroteev.

At the beginning of this year, twenty-three companies were registered at the Park, covering production of super-condensers, opto-mechanical components, electronic components and laser equipment, as well as medical technologies, and radiators made from steel and aluminium. Undoubtedly, the improved legal regime, using the 'one stop shop' principle, is attracting investors to the Park.

"Investors don't need to approach various ministries or committees; it's enough to come to us and express their desire to co-operate. State authorities are obliged to send their employees to the Park (upon request) to fulfil administrative procedures," explains Mr. Koroteev.

Previously, one could become a resident of the Park with a minimum injection of \$5 million (but without restrictions on the term for preferences). However, this is being reduced to just \$500,000 (with a condition for a three-year period).

Proposals made to potential investors

State Property Committee prepares list of more than forty enterprises for privatisation this year

By Alexey Fedosov

"Though we don't have planned privatisation each year, we compile a working list of enterprises in order to be ready for investors," explained the Chairman of the State Property Committee of Belarus, Andrey Gaev, at a press conference in Minsk. "This year, a renewed list, featuring forty-three joint-stock companies and unitary enterprises, has been ear-

marked for privatisation. We're constantly in negotiations with the private sector over the list, asking them to make proposals and to share views of what investors need to purchase an enterprise or a joint stock company. We've also begun developing interaction with the Currency and Stock Exchange."

Minority packages of five stock companies have been placed on the stock exchange, with interest shown towards



BELTA

Gomselmash Association is an attractive asset

three of these. "With our colleagues from the National Bank, the Finance Ministry and the Currency and Stock Exchange, we're developing legislation and plan to place new packages this year. We

view this as promising," added Mr. Gaev.

As far as the attraction of investments from China is concerned, a pilot list of twenty-two enterprises was compiled last year, and Chinese inves-

tors were invited to consider acquisition options, including large businesses. In particular, according to Mr. Gaev, negotiations were conducted for Gomselmash Production Association, which specialises in agricultural machinery. A proposal was also received on the construction of a hydroelectric power station on the Zapadnaya Dvina River.

Several proposals are now under discussion. Belgosproekt (part of the Ministry of Architecture and Construction) is being privatised, to offer a 60 percent share to Chinese partners, allowing for Chinese experience to be brought on board, explains the Head of the State Property Committee.

Under supervision of satellites

Domestic IT companies join world market with their products

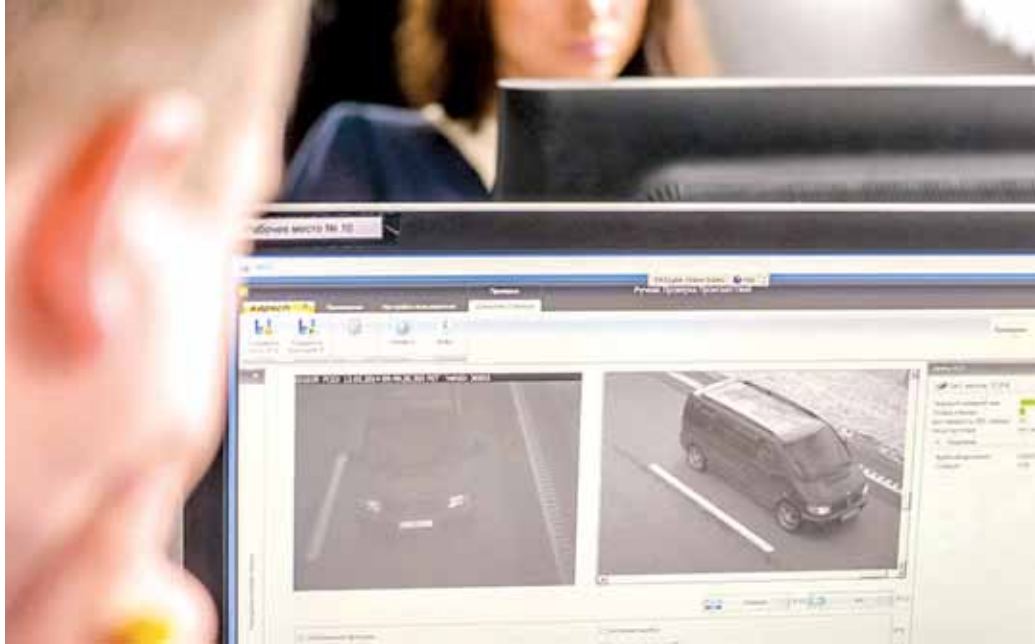
By Vladislav Kuletsky

Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Semashko has recently said that revenues of the High-Tech Park in late 2017 made almost \$1bn. According to him, this sum is much higher than the revenue of Belarus' industrial enterprises. "The modern HTP successfully operates and — independently of the crisis — is annually increasing in the Dollar and real equivalent," he noted.

Indeed, many IT companies made their way into the market without any preferences — simply improving their efficiency each year. For example, the Belarusian group of companies Gurtam has recently celebrated its 15th anniversary but it managed to join the HTP only last year — after gaining global recognition.

Once three guy-programmers decided they wanted to work for themselves. One of the programmes they developed for their client eventually became the basis for their further work. They understood that telematics would bring in a good income. The guys developed good software for GPS-monitoring and car fleet owners now save on downtime, route deviation and defueling.

At present, the company monitors over 1.3m vehicles worldwide in real time. Co-founder Alexey Shchurko explains that their start-up was truly unique for the market of



Shipping companies around the world use Belarusian software to monitor their vehicles



telematics. "We have proposed a solution almost ten times cheaper: previously, monitoring of a single car was priced at around 200 Euros, while we proposed the price of 20 Euros. In addition, we enabled our partners — who sell the product to end users — to make money and build a business: they would get 80-90 percent of the profit (rather than 10 percent in the past). Finally, we decreased the dependence of brands and equipment: previously, software and equipment used were inseparable but we proposed integrators to install our software on a variety of equipment for various projects."

