



Belarusian gem of Chinese way

Belarus is ready to become a strategic junction within the Chinese concept of Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road **Page 5**



Visa free entry to Pushcha

Belovezhskaya Pushcha announces free entry for foreigners, for up to 72 hours **Page 7**



Truly emotional expressiveness on fragile paper

Pastels and Watercolours by Russian Painters from the Second Half of the 19th Century, at National Art Museum of Belarus, as part of Our Collections project **Page 10**



Flowers at Eternal Flame of Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial

Road to the past launched at 4am

Meeting-requiem, marking 74th anniversary of commencement of Great Patriotic War, held at Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial Complex

As is traditional, the ceremony began at 4am, with the path from the entrance to the Zvezda (Star) Memorial to Ceremonial Square seeing re-enactments of episodes from the last peaceful evening in the city on the River Bug. Spectators were able to see the artillery position, exercises by Voroshilov's shooters and OSOAVIAKHIM (the Society for the Promotion of Defence, Aviation and Chemical Building), dancing at the soldiers' club, to gramophone records, as well as the way of life in the barracks and canteen. Photos from pre-war chronicles were also on show.

Brest residents were joined by numerous guests who arrived especially to honour the Day of Remembrance of the Victims of the Great Patriotic War. Around 12,000 gathered for the event at Brest Fortress in the morning. Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, Kirill, timed his visit to Belarus to coincide with the memorial date, leading a short divine liturgy at St. Nicholas Garrison Church, before taking part in the meeting-requiem at Ceremonial Square.

More on the meeting between Patriarch Kirill and President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on **page 3**

Mission completed, results ready for declaration

Belarus and Germany could considerably advance co-operation, notes Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Germany to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Wolfram Maas, as he ends his time with his diplomatic mission in our country

By Vasily Kharitonov

Wolfram Maas has worked as the German Ambassador to Belarus since 2012 and, as is traditional, visited the President to bid him farewell. Although relations with Germany are 'ambiguous', there

have been efforts to strengthen inter-state interaction and our trade turnover reached \$5bn in our recent best years.

There are no obstacles to trade, and 361 enterprises with German capital are currently registered on Belarusian territory. However, Belarusian-

German political dialogue has some way to go. Germany and Europe have been making overtures to extend constructive contacts and, undoubtedly, diplomacy plays a significant role in this process.

Mr. Lukashenko noted during his meeting that Belarus is prioritising collaboration with Germany and is implementing various projects, taking into account the experience of this country. In

particular, German standards, equipment and technologies can be used to modernise Belarusian manufacturing.

The President wishes to develop relations with Germany, saying, "If we join efforts, we can advance relations between Belarus and Germany."

The Head of State underlined, "If we come to an agreement and promote common interests, we'll become responsible partners and will

be ready to implement joint agreements, while discussing any topic or issue."

The Head of State praised the efforts of Wolfram Maas to strengthen Belarusian-German relations, adding, "I thank you for your constructive position as Ambassador to Belarus. You did your best to promote understanding between our nations. You never acted to create tension between Belarus and Germany



H.E. Mr. Wolfram Maas

and you understand our situation, appreciating well the history of our relations. You were a wise and tactful ambassador."

Crisis of security system in Europe reflected in OSCE

President of Belarus meets heads of Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus is in favour of enhancing the OSCE's role in restoring peace to Ukraine, as noted by President Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting the OSCE's General Secretary, Lamberto Zannier, and the Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Michael Georg Link.

Mr. Lukashenko reminded Mr. Link and Mr. Zannier that Belarus (with post-Soviet space partners) has proposed certain OSCE reforms. He stressed, "Unfortunately, these proposals are still being studied or are being blocked by certain states. Meanwhile, the Ukrainian crisis continues, showing us clearly that we need additional arguments today to strengthen the role of our organisation."

The President noted that Belarus' position regarding the OSCE is known. He emphasised, "We are unanimously in favour of strengthening the OSCE's role in Europe, and believe that reform of the organisation should aim to consider-



Lamberto Zannier and Michael Georg Link, in Minsk

Belarus-OSCE bilateral co-operation is rather intensive, with a number of projects dealing with the counteraction of slave trade, border security, and environmental protection being already accomplished

ably enhance its role."

The Head of State underlined that the OSCE has taken action in helping neutralise the situation in Ukraine, saying, "It's the only organisation which has played an important role in agreeing a ceasefire in Ukraine, but we'd like the OSCE

to step up its efforts and play a more prominent role."

Speaking about the role of Belarus, the Belarusian leader said that the OSCE is aware of our country's efforts, being an engine of crisis settlement.

The Head of State explained that Belarus is keen to see the prompt settlement of the situation in Ukraine, since the conflict is 'near our borders'. He asserts, "It isn't happening in a remote country, like Libya, Syria or Iraq; this is a neighbouring country. Therefore, we're concerned about the situation and would like to prevent escalation of the conflict."

The meeting also tackled the OSCE's election monitoring activity, as Belarus' Presidential elections are to take place this year. "You may

rest assured that we've invited all the representatives that you deem necessary," said the Head of State. However, he admitted that he is not satisfied in how the OSCE organises its election monitoring, criticising a lack of universal rules or a common approach. He noted that his remark has nothing to do with receiving 'more criticism than praise'.

The Head of State added that, alongside other former Soviet countries, Belarus has made suggestions regarding a new approach. "These may be discussed and adopted one day, but life goes on. We may agree or disagree, criticising each other or not. Nevertheless, we have commitments to honour to the OSCE," emphasised Mr. Lukashenko.

He is pleased by the intensity of Belarus-OSCE co-operation and the number of projects accomplished in acting against human trafficking, while promoting border security and environmental protection. Projects for utilising liquid rocket fuel and those dealing with drugs trafficking are in the pipeline. The Head of State feels confident that Belarus and the OSCE can implement such projects, which are vital to Europe's well-being.

The OSCE Secretary General, Lamberto Zannier, believes that Belarus is playing an important role in the peaceful regulation of the Ukrainian crisis. Speaking about the state of affairs in the OSCE, he noted that the organisation's freedom to act is under some restriction and is convinced that this reflects the wider situation in Europe rather than a problem within the organisation itself.

Invitation to visit Belarus accepted with gratitude

Upon the initiative of Afghanistan, President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko chats by phone with Islamic Republic of Afghanistan President, Mohammad Ashraf Ghani

The current state of relations came under discussion, alongside prospects for co-operative development between our two states. The President of Afghanistan offered his admiration of the successes of Belarus in the spheres of economic and political construction, while expressing great interest in developing relations with the Belarusian state.

The heads of state talked about the situation in the Central Asian region, with Mohammad Ashraf Ghani noting that his country is battling manifestations of terrorism, thereby contributing to the worldwide struggle. Mr. Lukashenko asserted that the fight against this evil is a globally shared task, with united efforts required to achieve victory.

With the aim of promoting bilateral relations, the heads of state have agreed to activate inter-state contacts across a wide range of areas.

Mr. Lukashenko has invited the Head of Afghanistan to visit Belarus soon, and the invitation has been accepted with gratitude.

Potential continues, with reserves still available

By Maxim Osipov

Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirms potential of OSCE and value of its interaction with Belarus

The Minister for Foreign Affairs, Vladimir Makei, making reference especially to the desire to settle conflict in Ukraine, has announced, "With all it lacks, the

OSCE remains a unique organisation, playing a role in neutralising the situation."

The OSCE has praised Belarus' peace-making efforts, with OSCE Secretary General Lamberto Zannier saying, "We appreciate the role of Belarus. Minsk is well-known as the place of meeting for the contact group and for working groups on Ukraine. I hope that Minsk agree-

ments will promote the peace process."

Belarus considers the OSCE to be an important international forum for dialogue on questions of principle, with particular reference to safety and co-operation in the region. Negotiations at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs have been effective, including a package of technical help projects, co-ordinated in Minsk, for



At the Foreign Ministry meeting

application across Belarus.

Meetings recently took place at the House of Representatives, exploring Belarus' liaison with the

OSCE, its Parliamentary Assembly, and its Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR).

Everyone has own way to church

Alexander Lukashenko sees no obstacles to good relations between believers in Belarus, speaking at meeting with Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, in Minsk



Patriarch Kirill awards Alexander Lukashenko the Order

By Vladimir Khromov

Belarus is home to people of various religions, noted the President. "I see no obstacles to believers' relationships and we very much appreciate this. We'll protect this as much as possible. Catholics and Orthodox believers live peacefully, without rebuke of each other. We try to help one another, to allow everyone to find their own path to church." Mr. Lukashenko also noted that, concerning questions of religion, "people should decide themselves where they go and what they do."

The Belarusian Orthodox Church occupies a leading place in the religious life of the country. "Belarus is a stronghold of Orthodoxy on the western borders of our once great Fatherland," underlined Mr. Lukashenko. He and the Patriarch touched upon events in neighbouring Ukraine, with the President

promising that Belarus will do all it can to end conflict.

The Head of State noted that Belarus' peace-making mission on behalf of Ukraine is well-known, saying, "We — brothers, Russians, Belarusians and Ukrainians — come from one root. It hurts us to see our brothers in trouble. We will do all we can to ease the situation and, if possible, to stop this fratricidal war."

Belarus appreciates the fact that believers in Belarus bear each other no grudges, and intends to maintain this state of affairs, as the President emphasised. The conflict in Ukraine began with a split in the church, as Mr. Lukashenko mentioned. He said, "It began when spiritual values were betrayed and when people started to defy them. All then passed into the plane of military opposition."

President Lukashenko expressed gratitude to Patriarch Kirill for his work in Belarus, where people appreciate the

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selfless role of the Patriarch and his attitude to the country. He commented, "I always have appreciated your efforts, and will continue to do so, being ever grateful for the good you do in our country: as Patriarch, and as a Russian person in our Slavic land." The Head of State noted that Patriarch Kirill has repeatedly visited Belarus and knows how far Belarusians are devoted to their spiritual roots and values.

Kirill, Patriarch of Moscow and all Russia, thanked Belarus for its role in organis-

ing the peace negotiations for Ukraine, adding that the situation is one he greatly grieves for. "It is a real wound to my heart," he said. "The Orthodox Church comprises people from the East and from the West in its congregation, bringing special responsibility. Today, our Church is a unique organisation in Ukraine and a unique force of peace-making potential, having remained outside of the two factions." Patriarch Kirill declared that it is impossible to divide a congregation by political principle.

"Both here and there, are Orthodox people; both here and there, they suffer and die," he said.

He also noted that each time he visits Belarus, he feels warmth and joy. He added, "Setting foot on Belarusian land, you always recollect the special contribution of Belarus in protecting the Fatherland in the last, big war. It has been especially wonderful for me to arrive in this year of celebrating the 70th anniversary of the Victory."

Belarus was the first to meet the terrible hordes which fell upon our land. At great cost, it stood against the enemy, preventing it from immediately crossing the hundreds of kilometres which separated the western border from the capital," noted the Head of the Russian Orthodox Church. He underlined that Belarus played a special role in the Great Victory, and is convinced that, in this year of its 70th anniversary, his

duty is to bow to the heroes who died for the freedom and independence of the Fatherland.

The Head of the Russian Orthodox Church thanked Belarus for inviting him to visit Brest Fortress, where his uncle died, near its walls. He said, "This holy place is an example of heroism, courage, and the ability of people to endure to the end of their physical strength, continuing to struggle, and remaining faithful to their oath."

During the meeting, Patriarch Kirill gave the President of Belarus the Order of St. Seraphim of Sarov of the 1st Degree, and gave him an icon of Saint Vladimir: a prince deemed equal to the apostles. Mr. Lukashenko gave the Patriarch a silver embossed icon of the Guardian Angel and took the Patriarch on a short tour of the Palace of Independence.

Country obviously needs more investors for deep processing of its timber wealth

By Vasily Kharitonov

Alexander Lukashenko demands more effective measures to solve wood-working industry problems, during meeting to discuss urgent issues facing timber enterprises, and their solutions

The state has long supported the timber industry; only dairy enterprises gain more attention. The President has more than once explained that timber not only performs a function in import substitution but has powerful export potential. Belarus can only benefit from processing its raw

materials, making investment into modernisation a wise path. Wood-working companies have received over \$1 billion in funding, bringing high expectations for return and efficiency.

The President told those gathered that some decisions will be unpopular but that most modernisation has been completed. Sadly, market potential has shrunk, and Belarus faces severe global sales competition, including from Russia. The President notes that European timber is more expensive but that it also offers higher quality of production. He warns, "We're living under these conditions



and must solve issues within today's world."

Discussion at the meeting concluded that Belarus cannot wait for markets to present themselves: effective and drastic measures are needed to ensure our market niche. Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov reported not only on financial questions but

wider issues, such as reducing costs, improving quality, and diversification of markets. Mr. Kobyakov notes that progress is evident, with 32 percent of goods exported over the first five months of this year. In 2012, export share hardly exceeded 20 percent. However, there is no time for complacency, since quality needs to be improved and new approaches taken towards expanding sales and selecting effective marketing strategies.

The Presidential Administration's Deputy Head, Nikolai Snopkov, noted that Bellesbumprom should cease to be an administrative unit, becoming a centre of competence, and au-

diting the technologies applied at enterprises. It should unite business processes to develop wood-working countrywide, guiding marketing work, and engaging in finding contracts, working towards the full loading of production capacity. Mr. Snopkov underlines that even full loading of Bellesbumprom enterprises would enable processing of only half the timber cut in Belarus. Full, deep processing is the aim, for which investment is required, to expand facilities. The Government is now charged with analysing all initiatives, before submitting them to the President for adoption.

New trends in system of economic measures

Alexander Lukashenko urges an elaborate and systematic approach to solving problems at large machine building enterprises

By Vladimir Khromov

The session, discussing topical issues of developing major machine building enterprises, discussed flexible measures which could be used to help companies respond to emerging threats and challenges. Mr. Lukashenko noted that the session continued conversation begun the day before, discussing ways of improving the Belarusian wood-working industry and focusing on the most pressing problems facing major industrial enterprises.