Moreover, the price of car monitoring has decreased to 10 Euros per month by now and the developers receive only 1-2 Euros (but still earn much). Net figures remain secret.

The company expects to enjoy even more opportunities after adoption of the decree on development of the digital economy. Top manager Alexander Kuvshinov believes this is definitely a positive step, 'including for our company'. "Technologies will come to the country. Workforce and new avenues of our work will develop then. Actually, we could have achieved all these without this step but improvement of conditions for the arrival and opening of IT companies will develop the state," he says.

Obviously positive tendencies promise to preserve worldwide

Belarus is utterly and completely in the wake of global economic trends. According to estimates of the international agency Bloomberg, China's economy will grow by 6.4 percent in 2018, that of the USA — by 2.5 percent, German economy will increase by 1.6 percent and Japanese — by 0.9 percent.

By Maxim Osipov

The Economy Ministry sees opportunities for GDP growth in the first three months of 2018 by at least 2.1 percent. Economy Minister Vladimir Zinovskiy believes that such forecast is completely reasonable, "Macroeconomic situation is stable and external conditions promise to be favourable. The goal-oriented matrix of tasks for the vertical power structure has been built. Further on everything depends on performers, their professionalism, degree of responsibility and desire to work."

Factors which can ensure higher growth rates in industry include growth of production at enterprises of Belneftekhim



Country in the tide of economic trends

Concern and Industry Ministry taking into account the adopted decisions dealing with support, as well as the creation of favourable conditions for population's purchase of domestically-produced passenger cars. "We expect to see the effect where investment projects have been completed. As far as light industry is concerned, this is Orsha Linen Mill and Kamvol while Svetlogorsk Pulp and Board Mill is expected to produce about 30,000 tonnes of new produce — cellulose. I will allow myself a bold assertion. Normalisation of economies of Belarus and of European countries is

partly explained by the fact that European politicians have finally stopped throwing commercial interests to the altar of the political ambitions and focused primarily on economic co-operation, towards which official Minsk has been calling for during long years."

Positive effect from such behaviour is also noted by the IMF in its World Economic Outlook: 'Risks regarding the forecast of the world growth in the nearest time is seen primarily balanced; however, they are still shifted towards reduction of growth rates in the mid-term'.

Products headed for export

By Oleg Bogomazov

Latest resident of Minsk free economic zone constructing new factory

Minsk FEZ's latest resident is BaFaHimBel Ltd., producing additives for concrete, for various purposes. Turkish YAKEM Company is funding the venture, bringing innovative production technologies. Well-known on the construction market, specialising in the manufacture of additives for concrete and various admixtures, BaFaHimBel Ltd. plans to become a leading enterprise in Belarus.

The factory will boast a high degree of mechanisation and automation, as well as serious quality control. About 90 percent of additives produced by BaFaHimBel will be exported to CIS and non-CIS states.

Under readers' heel

In our Internet age,
author-reader relations have changed drastically

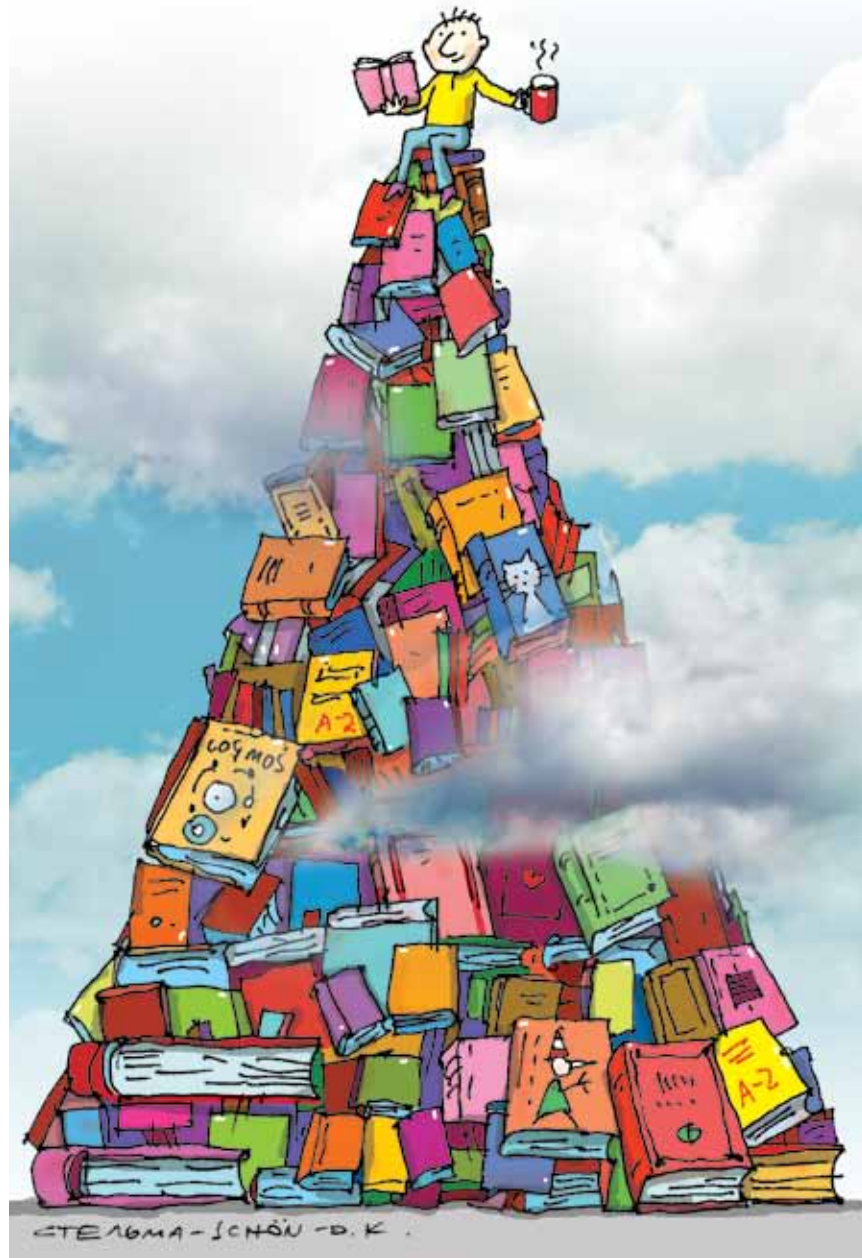
By Lyudmila Ivanova

Some stories gain the title of 'literary' while others have popular appeal. Bestseller status is no guarantee of 'quality', while producing an acclaimed literary work offers no guarantee that readers will 'enjoy' your narrative. A few minutes browsing the reviews left for legends of great literature on well-known sales platforms provides ample evidence that readers aren't backward in making their views known. Artist Vasily Kandinsky viewed artistic popularity as an inverse pyramid, in which familiarity allows a greater number of people to appreciate and enjoy an artist's work. As a book, or artistic work, grows in popularity, it trends to an ever-wider audience.

Through storytelling, authors have the ability to transport the reader, taking them on a cathartic journey, revealing eternal truths. However, we can all think of 'bestsellers' that seem to do no more than entertain, however cleverly they are crafted. Plot may follow the same arc as we see in television drama, with cliff-hangers dominating, and the reader expecting a 'happy' resolution to the end of the tale.

In similar style, autobiographies do well with readers, being written almost in imitation of 'soap opera', featuring real life professionals from interesting walks of life. I recently read a book by Saturnina Gallardo, a Spanish nurse and blogger. Entitled *Between Procedures*, it has sold over 100,000 copies, detailing her working day, in Spain. "I'd like to share with you each of my days spent in the hospital, bringing you a broad smile," she writes, adding that she's so happy with her author success that 'if I sneeze, confetti's likely to fly out of me'.

Belarusian downshifter Andrus Gorvat's diary, published as *Radziva Prudok* ('radziva' is a dialect Bela-



Readers looking on writers' creations with disdain

rusian word for radio), and Roman Svechnikov's travelogue, *Roma is Going*, are also good examples. The book's success at the crowdfunding venue also demonstrates its public appeal (however, it should be noted that the greatest crowdfunding event in Belarus so far was to raise money for a potato salad).

While serious writers, such as Argentine novelist, short story writer and essayist Julio Cortázar and Serbian novelist, poet, short story writer and literary historian Milorad Pavić oblige readers to strain in understanding their dense writings, graphic novels provide accessible storytelling entertainment for all. That's not to

say that comic books can't provide a transformative reading experience, but mass popularity is never a good yardstick by which to judge 'quality'. Just think of the rap battle between Oxxxymiron and Gnoyny, both Russian rappers, which earned millions of views within a few days.

It may be time to put aside literary snobbery, and realise that every author should be judged on their own merit, whatever their style or genre, and that the ability to entertain should be recognised as a rare skill. Whether you're reading the latest murder mystery topping the sales charts, or a classic by George Orwell or Umberto Eco, you may find yourself transported through the realm of fiction, to a greater understanding of the human condition.

Bob Dylan received the Nobel Prize for Literature, demonstrating that words can speak to us from the most unexpected places.

Literary critics bewail that our desire for pulp fiction is actually shaping the market, governing the direction taken by new authors, who wish to make money from their writing. One bestseller begets a thousand imitations, as we know. However, perhaps we should remember that art mirrors its time, and the trends of its age. Today's 'engineers of human souls' are doing no more than feeding the appetite we display as a society.

One of hardest things for today's writers is the obligation to be under the public eye. With the Internet leaving no doors closed, anyone who gains fame comes under scrutiny, and the online community is not always kind. Readers don't hold back in leaving crushing reviews when they feel disappointed, and the media are quick to gossip about authors who fail to fit some 'ideal' mould. In this age of Instagram, authors are under the heel of their readers.

We may lament the lack of literary greats, but perhaps we're failing to see what's actually in front of us.

Co-operation unites people and communities

March 24th is World Tuberculosis Day, as decreed by the World Health Organisation, marking German microbiologist Robert Koch's discovery of a causative agent of tuberculosis, in 1882. In 1993, tuberculosis was declared a national disaster and March 24th became World TB Day.

Belarus has been working to control the spread of tuberculosis via regulatory, organisational and methodical methods. Its health facilities provide public TB care, using the latest modern, efficient and economically justified technologies. Two years ago, broad clinical use of new TB drugs launched in Belarus: bedaquiline, delamanid, and clofazimine. There is also a new scheme of treatment for patients with extensively drug-resistant pathogens. Belarus has introduced new approaches for

the detection and chemoprevention of tuberculosis in children, while offering state funded social support to outpatients.

The TB situation is under the control of the Government of the Republic of Belarus and the Ministry of Health. A new state programme — *Tuberculosis* — has been developed and approved for 2016-2020, helping prevent the spread of resistant forms of tuberculosis, while increasing the scale of treatment.

A new grant for 2016-2018 has allocated \$11.8 million, and a programme of international technical assistance has been successfully completed in Belarus, promoting anti-tuberculosis measures to battle the multidrug-resistant disease, funded by the Global Fund to Fight AIDS, Tuberculosis and Malaria. Belarus ensures constant interaction between the Department of Execution of Judgements' medical



services, under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, and Ministry of Health organisations, which render anti-TB assistance. All penitentiary establishments are controlled by curators from anti-TB organisations.

Belarus has reorganised its bacteriological service, introducing molecular genetic rapid diagnostics on the drug suscep-

tibility of the TB mycobacterium. Experience in using rapid methods of genetic diagnostics are proving highly efficient, enabling speedy treatment at specialised hospitals. All anti-TB organisations are implementing infection control plans, including the purchase of personal protective equipment.