According to the President, last year, the Belarusian production sector was affected by complicated foreign economic conditions. Unfortunately, negative trends remain, reducing export volumes and production output, and negatively affecting the financial and economic state of enterprises.

"Issues of quality and prime cost, as well as effective management, manufacturing, and sales diversifi-

cation are to the fore," stressed the Head of State. "We've discussed this problem more than once and have determined what action the state can take. We should honestly and sincerely say what path we're taking, and why. As far as I understand, the Government has now worked out support measures."

The President also demanded, "Every enterprise must plan flexible measures, to respond to emerging threats and challenges. We have agreed on this."

He commented that, in 2013, he assigned top Government officials to oversee enterprises with sales problems. He noted, "In view of the results achieved, it's obvious that the mechanism is weak in current conditions. Nevertheless, the director of an enterprise is primarily responsible for the state of affairs."

Before hearing Government proposals regarding development of the production sector and ways to improve, the President asked the



At Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant

Industry Minister and the Deputy Prime Minister (responsible for this field) to present information on the real situation. Afterwards, the Prime Minister reported on Government measures to bring financial rehabilitation to troubled enterprises.

"I'm interested in dynamics and trends," noted Mr. Lukashenko, adding that he wants to see a clear development plan and systemic approach to handling tasks.

The session discussed the state of Industry Ministry enterprises

as a whole, and with focus on four in particular: MAZ, BelAZ, Gomselmash, and MTZ. The efficiency of their foreign sales promotion came under scrutiny, with the Government proposing measures of state support, to enable enterprises to successfully complete their financial year.

Mr. Lukashenko supported these proposals but has asked that constant monitoring of efficiency be ensured, with reporting to the Presidential Administration and the State Security Committee.

Task for tomorrow

Reducing inflation remains main task of monetary and credit policy for 2015-2016, with ambition of limiting consumer price index to no more than 10 percent growth, notes Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov, addressing Presidium of Council of Ministers

The recent meeting of the Council of Ministers included forecasts for social and economic development for 2016. Mr. Kobyakov underlined, "Our second task is to escalate gold and exchange currency reserves, aiming all the tools of our monetary policy at achieving these two tasks, taking into account external and internal conditions."

Mr. Kobyakov added that the Ministry of Economy, the Ministry of Finance and the National Bank have prepared conceptual approaches towards forecasting budgetary-tax and credit policy for 2016, for use by the Government. He explains, "It's important to define initial conditions correctly, primarily external economic conditions under which our economy will develop. Recent years' experience shows that it's not an easy task, as the world economy changes rapidly."

High standards in professional education

By Alexander Pimenov

Implementation of WorldSkills International standards to provide high quality professional training for real sector, notes Rector of Republican Institute of Vocational Education, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor Arkady Shklyar

"The Belarusian economy is facing a serious challenge in ensuring innovative development, which will inevitably entail changes to the technological processes within many industries. To ensure a sustainable pattern of development, we need a system of high quality professional training," notes Mr. Shklyar.

Belarus' joining of the WorldSkills International (WSI) Non-profit Association in 2014 was an effective step towards improving our system of professional education and towards raising the prestige of working professions. WSI standards have direct impact on the development of the economy and labour resources.

Mr. Shklyar comments, "In future, all final exams in vocational and post-secondary education will need to comply with WSI standards, showing the high quality of our specialists' training. We'll then know that our system of education is performing adequately, meeting today's challenges."

The WorldSkills International Association brings together 72 countries. WSI promotes working professions in modern society, raising their status and contributing to their increased attractiveness among young people, while helping attain high standards in vocational education.

Project connected with pure water

Huge American transnational corporation, Culligan International, to attract preferential loans from foreign banks, to reconstruct and build water supply facilities in Belarus

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus is willing to act as an agent bank on the Belarusian side for the project, noted the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, Anatoly Kalinin, on meeting the Vice President of the American company, Lawrence Bower, and top executives of Culligan Bel Ltd.

The sides have discussed future co-operation to develop modern production of water treatment equipment in Belarus, using cutting-edge water purification and

water treatment technologies. Mr. Kalinin notes that Belarus is interested in attracting investments and state-of-the-art technologies for implementing water supply and water treatment projects. He adds that Belarus is ready to facilitate necessary conditions to develop mutually beneficial collaboration, including on public private partnership terms.

As a result of the meeting, the Deputy Prime Minister has instructed the Housing and Utilities Services Ministry to prepare a plan of joint work with Cul-



Preferential loans attracted for reconstruction of water supply facilities

ligan International. The plan envisages the establishment of an enterprise to make water purification equipment and implement projects to fit water supply facilities with equipment made by the company, using loans from foreign banks.

The Ministry plans to soon sign a relevant protocol of intentions with the company, and Mr. Kalinin in-

tends to visit the production facilities of Culligan Bel Ltd., in Zaslavl, to gain familiarity with its water purification equipment.

The Deputy Prime Minister has suggested localising up to 60-70 percent of goods, work and services of Belarusian companies, and has suggested that Culligan Bel should implement a pilot project to supply water to

agro-towns, using its equipment.

Culligan International controls 40 percent of the global water purification market and is present in over 40 countries. For the sake of making, selling and servicing Culligan equipment within the Eurasian Economic Union, the company has set up Culligan Eurasia Ltd., which is headquartered in Minsk.

Belarusian gem of Chinese 'way'

Belarus is ready to become a strategic junction within the Chinese concept of Silk Road Economic Belt and 21st Century Maritime Silk Road

The concept aims to revive and develop the spirit of the ancient Silk Road, furthering trade and economic relations between China and the Eurasian states, to the benefit of all. Belarus' participation within this economic zone was the main point on the agenda of recent Belarus-China negotiations.

Alexander Lukashenko and Xi Jinping have signed an agreement on friendship and co-operation between Belarus and the Peoples Republic of China. Minsk and Beijing are to jointly promote the Silk Road economic zone, expanding co-operation in such spheres as trade, finance, investment, science and technology, energy, space, transport, IT, agriculture and humanitarian issues, to mutual benefit and advantage. Meanwhile, they agree to preserve the peace, safety and stability of the Eurasian region.

Most Chinese financing and credit resources are being directed towards infra-structure and industrial projects, within the limits of the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park, and towards the development of small and medium-sized businesses in Belarus.

According to the Chairman of the People's Republic



Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park: future skyline

of China, Belarus is an important strategic junction at the centre of Europe, possessing unique advantages for the development of the economic zone of the Silk Road. Belarus' importance has grown following the destabilisation in Ukraine, with its military-political conflict: previously considered to be a strategic partner for China in Europe.

The Ukrainian crisis has obliged China to freeze (or even end) major projects in this country, including the

building of an industrial park and deep-water seaport in Crimea. Now, China has transferred its attention from Ukraine to Belarus: as a more stable and reliable state. Over the last year, Belarus-China co-operation has stepped up considerably, especially within the limits of the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park.