Republican and regional

councils on multidrug-resistant tuberculosis are operating efficiently and, owing to their work, all patients receive adequate chemotherapy treatments. Such actions have reduced morbidity and mortality from tuberculosis. The TB incidence rate fell 4.6 percent from 2014 to 2016, while TB mortality dropped by 12.8 percent (from 4.7 per 100,000 people in 2014 to 4.1 per 100,000 in 2015).

The Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Pulmonology and Tuberculosis is the country's major establishment coordinating the fight against tuberculosis, developing new technologies and testing an advanced international approach to diagnosing and treating TB. A free hotline on TB issues operates daily: 88011001313.

By Tatiana Zhukova,
doctor of highest category,
Candidate of Medical
Sciences

Focus on agro services

By Kristina Khilko

Revival of the 'unpromising'

In 2006, there were just three dozen agro-estates in Belarus while now their number exceeds two thousand — a huge jump over a decade. Moreover, Belarusian agro-ecotourism continues to develop by leaps and bounds, with the benefit of 'charitable' taxes.

The conditions are almost unbelievable: paying just one base rate per year, taking a loan on privileged terms and launching one's own business. Signing the Decree, Alexander Lukashenko was in no doubt that agro-ecotourism will help revive abandoned villages and preserve folk traditions and way of life. The advantages are apparent: new jobs appear, the infrastructure improves and additional money is directed to the regions for development.

An important aspect is that the hosts need not simply rent accommodation for tourists but introduce them to local sites, culture and traditions. This is the requirement of the law. There are those however, who try to violate the rules, turning authentic rural houses into the usual cafes for corporate parties. This practice has forced the Ministry of Sports and Tourism to submit a new draft decree for consideration, "If a host lives in the village, does the housekeeping and rents out up to ten rooms nothing will change for them, they will continue paying one base amount and will be able to take privileged loans," explains Mikhail Portnoy, Deputy Minister for Sports and Tourism. "Sly owners of restaurants and hotel businesses will have to tighten their belts; they have disguised their businesses as agro-ecotourism."

'Cups' and 'sizzles'

Last year, according to the *National Geographic* magazine, Belarus won in the 'Agrotourism' category, followed by Italy and France, while Russia was placed fourth.

What do Belarusian villages and homesteads offer to tourists? Renovated houses boast ancient interiors and modern conveniences. The more original and diverse the site is, the more guests there are. Tourists are delighted by mini-zoos — live corners where one can feed peacocks, geese and pheasants, to milk a goat and stroke a lamb. Original cuisine with national flavours also attracts custom.

An interactive map, 'Gastinia' was invented for tourists, gathering dishes from various regions of the country. One just needs to click an interesting name and see the agro-estates which offer ancient Belarusian dishes of peasant or 'noble' cuisine.

Meanwhile, as men don't live by bread alone, in some villages tour-

Powerful impetus to the development of new leisure area in Belarus given by Presidential Decree



Hostess of 'Over the Nieman' agro-eco-estate, Oksana Salkovskaya, invites guests

ists can make pots from clay, create talismans in the form of dolls from straw and weave belts. More and more guests from abroad are attracted by folk holidays organised in each village together with the traditional festivals: Kupalie, Calling of Spring and Maslenitsa.

Previously agro-estates were a place of rest just for a weekend but now they are often booked for a longer period, from a week or more.

"Many are fed up with the traditional beach holiday," Georgy Gribov, the Chairman of the public council on agro-ecotourism of the Brest Region and host of the Mlynok agro-estate, says confidently. "Many would like to have simple joys of picking mushrooms, fishing, natural products and rural quiet. We have a sweet-smelling hayloft for sleeping, picnic places and campfires, as well as cycle rides and extreme rafting, so places are often booked until the end of summer."

The businessman admits that foreigners are among his guests but they are mostly Belarusians and Russians.

"We often welcome families from Minsk, Moscow, St. Petersburg. Residents

of large cities would like a rest from the concrete jungle in the countryside. Many visit us several times and we have already acquired regular clients. Agro-tourism rests on three major aspects: hospitality of the hosts, originality of the estate and its location. We're located one hour's drive from the Belovezhskaya Pushcha or ancient Brest. Prices are moderate: a house will cost about \$40 per day."

Under the wings of the green cockerels

Hotels are usually given stars while Belarusian estates are given 'green roosters'. Four birds are a sign of the highest quality. This is an international trend: Lithuanians mark their best estates with storks, Spaniards — with olives, Latvians — with butterflies.

Estates and their services are assessed by experts from the Country Escape public association which is already 14 years old. "We read comments on forums and talk to hosts. It sometimes happens that a house is ordinary, without any sophistication, but there's no end of guests. The secret is in benevolence and hospitality of the hosts," explains Valeria Klitsounova, the Chair of the Country Escape Belarusian Association of Rural and Ecotourism.

Agro-estates aren't an easy business and special seminars are conducted by specialists from the public association for those wishing to start their business. They describe how to develop the concept of the agro-estate and to organise everything. Experience shows that if a correct approach is taken, rural and ecological tourism is fashionable and profitable.

Tourist choices

- 'Nanosy-Novoselie' ethno-cultural complex (Myadel District's Nanosy village in the Minsk Region). Guests are offered to heat a Russian stove, cook food in it and sleep in the hayloft. A wind and water mill is located near the house, as well as museums of samovars, coins and Soviet automobiles. Moreover, there's a brandy kitchen.

- 'Veres' estate (Zelva District's Kozlovichi village in the Grodno Region). It was recognised best agro-estate in 2006. The inn in the national style cooks original dishes. A dendropark with two hundred trees and bushes is located nearby. Children are greatly delighted with swans, peacocks and pheasants.

- 'U Rysya' Homestead (Svisloch District's Korevichi village in the Grodno Region). The agro-estate conducts master-classes on creating straw dolls, moulding clay pots and weaving traditional belts. The local healer will tell her guests how to collect

and prepare healing herbs while water therapy will help cure some disorders.

- 'Krolava Khata' estate (Rossony District's Zaborie village in the Vitebsk Region). A one-storey house stands on the bank of the picturesque Lake Neshcherdo, with an air-rifle shooting range and a sports ground nearby. The hosts of the estate are experienced tourist instructors, offering hikes, trips and rafting events.

- 'Khata pod Klenami' estate (Postavy District's Noviki village in the Vitebsk Region). Last year, the estate was recognised best in the 'Preservation of Belarusian Traditions' category. Guests can bake fresh fish caught in the lake or bake a cake from mushrooms gathered in the neighbouring forest. Hosts offer their guests home-made cheese and cottage cheese while a wedding in line with ancient Belarusian traditions can be organised for newly-weds: with a round loaf, medovukha (an alcoholic drink made of water, honey and yeast), 'bride price' and circle dances.



Ethnocultural complex in Myadel District's village of Nanosy



Rare snowfall blankets Rome, closing schools

Romans have awoken to a rare snowfall, after an Arctic storm passing over much of Europe dumped enough snow to force schools to close and public transport to reduce services

Rome's Mediterranean climate and proximity to the sea usually result in mild winters, such that restaurants often keep outdoor seating

open even through the coldest months of the year. As a result, the Monday morning snowfall, though not huge in quantity, brought excited young

Romans out for a rare snowball fight or walk in the slush. Mayor Virginia Raggi signed an ordinance closing public schools as a precaution, and

many private ones followed suit. Elsewhere in much of northern and central Italy, the storm also closed schools and disrupted transport.



Space station builder Bigelow Aerospace forms new company

Bigelow Aerospace has spun off a new commercial space company called Bigelow Space Operations, which will act as the sales, operations, and customer service provider for the inflatable space stations that Bigelow Aerospace is developing. The fledgling company has few employees at the moment, but CEO Robert Bigelow expects BSO to employ up to 500 people when its first stations are launched in 2021.

The International Space Station may be winding down, but when it finally ceases operations sometime between 2025 and 2028, low Earth orbit may be set for a population boom. For some years now, Bigelow Aerospace has made no secret about its ambitions to develop inflatable, multipurpose habitat modules that could one day dwarf today's orbital laboratory. Currently, Bigelow is testing an experimental inflatable module on the ISS.

Creepy dog robots cannot be stopped from opening doors

In one of the scariest moments in the movie *Jurassic Park*, a pair of intelligent Velociraptors, brought back to Earth by man's hubris, defy an assumption about their limitations: they open a kitchen door

Now imagine that the raptors are real, transformed into headless robot dogs that can negotiate stairs, fling open doors with their robotic claws and generally overcome the puny obstacles offered up by the human technicians at Boston Dynamics.

The robotics company posted a video, showing two of their yellow SpotMini robots helping each other enter a door. Now the company has released a sequel in which a single



2½-foot-tall robot is controlled by an unseen human driver who directs the robot claw to the door handle and issues a 'Go' command. From then on, the SpotMini's camera-guided, autonomous programming kicks in to fulfill its mission to open the door.

Theresa May's post-Brexit wish

The UK Prime Minister says she wants all EU citizens lawfully living in Britain to remain after Brexit in 2019

Theresa May is also promising a streamlined system for them to register to be able to stay.

"They have made a huge contribution to our country, that's why we want them and their families to stay. I am absolutely clear that EU citizens living lawfully in the UK today will be able to stay," May said in Parliament.

"It is going to be a digital system, it will be streamlined, it will be user-friendly and it will ensure that this is as simple and as easy a process for people as we can provide."

EU moves to tackle terror financing

The EU's Committee on Foreign Affairs has backed moves to cut off sources of terrorism financing

It comes amid a push to prevent attacks and stem the flow of cash, honing in on money laundering and organised crime. A European Parliament vote is expected next month.

"What we want is to create means, with the actual bodies and institutions in order to give them facilities to investigate and to follow what could be the channels of financing micro terrorism," explained Spanish MEP Javier Nart, from the Group of the Alliance of Liberals and Democrats for Europe. "There is a major point is to create a platform where intelligent services of Europe will find, and share knowledge and data."

The European Counter Terrorism Centre is already up and running, to strengthen the EU's response. It uses two arms — a tracking programme and intelligence units — to share intelligence and knowledge on financing

British American sales, profit helped by Reynolds deal

British American Tobacco reported higher full-year sales and profits, helped by the acquisition of Reynolds American and market share gains

The maker of Dunhill and Lucky Strike cigarettes said revenue rose 37.6 percent to 20.29 billion pounds. Adjusted organic revenue rose 2.9 percent.

Adjusted earnings per share rose about 10 percent to 284.4 pence, excluding the impact of a gain related to the deal and a deferred tax credit.

Global cigarette sales volumes are in decline as more people cut back or quit smoking.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Falsity in creativity isn't peculiar for true painter

National Art Museum of Belarus hosts *Between the Word and the Image* exhibition, by outstanding graphical painter Anatoly Alexandrovich

By Veniamin Mikheev

The exhibition showcases drawings and etchings from the collections of the National Art Museum, Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, and Yakub Kolas State Literary-Memorial Museum, as well as from the collection of the artist's family. Anatoly Alexandrovich's mastery is clear, across all types of graphic art: from canvases to book illustrations. His interest in the latter was especially widespread, for literary works and more popular books.

Meanwhile, the art of words and the art of drawings have been inseparably connected since ancient times, since graphical signs — elements of any alphabet — record the cultural code of the nation, creating a definite image system. Then the interaction between words and images enters a new level with the appearance of printed books. Meanwhile, book engraving has been one of the most popular and significant forms of art for centuries.

The word 'illustration' is translated from Latin as 'to cover, or to reveal'. We may suppose that this is the meaning of a true art of illustration.

Beyond addition or decoration, illustrations penetrate the 'soul' of a work, revealing and embodying its essence, ideas and mood, visually. The ability to interpret literature is also an art form.