Following the state visit of the Chairman of the People's Republic of China, the Great Stone is to become a gem of

in the Silk Road economic belt, underlining the strategic character of the project for China.

Belarus boasts a well-developed railway network, as well as automobile infrastructure, and close proximity to the Baltic and Black Sea ports, making a perfect transport-logistical economic junction. It enjoys good relations with the Baltic and Black Sea ports, allowing Belarus to connect the 21st century Silk Road with the sea.

Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park

The Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park was established in line with the decree of the President of Belarus and boasts the status of a separate territorial unit with a special legal regime, lasting for 50 years

- The Parks' square — 8,480 hectares
- The construction period — 30 years
- The number of employees — 120,000

Priority areas to be developed in the Park:

- ELECTRONICS
- BIOMEDICINE
- FINE CHEMISTRY
- MACHINE BUILDING
- NEW MATERIALS

In line with the general plan, the northern ground — an industrial-logistical zone — is to be developed during the first stage (851 ha)

It's supposed that initially the Park will employ around 25,000 people

The planned amount of investments is \$5.6bn

Industrial Park Development Company JSC was established for the implementation of the project

The company's statutory fund:

China CAMC Engineering Co., Ltd.	45%
Minsk Regional Executive Committee	32,5%
Harbin Investment Group	15%
Minsk City Executive Committee	3,75%
Horizont Holding	3,75%

China Merchants Group, which works in the field of transport and logistics, real estate and finance, plans to spend \$500 billion on constructing a logistics centre within the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park. The company has signed memorandums on co-operation with the Port of Klaipėda, as well as with Lithuanian Railways and with the Kaunas free economic zone. Successful realisation of the project should inspire

further transport-logistical infrastructure development across the region.

The Minsk visit by the Chairman of the People's Republic of China is evidence of the strategic nature of our partnership, which has an ambitious agenda of future co-operation. The impact will be significant: not only on Belarus, but upon the whole region.

Arseny Sivitsky,
Director of Strategic and Foreign Policy Research Centre

Regardless of the type of ownership

By Yevgeny Bystrov

Belarusbank to offer credit support to efficient Belarusian-Chinese investment projects

Belarusbank JSC is ready to provide lending support to Belarusian-Chinese investment projects using resources available via a credit line of the China Development Bank. It primarily refers to joint projects implemented in spheres of industry, power engineering, transport, small and medium-sized business, alongside modernisation and expansion of manufacture, plans for new construction, and acquisition of equipment and technologies from the People's Republic of China.

In order to get loans, investment projects have to be effective. These projects have to be implemented outside the framework of government pro-



grammes and measures. The loans will be granted only if there is a contract signed with a China resident company for the delivery of equipment, execution of work or provision of services, with the Chinese share at least as large as 50 percent of the contract's value. Belarusbank will finance at most 85 percent of the contract's value. The money will be available for

up to 15 years, with ten years to pay back the loan. The interest rate will be six-month LIBOR (the weighted average interest rate on interbank loans) plus six percentage points. The press service pointed out that loans will be available to Belarusian enterprises regardless of the economy branch, the scale of operation, and the type of ownership.

New challenges surely need to be discussed in advance

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus preserves business climate — favourable for foreign investors, notes Director of International Relations and Communications at Lithuanian ARVI Group, Algirdas Kumža, at the 11th Belarusian-Lithuanian Economic Forum

ARVI is implementing several investment projects in Belarus to set up new production facilities, with unique animal by-product processing plant already up and running in the Lida District. Mr. Kumža noted that the Lithuanian side is interested in successful completion of all projects in the country. "We'll fulfil all our obligations. It's important that Belarus retains its favourable investment climate," he said.

In his turn, Lithuania's Ambassador to Belarus Evaldas Ignatavicius stated that



At the Belarusian-Lithuanian Economic Forum

the two countries have already achieved some success in transit transport, tourism and agriculture. "A lot of funds were invested in our common projects in border regions, and we need to continue this co-operation in the future," believes the Ambassador.

However, new challenges are constantly emerging, and they should become the subjects for discussion at economic forums. According to Evaldas Ignatavicius, this is about the improvement of transit transportation to Kazakhstan,

China and other Asian countries, as well as the development of alternative energy and new areas of interaction in agriculture.

The 11th Belarusian-Lithuanian Economic Forum was held in the city of Marijampole. The forum primarily discussed trade-economic and investment co-operation between Belarus and Lithuania, including collaboration in the field of transport, transit and logistics, financial markets and banking services, alongside agriculture and food industry.

Sea coast ever attractive

Despite the concerns of tourist agencies, Belarusians are booking holidays to the coast for the coming summer, regardless of higher prices (due to the exchange rate). Since March, all payments have been required to be made in Belarusian Roubles but some agencies are, nevertheless, registering increased demand.

By Maria Dorokhova

Early booking trends began last autumn, with demand stagnating over the winter months but, by February, Belarusian thoughts had returned to holiday plans, perhaps inspired by rumours of an expected ban on foreign currency payments and a further price rise.

Time Voyage Agency has registered incredibly 'active' bookings, explains Director Ruslan Segenyuk. He tells us, "Some clients are still coming with Dollars and Euros but we send them to bank exchange offices. To simplify payments, we're fixing our prices in Belarusian Roubles and foreign currency on our site. Some effort was needed to adjust the programme, and it takes some calculation, but it'll become easier. Those in Russia are now used to Rouble settlements. In honesty, we should have shifted to payments in our national currency some time back."

Colleagues support Ruslan, admitting that dedollarisation has not negatively impacted bookings (with some using the National Bank's rate alone). Among them is Top-Tour, whose Deputy General Director for Marketing, Yelena Martynova, comments, "We've conducted dedollarisation and slightly increased our fees, but our number of clients has risen."

Tourists seem to appreciate such bonuses as free excursions (offered by agencies' foreign partners). Those in Montenegro have cut hotel accommodation prices by 30 percent while Belavia has reduced its prices, resulting in many early bookings. Top-Tour staff recollect that, last year, their company had many last-minute deals to Montenegro but, these days, only certain resorts in Bulgaria are cheaper — such as Sunny Beach. "We're also registering fall-



Exotic beaches attract holidaymakers



Holiday season at Minsk airport

ing prices in Kusadasi and Greece," adds AlatanTour's Nikita Lash. "This does not mean that accommodation will always be cheap, as discounts come and go at a moment's notice. However, existing prices are lower than they would be in mid-season."

Time Voyage specialists add that discounts of no more than 10-15 percent — as proposed by partners — would not significantly influence demand. Moreover, not all hotels are ready to compromise, failing yet to realise that the Russian market has lost ground. Only when they see

booking figures lagging are they likely to try attracting foreign tourists with better offers. Of course, since charter flights from Belarus only run when sufficient demand is registered in a timely manner, the system may not accommodate such late deals.