Undoubtedly, Anatoly Alexandrovich possessed this special talent: of interpreting words, creating images which stood as art of high class in their own right.

It's no accident that most of his creativity was connected with print editions while his best works were inspired by bright creativity of outstanding representatives of Belarusian and world literature: Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas, Maxim Tank, Ivan Shemyakin, Nil Gilevich, Yanka Bryl, Ivan Chigrinov, Mikhas Charot, Ivan Naumenko, Vasil Vitka, Ivan Karizna, Konstantin Tarasov, Adam Mickiewicz, Valery



Crowds gather for opening of exhibition of Anatoly Alexandrovich's works

Director of National Art Museum, Vladimir Prokoptsov, shares warm words about the artist

Artist's works arouse contemplation on art of words and art of drawings



Anatoly Alexandrovich's experimental works are also on display, combining various engraving techniques in new ways, such as etching and lino-print.

Anatoly Alexandrovich was versatile and innovative, as the exhibition demonstrates, showing his diverse techniques and careful eye, his meticulous work, and beautiful use of delicate watercolour. His ability to portray the nuances of literary works through illustration is unmatched.

With a zest for life and humour, he was a perfect illustrator of children's literature and for several satirical works. Mr. Alexandrovich's latest large-scale work is a collection of works by Belarusian literary classic Konrat Krapiva: *On the Cutting-Edge* (2016). At the same time, the exhibition displays dramatic, emotional pieces connected to the topic of the Great Patriotic War.

Anatoly Alexandrovich was successful in all his endeavours. Sadly, his illustration of *My Belarus* series of graphical pieces was never completed. Undoubtedly, had he finished his work on the book, it would have been one of his greatest accomplishments. However, his legacy sets the creative bar for all artists.

Bryusov and F. Garcia Lorca.

A series of ink drawings for the poems of Yanka Kupala presents Anatoly Alexandrovich as a prominent painter whose delicate and skilful work creates expressive images which seem to come alive: a perfect match for the genius of Belarusian poetry.

On show are illustrations on various themes, and in various media. His soft watercolours, created with a light,

warm touch, set the mood for the Belarusian folktale of *The Cunny Fox*, from the 1995 collection for children. Meanwhile, his ink drawings bring to life scenes of ancient Belarusian history, in K. Tarasov's *Memory of Legends* (1990). The reserved exoticism of his engravings suits *Tobacco Flower* (1986), an anthology of Cuban poetry.

His special love for book illustrations made his pay at-

attention to the image of the legendary personality — a person who founded Belarusian printing five hundred years ago. One of the pieces dedicated to Francysk Skaryna is a classical portrait inspired by the famous self-portrait engravings of the first printer. Meanwhile, *Francysk Skaryna. Prague* presents the would-be famous Belarusian printer and publisher as a young enthusiast yet to find his role in the history of the state.

How our biathletes surprised the whole world

Belarusian women's relay team wins Olympic gold in PyeongChang, following an incredible winning race! All the favourites finished behind our Belarusian quartet, who appeared as a coordinated team with a single heart and common dream

By Igor Grishin

Nadezhda Skardino, Irina Krivko, Dinara Alimbekova and Darya Domracheva have not simply won but have proven that nothing is impossible if you believe in yourself and see your goal clearly. Their victory seems incredible, and we still want to pinch ourselves. Of course, we'd wanted to believe that our team could surprise everyone but we could hardly have predicted the win, among such stiff competition.

Never before has our women's squad won an Olympic medal as a team, though they have several times come close. The present line-up has lacked

success this season and last, with sixth place being its best result, last January, at the World Cup round in Antholz. This season, three relay races in the Cup standings resulted only in seventh place in Hochfilzen. Moreover, in Oberhof, Dinara Alimbekova took three penalty laps, forcing our team to leave the race, having been lapped from behind. In Ruhpolding, we finished thirteenth. However, everything was different in PyeongChang, when our determination paid off, with stunning results.

Before the start, bookmakers gave odds of 30:1 for our women's team to win. With this in mind, the PyeongChang victory is incredible. The brilliant feat will be long remembered, and spoken of proudly, warming our souls and raising our fighting spirit in hard times.

The breath-taking race began with Nadezhda Skardino skiing steadily, and shooting reliably. With fire in her belly, Irina Krivko's speed took us within the leaders' reach, showing us why she's been called a 'revelation' this season. In the World Cup round in Annecy, she clung to second place in the mass start by her teeth, refusing to allow Anastasiya Kuzmina or Laura Dahlmeier to catch her.

Dinara Alimbekova, 22, was potentially our weak link in the chain but proved herself iron-willed, with steel cables instead of nerves. She skied steadily, and showed no fear at the shooting range, hitting all her targets,



Nadezhda Skardino was first to cover the distance



Dinara Alimbekova at the shooting range

despite the strong wind almost blowing the rifle from her hands and the snow covering her eyes.

The fourth leg saw Darya Domracheva take to the track, initially scaring us by missing three targets. However, her astonishing speed took her to a confident finish in first place, to the deafening cheers of her supporters.

Our wildest predictions might have conceived of silver or bronze but gold was a complete surprise. It may be a boomerang of justice, making up for the judges' poor decision in failing to score Anton Kushnir highly enough to enter the final round in the ski acrobatics. Regardless of the cause, it's our greatest Olympic winter victory to date (putting aside Darya Domracheva's three gold medals in Sochi). It's only matched, perhaps, by our ice hockey miracle in Salt Lake City, when our team smashed the powerful Swedes, in the quarter-final. Korea witnessed our undeniable victory, historical and unforgettable.

Irina Krivko and Dinara Alimbekova deserve special praise, being new names in biathlon, although we hope to hear of many more successes. Krivko has progressed wonderfully since last season, and covered her relay stage with panache. As she said, "I joined this sport rather late, at the age of 12, and felt uncomfortable about that, since all the girls of my age could ski with confidence by then, while I used to fall down every ten metres. However, I was motivated to become as good as they were and, then, when I approached their level, I wanted to beat it."

A random twist of fate brought Irina to biathlon. She explains, "My family house burnt down and we had to move to a hostel, not far from the sports complex where biathletes were training. I watched for a year but had no plans to join them. One day, a physical culture teacher took a girl who was great at skiing to the amateur club, and I decided to go along."

Dinara Alimbekova also



Irina Krivko supports her teammates



Darya Domracheva's victorious finish

has a remarkable story, having moved to Belarus from Kazakhstan when she was three. Her physical culture teacher guided her into biathlon when she was 11 and living in Chausy. "It was very difficult," she recalls. "I studied dance and played the piano at art school, working hard, but it was impossible to combine everything. I liked the sporting school so much that I even cried, asking my mother to let me go to training rather than lessons. I later realised that I couldn't keep up with everything simultaneously and that I had to make a choice, giving up sport. However, ex-

actly one year later, I returned to the sports school and began taking part in my first competitions and our first 'snow' events, in Russia. I tried hard to keep up, sometimes returning home from competitions with medals and music sheets — to immediately pass an exam in music upon arrival."

The road to the Olympics is never easy but we hope the stories of our women's team will inspire others. With determination, anything is possible, as Darya Domracheva will agree, having just won her fourth Olympic gold! (more than any other biath-



lete in history, since Anastasiya Kuzmina and Kati Wilhelm only have three gold medals each). Bravo, Darya!

The Chairman of the National Olympic Committee, President Alexander Lukashenko, sent greetings to the national biathlon team of Nadezhda Skardino, Irina Krivko, Dinara Alimbekova and Darya Domracheva, congratulating them on winning the women's relay gold at the 2018 Olympic Games in PyeongChang. His greeting reads: 'Thank you for this great present to the entire

country on the eve of the Day of the Defenders of the Fatherland. You have realised our life-long dreams by winning Belarus' first Olympic gold in the most prestigious biathlon race'.

The Head of State also congratulated the team, with Orders for Personal Courage and titles of Honored Master of Sport of Belarus bestowed upon Nadezhda Skardino, Irina Krivko and Dinara Alimbekova. Mr. Lukashenko thanked the coaching staff and wished everyone strong health and new successes.

DIRECT SPEECH!

Darya Domracheva: If you remember how the Games began for us, then this is a reward for all our efforts and patience. We finally made friends with PyeongChang. When Dinara Alimbekova completed the first shooting range, my emotions were overwhelming. Maybe I haven't yet fully realised the extent of our success. We thought that a medal was possible but none of us expected gold. I'm incredibly happy that we're standing on the top level of the medals podium and I thank the girls for their work. This is incredible! When Dinara departed the first shooting range, I felt shivers over my skin. When I had just three bullets for three targets at my last shooting range, it was a test of my biathlon professionalism. Fortunately, I was able to hold my nerve, bringing joy to fans.

Nadezhda Skardino: I've been working towards this medal for many years. I've dreamt of gold and believed it would happen one day. Winning the relay is symbolic and enjoyable for the whole team. The past three years have been challenging for us; we've had to adapt a great deal, trying to finally prove our strength. I'm especially happy for our young girls — Irina Krivko and Dinara Alimbekova. They covered their stages confidently, enabling us to win.

Irina Krivko: Before the second firing range, a strong wind blew, but I tried not to hurry. In the end, everything was a success — though it's still difficult for me to compete with the leaders in terms of speed. Happily, Dinara Alimbekova was great in covering her stage.

Dinara Alimbekova: We're all very excited. After realising that we'd won, I asked journalists where I should go and what I should do. I couldn't quite grasp what was going on! I want to thank the team for believing we could do well, and our coaches, too. We'd trained for this relay race and have now proven we're the best.

Alfred Eder, women's team coach: We pinned great hopes on this race, but the Belarusian women's performance will go down in history. It's a victory for these experienced and younger sportswomen. The most difficult thing for a coach is to avoid making a mistake in choosing the quartet. We made the right choice, and I'm so happy for the younger girls, Irina and Dinara. They've proven that they're worthy of being Olympic champions.

Ole Einar Bjoerndalen: This is one of the best days of my life. I'm happy for Dasha and all the Belarusian team: they're my heroes! I'm extremely happy! I didn't think she'd pull it off, as only three or four percent of sportsmen manage to hit all three targets with three bullets at the last shooting range. This is very impressive. This is a great day for Belarus. It's the most marvellous thing that could have happened. Winning a relay is complete madness.



Flag of Belarus at Games' closing ceremony carried by Darya Domracheva

Welcome home!

Minsk National Airport meets our freestylers with bouquets of confectionary, streamers, balloons, singing and other festive proclamations



Belarus' national freestyle team greeted with excitement at Minsk airport

By Vladimir Altov

Because of poor refereeing (which might be viewed as a stab in the back) Nikolay Kozeko's team has brought home only one medal but even this is more than many teams dream of. What other team has continuously won Olympic medals for the past twenty years? Does anyone dare to reproach Anton Kushnir, who was meanly thrown from the final qualification stage? Or Alla Tsuper who finished fourth?

Head coach Kozeko stressed at the airport, once more, that he's annoyed on Anton's behalf. However, he admits to being satisfied with the Olympics overall, saying, "I think Anton will be upset for a long time. He's not yet fully recovered, like all of us. Conclusions can be drawn and we're going to submit an appeal for investigation. However, it's impossible to speak about this with Anton; we must gain strength

and recover, to move on. Overall, I'm pleased with the Olympics. See how we're being welcomed! There are so many young people! This means we aren't working in vain: people know about us."

People certainly do know about the Olympic team. The VIP hall at the airport was crowded, including not only sports officials, friends and family members but fans, children from sports schools and journalists. Emotions ran high, and only a few team members managed to slip quietly away. Olympic champion Anna Guskova was surrounded by a crowd, telling us, "I'm shocked, feeling lost and confused, with so many fans and reporters surrounding me. This is unusual and exciting. It's also morally difficult. I've not yet fully processed what happened in South Korea. I don't know whether I'll take a holiday in the coming month. However, I know for sure that I'll continue train-

ing; just because you've won an Olympic gold, doesn't mean you should stop. On the contrary: it's important to work twice as hard."