"Flights to Sardinia, the Greek islands and, even, Montenegro have been reduced in price and flights are being cut on destinations which lack demand. Accordingly, clients need to choose from current offers: for example, leaving on June 15th rather than the originally planned June 10th. Tourist companies will soon recalculate 'sold' tours, uniting tourists under single flights and cancelling some charters," comments Mr. Segenyuk.

Igor Cherginets, Belavia's Deputy General Director, agrees, while noting that there are 18 percent more charter flights today than in 2014. However, their list is being daily cut. To support tour operators, Belavia is trying to compromise. The Director of Rosting tourist company, Oleg Malashenko, hopes that citizens will soon come to their senses and make their bookings, before the available flights are fully booked. As experience shows, there are never too many departures from Minsk. Following Russian air carriers' bankruptcy, Belarusians no longer trust departures from Moscow, so flights directly from Belarus are preferable (and save time and money in the long run).

Companies admit that Belarusians mostly choose 'affordable' breaks and are used to 'bargain' holidays with a certain level of service. Few will settle for three star hotels when they are used to five, but may accept bookings to four star accommodation. Mr. Segenyuk recalls that, last March, the average holiday was priced at \$2,500-\$3,000 per person, against \$1,500-\$2,000 at present. Among the most popular destinations are Turkey and Egypt, followed by Montenegro and Georgia. Bulgaria, Greece, Spain and Italy are next in line, having lost some of their previous popularity.

Visiting Vietnam without formalities

By Alexander Pimenov

Vietnam simplifies visa regime for Belarusian citizens

"From July 1st, 2015, citizens of the Republic of Belarus visiting Vietnam for up to 15 days will not need to apply for a visa, regardless of their passport type or purpose of visit. A visa-free regime for Belarusians making short trips to Vietnam will be valid for five years, until June 30th, 2020. Vietnam's legislation envisages the possibility of further extension of the document," notes the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, citing the Vietnamese Government.

Facilitation of the visa regime has been under discussion for the past few years,

alongside talks on a free trade agreement. The Foreign Ministry has announced that 'development of trade-economic relations within the framework of a free trade zone is difficult to accomplish without mutual facilitation of movement, by business circles'. It explains that, in December 2014, Belarus 'simplified visa regulations for citizens of Vietnam on a unilateral basis'. "The reciprocal step was raised when Belarus' Prime Minister, Andrei Kobyakov, met the Prime Minister of Vietnam, Nguyen Tan Dung, during the signing of a free trade agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and the Socialist Republic of Vietnam in Kazakhstan, in May 2015'.

Belarus has praised Viet-



Vietnam offers destination for relaxation

nam's prompt adoption of the corresponding decision: from July 1st, 2015, Belarusians will be able to make visa-free short trips to Vietnam.

The Foreign Ministry notes that Belarus is one of the few countries granted visa-free short trips to Vietnam (for up to 15 days) and is the first country to gain this privilege under Vietnam's new legislation, showing the robust and friendly relations between our countries.

The Government of Vietnam unilaterally introduced visa-free entry to Vietnam (for up to 15 days) for citizens of the Republic of Korea and Japan in 2004, for those of Denmark, Sweden, Norway, and Finland in 2005, and for those of the Russian Federation in 2009. From January 1st, 2015, the Vietnamese Government's power to unilaterally introduce a visa-free regime for citizens of another country was fixed at legislative level.

Top-5 of popular destinations

The most widespread directions for overseas holidays

1. Turkey. The most popular destination for Belarusians, it is offered by dozens of travel agencies, with hundreds of hotel deals, in such towns as Alanya, Kusadasi, Kemer, Belek, Side and Antalya. The 'all inclusive' package is most common.

2. Bulgaria. It is necessary to note that offers 'all inclusive' are not frequent in Bulgarian hotels. Basic offers of tourist agencies -- breakfasts in a hotel or half board. There are variants of tours without food included into the cost. People fly to Bulgaria basically from Minsk.

3. Egypt. Most flights to Egypt transit Moscow or

Kiev, with few departing from Minsk. Belarusians need a visa, which can be gained at the airport on arrival, for \$25.

4. Italy. Beach recreation can be combined with fantastic Italian sightseeing. Choose from resorts on the Adriatic, Tyrrhenian or Ionian seas, continental Italy, Sicily or Sardinia. Most Belarusian tour operators specialise in the Rimini area: a huge resort in the northeast of Italy.

5. Greece. With its long coastline, hundreds of islands and low prices, it continues to attract tourists, with its opportunities for swimming, sunbathing and tasty food. Rhodes, Crete and Corfu are the most popular destinations.



Belovezhskaya Pushcha landscape

Visa free entry to Pushcha

Belovezhskaya Pushcha announces free entry for foreigners, for up to 72 hours

By Valentina Kozlovich

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park is to become even more attractive to tourists: the Bialowieza-Pererov simplified pass allows foreign citizens to travel from the Polish Pushcha to the Belarusian side, staying for up to three days. Border guards at this checkpoint already offer a free New Year's pass, which may have inspired the new visa free idea.

Actually, 72 hours are enough to enjoy all the local sights, although there's plenty to do. You can use the services of a guide to travel by car, from Tsarskaya (Tsar) Avenue, or go as a group. Over the last weekend of May, imitators of noble deer's roar from nine European countries gathered for a competition: the first such high-level event not only in Belarus but across the Union State.

The Museum of Folk Custom and Ancient Arts is certainly worth a visit, with its wooden frame house, situated amidst centuries-old oaks. The air is pure and fresh. You can also try locally distilled gin, since the Pushcha has its own license, or try rug weaving (rootstock is included on the List of Belarus' Non-Intangible Heritage).

Father Frost's Residence is the next stop; it's even more

attractive in summer than in winter, since there are fewer crowds, and Father Frost has more time to devote to his guests. The Museum of Nature is nearby: a truly interesting, educational and beautiful place.

There are open-air cages in the Pushcha but it's definitely better to observe animals in their wild surroundings. Why not visit aurochs and wild boar via one of four cycle routes, which cover 10-27km each? A special 45km route takes tourists from Poland through the Bialowieza-Pererov checkpoint, to Lake

MT'S REFERENCE:

The Belovezhskaya Pushcha covers over 150,000 hectares, with some areas dating back 250 to 350 years. There are even some 500 and 600-year-old oaks and pines. The first law on the Pushcha's protection came into force in the 16th century, instigated by King Sigismund I.



Aurochs in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha

Lyadskoe, and a monument to local victims of a massacre, conducted during the Great Patriotic War. It also takes in Tsarskaya (Tsar) Road, as well

as deer, aurochs and many other attractions.

A simple 1km walking route, through the Yazvinskaya Dubrava (Oak Forest)



Pererov-Bialowieza international border checkpoint

passes through century-old trees: each a natural monument. Alternatively, you can enjoy a two-day hike of 21km, or take your camera on an eight-hour photo safari.

The National Park has created good conditions for tourists coming for several days and needing to spend the night. There's the Kamenyuki Hotel (having three blocks), and a hotel near the museum, as well as several guesthouses run by the forestry. Several agro-mansions offer rooms near the Pushcha, at prices more affordable than local hotels.