Stanislav Gladchenko, who was the only man representing Belarus in a men's final, voiced his pleasure, but also his discomfort in what had happened to Kushnir.

Speaking of the complexity of his final Olympic jump, the sportsman admitted that he'd only performed such a jump on snow three times previously, but felt obliged to take the risk. "I could have performed an easier jump and, even if I'd not jumped perfectly, would have reached at least fourth place," he asserts.

Mr. Kozeko's team is endeavouring to rise above the disappointment and to focus on its achievements, having been winning winter Olympic medals since 1998. As fans at the airport chanted loudly: 'Best in freestyle! Belarus has no equal!'



Vladimir Chepelin

Fifth place is a worthy accolade

By Timur Svitov

Belarusian biathletes fail to capture medal in mixed relay race but inspire our hopes

Belarus' national team came fifth in the mixed relay at the Olympics in PyeongChang: a far better result than many hoped for, following the World Cup stages, in which the men lost time carefully accumulated during early stages. The guys still have work to do in this sphere, but the final lap was not so critical.

Sergey Bocharnikov managed to remain among the top three until the last lap. Vladimir

Chepelin — who was opposing French Martin Fourcade and Norwegian Emil Hegle Svendsen during the last stage — also performed moderately well. For speed of skiing, the Belarusian team came sixth, and was fourth fastest at the shooting ranges, ahead of Austria, Sweden and Ukraine.

It seems that our men can rise to ski worthily beside our women. Darya Domracheva and Nadezhda Skardino complained of fatigue on finishing, but team spirits were high, resulting in the decision to participate in the mixed-race finals.

Personal record set in lowland skating rinks

Ice skater Ignat Golovatyuk sets personal record over 500m, on lowland rink, in PyeongChang

"I fulfilled the coaching staff's target, covering 500m confidently, without any mistakes. As a result, I've set a personal record for myself on lowland rinks — of 35.23 seconds (against 35.33 seconds previously). I wanted to accelerate but, for this, I needed to set off among the leaders," noted the sportsman, after the competition.



Ignat Golovatyuk

Golovatyuk noted stiff competition but hopes to be ranked above 22nd place in the final standings. The 500m speedskating was won by Norwegian Havarð Lorentzen, who set an Olympic record, while second place went to Cha Min-kyu, from South Korea, and Chinese Gao Tingyu (34.65) took bronze.

Show of the week



Spectacular tractor biathlon held in Grodno Region's Smorgon District, with display in giant sand pit

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS
20 Lenin Street
Until 11th March. *Between the Word and the Image* Until 15th May. *Serving to the Homeland*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM
12 Karl Marx Street
Until 30th March. *My Ikigai*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM
8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 13th August. *Piotr Masherov: His Heart Beats for People*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS
116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 15th April. *Fiodor Yastreb's Poetic Palette*

STATE MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY
13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 16th April. *Timkovichi: Treasury of Inspiration*

CHELJUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST
84/1 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th June. *Legacy of Belarus: Dedicated to Minsk's 950th Anniversary*

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM
4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 16th April. *Awaken Zhaleika*
MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY
15 Svobody Square
Until 4th March. *Yan Rozental's Artistic School*

LEONID SHCHEMELEV CITY ART GALLERY
10 Revolyutsionnaya Street
Until 11th March. *Familia*

MINSK GALLERY
9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 4th March. *13th Wonder of the World*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY
117 Kazinets Street
Until 25th March. *Water Residents*

CENTRAL BOTANICAL GARDEN OF BELARUS' NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES
Kalinin Lane
Until 11th March. *From Winter to Spring*

TSENTRALNY
13 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 4th March. *My Dear Native Land*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE
1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
01.03. *La Traviata* 02.03. *Giselle*, ou *Les Willis* 03.03. *Turandot* 04.03. *The Fountain of Bakhchisaray*; *Songs from Soviet Films* 06.03. *Festive Concert* 07.03. *Romeo and Juliet*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE
44 Myasnikov Street
01.03. *Without a Dowry* 02 and 04.03. *Tours of Kaliningrad's Regional Musical Theatre: Joaquin* 03.03. *Vivat, Munchhausen; Men's Tango* 04.03. *Miraculous Ring* 05.03. *Cleopatra* 06.03. *Mister X* 07.03. *Musical Cocktail for Fair Ladies*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE
5 Volodarsky Street
01.03. *Tricks of Khanuma* 02.03. *Viva Commedia!* 03.03. *Lady for a Day* 04.03. *Innkeeper* 06.03. *Private Lives* 07.03. *Russian-Style Cabbage for Ladies Only!*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE
20 Engels Street
02.03. *Belvedere* 03.03. *Little Red Riding Hood* 04.03. *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE
7 Engels Street
03.03. *Paulinka* 04.03. *Kolyady Night*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
01 and 02.03. #13 03.03. *The Battlefield* 04.03. *Pygmalion* 06.03. *Forgetting Herostartos!* 07.03. *P. Chekhov's Night of Miniatures. Proposal. Jubilee*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
01.03. *This Is All She* 02.03. *Suffering from Common Sense* 03.03. *Two Miraculous Umbrellas* 04.03. *Three Giselles* 06.03. *Adam's Jokes*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
01.03. *Bankrupt* 02.03. *Vanyushin's Children* 03.03. *New Affair of My Husband* 04.03. *Celestino's Career* 07.03. *The Fool* 08.03. *Curtains Open: For You, Ladies!*

YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street
01.03. *Savage Hunt of King Stakh* 02.03. *Wings of My Youth* 03.03. *Wolf and Seven Goats* 04.03. *Thumbelina*