Oksana Bogoleisha, the Head of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park's Tourist Department, tells us

Foreign tourists need to show their passport on entering the Belovezhskaya Pushcha (or another document accepted internationally). A document allowing entry to the National Park can then be issued directly, without aid from tourist organisations. Foreigners can register online, on the Park's site, after paying for tourist services, and visitors are free to use all cycle and foot paths, as well as roads approved by the administration.

that programmes for foreign tourists have already been developed. She comments, "We offer excursions lasting one, two or three days, taking in local sites. Guests from Poland can come on bicycles, through our simplified checkpoint, or you can hire a bike or car here,

collecting them from near the checkpoint if necessary."

Not long ago, Belarusians arranged a two-day tour for Polish businessmen, with foreign guests being most impressed by the Pushcha's lakes, having none such on the Polish side.

Declarative character of passage

By Alexander Mityukov

Polish tourist group of 27 enters Belovezhskaya Pushcha through international Pererov checkpoint, to enjoy foot-bicycle route, without need for visas, met by border guards, the management of the reserve, and diplomats

Henceforth, Europeans wishing to see the Belarusian side of the ancient forest are allowed to enter without restriction, simply applying to

a travel agency or filling in an application form online (via the National Park site — at <http://npbp.brest.by>).

Director General Alexander Bury notes that they'd been considering the idea for about four years before implementation. He tells us, "There should be no borders to tourism. We want to increase tourist flow, and there's so much to see on our side of the Pushcha: beautiful landscapes and animals, as well as museums, hotels, cafes and souvenir shops. As we gain

more tourists from the West, we'll develop infrastructure: in particular, in the northern zone of the Pushcha."

There's no doubt that tourists bring revenue. Mr. Bury is sure that, in the near future, the National Park could generate up to \$25 billion a year. Border guards already expect an increase in volumes of passenger traffic through Pererov.

Having passed promptly through border control, Polish tourists shared impressions. The organiser of the first visa-free excursion, from

a travel agency in Bialystok, Yevgeny Lavrenyuk, underlines, "It was simple for us to order a pass from the Administration of the National Park. We found the first tourists as soon as we advertised, listing a one-day programme of seeing the Pushcha museum, open-air cages, Father Frost's Residence, the folk museum and a sightseeing tour. We plan to next take a three-day group." Some visitors have already made multiple trips, such as Yeva Kondratyuk, although it was her first visit



Guests from Poland at the border crossing

to the Pushcha in this way. She asserts that the process is now simpler, requiring only passport details and insurance. "I think that our tourists will choose to travel to your

country more often now," she stresses. A similar move is soon expected from the Polish side, allowing Belarusians to visit that part of the Pushcha more freely.



Protesters gather in front of the Athens Parliament during a rally calling on not to leave Eurozone

Greeks are in last-ditch rally to stay in the Eurozone

With Greece once again on a knife edge over whether it will leave the Euro, thousands of people rallied in Athens calling for the country to remain in the bloc

Their protest, outside Parliament, took place as a crisis meeting of Eurozone ministers was underway in Luxembourg. The urgent talks ended with no deal. In a recent opinion poll, 7 out of 10 Greeks want to keep the

Euro at all costs. One Athens resident said, "I'm here because I want my country to stay in the Eurozone. I have kids and grandchildren and I want them to have a future. Without the Euro, they won't"

Another protester added, "I don't want to think about leaving the Euro, I don't want to think about it. This will be a disaster not only for my generation, but for everyone. It's really dramatic." Demonstrators say

any road that Greece takes without Europe will be a nightmare. They've demanded the government reach an agreement with lenders. With time running out, Greece needs to take some tough decisions.



Airbus in the limelight at Le Bourget

European Airbus beats Boeing in sales battle at Paris Air Show

If you listen to Airbus then size does matter...

The European plane maker says it has taken 421 orders worth 50-billion Euros at the Paris Air Show. A last minute deal for 110 A321 with Hungary's Wizz Air gave it reason to celebrate.

Even if none are for its super jumbo A380, Airbus insists bigger planes are the future with more and more people expected to take to the skies.

John Leahy is Airbus' Chief Operating Officer, "How are we going to double the amount of traffic in 15 years if all we can do is double

the number of aircraft? You can't do that. We need larger aircraft. It just so happens that the A380 is a larger aircraft that people prefer to fly in. It's quieter, smoother, with bigger seats, burns less fuel per passenger for each one of its trips and has less impact on the environment."

Crucially for Airbus in the battle for bragging rights it has beaten its rival Boeing for sales at Le Bourget.

But the US firm has arguably won the best media coverage, largely thanks to footage of the near vertical take-off of its 787 Dreamliner. In total, Boeing took 331 orders worth some 43-billion Euros.

Waterloo re-enactment kicks off in Belgium

It's been two hundred years since Britain and its allies defeated Napoleon Bonaparte on the muddy battlefields of Waterloo, just outside of Brussels

The area will be hosting a three-day long reconstruction of the battle...as it happened back in 1815. These reconstructions take place every five years. But with this year being the 200th anniversary, it's an extra special celebration this time around.

The Battle of Waterloo brought about the final downfall of Napoleon Bonaparte and his attempts to redraw Europe's borders by force. Senior royalty, and top politicians gathered at Waterloo earlier to make a battle that would leave more than fifty thousand men killed or wounded. None, however, were there from France. It seems that Napoleon's defeat two hundred years ago remains too much for Gallic pride to swallow.

The show is set to be a spectacle



Frenchman visits the French troops' bivouac

of sound and light, with some 5,200 actors playing the role of soldiers in both armies. Royalty from across Europe will be present for the celebration, including senior royals from the British Royal Family.

But it is the Belgian monarchs, who will kick things off. Senior European officials and the prime minister of Belgium will also be present.

Eight new cases of MERS in South Korea

South Korea's Health Ministry has recorded eight new cases of Middle East Respiratory Syndrome or MERS, bringing the total to 162

So far 19 people have died since the virus was first diagnosed in May in a businessman who had returned from a trip to the Middle East. Nineteen others have recovered and been discharged from hospital. The World Health Organisation (WHO) which has described the South Korea flare up as 'large and complex' has traced all the cases to healthcare facilities.

Meanwhile, in Germany a 65-year-old man has died from the virus. He'd become infected while visiting an animal market on the Arabian Peninsula. MERS emerged in the Middle East in 2012 and is from the same family as the SARS virus. It can cause coughing, fever and pneumonia.

Saudi stocks now open to foreign investors

Saudi Arabia has opened its stock market up to foreigners for the first time as part of long-awaited economic reforms in the world's largest oil exporter

For now, foreigners will be limited to buying Saudi stocks via swaps involving international banks and through a small number of exchange-traded funds.

Foreign investors own about 15 percent of other, much smaller stock markets in the Gulf such as Dubai. If foreigners raise their ownership of Saudi market to that level, it could mean an inflow of some 40 billion Euros into the country.

China goes to Hollywood

Hollywood is beating a path to Beijing with China now the biggest market for American blockbusters

Product placements and Chinese stars are now becoming increasingly common as the US film industry tries to remain the big player in the market. Professor Ying Zhu of New York's City University believes it is further evidence of China's global power.

"Stalin once said that if I could control the medium of American motion pictures, then I need nothing else to convert the entire world to Communism. Cineam has become a battlefield for competing cultural values, and political values, as well as economic values."

China represents around 3.5 billion Euros to the US economy and increasingly Chinese money is being used to finance films whether or not they feature the country's own stars. It means there is growing expectation that a Chinese company will soon take over a major Hollywood studio; giving Beijing more say in what we all watch.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Muses of arts fly to Nesvizh

Nesvizh is often called 'little Paris', having been the uncrowned capital of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania and, for two decades, host to the *Muses of Nesvizh Festival of Arts*

By Irina Svirko

Nesvizh has played a significant role in the development of our national musical culture, as begun by the noble Radziwill family. They aspired to glory as one of the largest cultural centres of Europe. It was Nesvizh, in the 17th-18th century, that attracted the best musical talent and which influenced musical trends, combining local and western cultures.

The National Academic Concert Orchestra, headed by People's Artist of Belarus Mikhail Finberg, as Art Director and Chief Conductor, is helping revive music undeservedly forgotten, making it again familiar. Supported by local authorities, ancient polonaises, mazurkas, sonatas and operas are being performed,



At the *Muses of Nesvizh Arts Festival*

rivalling the melodies of well-known European classics. Our musical heritage dates from the 17th century (not 1917 — as is commonly held).

The compositions of Michal Kleofas Ogiński, Jan Holland, Michail Yelsky, Napoleon Orda, Józef Kozłowski, Stanisław Moniuszko, Mieczysław Karłowicz, Maciej and Antoni Radziwill are being revived.

They once sounded at grand balls, held in castles and on noble estates, spreading in fame across the world.

Academic music certainly does hold the power to capture a wide audience in Belarus, even beyond the cosmopolitan streets of Minsk. Full houses at Nesvizh concerts offer proof, as maestro Finberg declares proudly. Those who first came as

children now return to the festival with their own youngsters.

The 20th *Muses of Nesvizh* has featured a diverse programme hosted by the central regional library, the town hall, culture and recreation centre, and the theatrical hall of the Palace Estate. Debates and seminars, exhibitions and concerts have delighted those in attendance.

MT'S REFERENCE:

The *Muses of Nesvizh Arts Festival* gathers leading experts in the spheres of history, architecture, music, theatre and fine arts. Their research has found embodiment this year in a book entitled *Muses of Nesvizh: 20 Years of Artistic Education*, launched at a conference traditionally organised as part of the festival.

Over these two decades, the event has matured and grown, gathering new admirers and shaping the tastes of audiences. It has passed the baton in reviving our little known musical heritage across Belarus' cities, each distinctive historically and culturally. *Muses of Nesvizh* is a predecessor of festivals attended by the orchestra in Zaslavl, Mstislavl, Turov, Chechersk, Pinsk and Khoyniki: in total, 21 regional centres.

Organising a special musical holiday is no simple task; making it traditional is even more challenging. However, the founders of Nesvizh celebrations are sure that ancient and modern national music should continue to sound. Next May, the muses will again meet in their hospitable capital.

Michal Kleofas Ogiński's chanson

In 2008, Michal Kleofas Ogiński's archive, of 6,000 documents (including musical notation) returned to Belarus from Russia. It is now kept at the Museum of Theatrical and Musical Culture. This year, the composer would have celebrated his 250th birthday and researchers have been working hard to advance their studies. Svetlana Nemogay, a candidate of art studies and a leading specialist in Michal Ogiński's artistry, in Belarus and Europe, tells us of recent discoveries and findings.

By Irina Ovsepyan

Svetlana, what surprises have Michal Ogiński's archives brought us?

I've worked with the musical section of the archives, which were returned from Russia. Ogiński's documents and notes can be found all over the globe. Many were preserved at the Lithuanian Historical Archives and a great number of documents are kept at his Zalesie mansion, including the Ogiński's musical albums and polonaise sheet music. In turn, documents belonging to his daughters — Amelia and Emma — are kept at Krakow's Jagiellonian Library. Over the past decade, we've gained new understanding of Michal Ogiński's musical legacy, thanks to our diverse discoveries.

Tell us more.

Until recently, encyclopaedias stated that Ogiński composed 17

ballads; not long ago, we discovered a unique edition of his ballads, at Moscow's Russian State Library. His first was published in 1802, in St. Petersburg: by Michal's teacher, Józef Kozłowski. We've been able to add

ten new vocal works by Ogiński to our inventory. He composed in so many genres, including chansons, canzonets and villanelles. Moreover, until recently, we believed that he'd composed only three marches: we now have five.

Many only know him for one composition.

His 'Farewell to Homeland' is truly a work of genius. Unsurprisingly, Ogiński is associated exclusively with this polonaise in the mind of many. However, this polonaise brought him fame to only after his death. As legend says, Michal Kleofas was leaving his home town of Zalesie by carriage when the melody came to him. Of course, this isn't true.



Michal Kleofas Ogiński



Svetlana Nemogay

Do you know the real story?

The first edition of his 'Farewell to Homeland' was composed in 1831, two years before his death. Despite its popularity, the polonaise is probably Ogiński's most mysterious work, and was probably composed as an artistic reflection on the 1830-1831 rebellion. Ogiński stayed in Florence, printing his works there (and in Milan). However, his 'Farewell to Homeland' was released in Paris, as a French edition. In my opinion, Michal Kleofas could have sent notes to Paris, as he followed events occurring back home. Among his legacy is a historical literary document: 'Observing the Events of 1830-1831'.

What other works is Ogiński most known for?

He gained recognition for his 'F-major Polonaise': among his first polonaises, composed in 1792 and performed at balls. Variations and fantasies were composed on its theme

and genius pianist Maria Szymanowska (Adam Mickiewicz's mother-in-law) was known for playing it.

Ogiński's works received various interpretations during his lifetime: all amateur, like small, unprocessed crystals, lacking harmony. Ernst Theodor Amadeus Hoffmann, who composed *The Nutcracker* and *The Mouse King* reviewed Ogiński's works. He worked in Warsaw for some time, as a musical critic. Hoffmann heard various versions and only later received an original copy of the sheet music. He was disappointed that Ogiński's piano forte versions were weak and less interesting than those he'd heard at concerts. Of course, this was only Hoffman's opinion but it shows that various interpretations of Ogiński's work were in circulation. We have the right to enrich Ogiński's legacy, processing his 'crystals' and creating new frames for them.

Young theatres to reveal new ideas

By Anastasia Shoplya

Minsk hosting 2nd Youth Theatre Forum of CIS, Baltic States and Georgia in November

Taking part in the forum will be theatrical troupes from 14 countries: Russia, Ukraine, Moldova, Latvia, Lithuania, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Uzbekistan and Estonia. Belarus will be represented by Mogilev's Regional Puppet Theatre, performing Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, staged by Igor Kazakov.

Exhibitions and round-tables are planned, with audiences able to enjoy the work of young theatres, full of new ideas, and unconstrained by traditions. The Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Theatre Workers, Alexey Dudarev, notes, "This is not a theatre of the future but a young theatre. This is how they see, how they go forward and how they think." He hopes that young artistes will keep seeking originality and fresh concepts, while remembering that art (and especially the theatrical arts) is aimed at an audience.

The decision to organise the forum was made by the International Confederation of Theatre Associations, the Interstate Humanitarian Co-operation Fund and the Belarusian Culture Ministry. The 1st Youth Theatre Forum of the CIS, Baltic States and Georgia was held in Moldova's Chisinau, in 2012.

Truly emotional expressiveness on fragile paper

Pastels and Watercolours by Russian Painters from the Second Half of the 19th Century, at National Art Museum of Belarus, as part of Our Collections project



By Veniamin Mikheev

The exhibition gathers artworks from the National Art Museum of Belarus, featuring over 30 pieces by 20 artists. Watercolours are widely held to be no less emotionally expressive than oil paintings, having their own fragility and ethereality, as well as depth of light and colour; they have their own charm and require both technique and flair. Accuracy is important, since corrections in the course of work are almost impossible, for fear of losing freshness, and colour transparency.

The last two decades of the 19th century and the beginning of the 20th century were a time of great interest in watercolours by Russian painters, who would use the medium for preparatory sketches for future canvases and theatrical set designs. The Society of Russian Watercolour Painters launched, and there were numerous watercolour exhibitions, displaying



Apollinary Vasnetsov's *Veche in Pereyaslavl-Yuzhny, 12 Century (1908-1909)*

pieces by masters in various creative trends. This, undoubtedly, stimulated Russian artists' interest in watercolour techniques.

Almost all painters work with watercolours, yet without stylistic unity or uniformity of technique, each having their own preferences. The use of

'pure' watercolours is rare, since most apply a mixture of mediums: watercolour, gouache, pastels and charcoal.

The *Pastels and Watercolours by Russian Painters from the Second Half of the 19th Century* exhibition familiarises us with watercolour painting from Russia, showing the main trends



Boris Kustodiev's *Meeting at the Corner (1920)*

are on show, some more famous than others, but each with their own manner, world outlook, and technique, depending of their task.

Larger works by Vasily Surikov, Isaac Levitan and Alexandre Benois are on show: Surikov's *Pompeii. Dorian Columns* (1884) uses transparent



Much to see at the exhibition



Ivan Goryushkin-Sorokopudov *Skete (1910)*

and characteristics from this period, and demonstrating their emotional expressiveness. Works by 20 artists

glaze, in his favourite tones of delicate blue-grey. Meanwhile, we see the softly overflowing musicality of nature's moods in Levitan's work. Benois' *Versailles. At Curtius*, his *Peterhof. Golden Mountain*, and his *Peterhof. Hermitage*, focus on architectural motifs, giving a real feel of the age. Each work uses graphic detail but is modern in atmosphere, with classical use of colour and the addition of

whiting ceruse.

Albert Benois only worked in 'pure' watercolours or a mixed technique, creating such landscapes as *Summer Evening* and *Finland. View from the Balcony*. He used wide, free strokes and complex colour solutions, shifting from one tone to another and using the colour of his paper to create a feeling of light and air, as in the open spaces of nature.

Apollinary Vasnetsov is known for his historical works, such as *Torzhok* (1930) and *Moscow. Voskresensky Bridge in the 18th Century* (1917). He used a mixed technique, in which colour never played a leading role. Rather, the graphics dominate the compositional structure and space.

Being a great age for the theatre, this found its response in the creativity of painters. Watercolours were used to decorate theatre sets and to adorn costumes. *Veche in the Moscow Kremlin* (1901) is a sketch of the set used for Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's *Pskovityanka* opera, created by one of Russia's leading theatrical artists Alexander Golovin.

Dreams definitely come true if not betrayed

By Vladimir Velikhov

Legendary bass guitarist Bob Daisley, of hard rock and heavy metal fame, joins Zapashny brothers for K.U.K.L.A (Doll) show

Like various other global celebrities, Bob Daisley is planning to come to the Belarusian capital this autumn, to attend the *K.U.K.L.A* show, at Minsk-Arena. On learning of this international initiative, he showed great interest, saying, "I love its unusual idea of uniting countries and continents, laying a bridge of co-operation and friendship, and helping children from all over the world. I know that several famous personalities have already supported the project, in-

cluding Tony Moore (a descendant of Pushkin and the Radziwills) and well-known sportsmen, actors, dancers and illusionists. Just imagine us all gathering in Minsk; it will be an incredible concentration of talent, art and energy. A true show could be created with such participants."

The musician believes that charity resides in our ability to share, while expecting nothing in return. Giving advice to project participants, Mr. Daisley recalls the saying that 'if at first you don't succeed, try, try again'. He urges, "This is what I've learnt from life and what has helped me to achieve and realise my dreams. Insistence and persistence pay off in the end."

The musician wishes the project



Bob Daisley

all success, and hopes that its participants achieve their goals, never betraying their dreams and always remembering that a country's future

lies in its youth.

The *K.U.K.L.A* charity show is the first of its kind for the Zapashny brothers, who are famous artistes

and stage producers. Including envoys from around the globe, who are known for their work with others, there will be a contest to choose the best life story connected with the circus, within each nominated country. Ten talented young people will then be chosen, who may attend a workshop of friendship, uniting participants and art envoys for a single day; they will make 'dolls' of wood, glass and fabric — representing the country or region in which they live. The initiative aims to unite artistic young people from all over the world. Meanwhile, famous artistes, sportsmen, musicians, dancers and actors from Malta, Latvia, Finland, Moldova, Armenia and the Netherlands have joined the project.

Not a single day without medals

Belarusian national team's successful performance at 1st European Games in Baku worthy of victorious slogan



Vladislav Goncharov and Nikolay Kazak

By Igor Grishin

Belarusian athletes claimed medals across a long list of disciplines, including cycling, shooting, rowing, gymnastics, table tennis and wrestling. In fact, the event has been among the richest in terms of medals for our sportsmen, who took 10 of 25 possible.

On a single day, our gymnasts performed brilliantly in their group exercises: Ksenia Cheldyshkina, Anna Dudenkova, Maria Kadobina, Valeria Pishchelina and Arina Tsitsilina won gold for the clubs and balls. The leader of Belarus' national calisthenics team, Melitina Stanuyta, confirmed her supremacy, capturing three personal medals: silver for the ball event, and bronze medals for her



Vladimir Samsonov

exercises with hoop and clubs).

Belarusian trampoline jumpers were also a success in individual events: Vladislav Goncharov won sil-



Gold medalist Yelena Omelyusik



Melitina Stanuyta

ver, while Anna Garchenok captured bronze. Later, Vladislav Goncharov and Nikolay Kazak won silver in synchronised jumping.

Vitaly Bubnovich claimed bronze in the 50m small-bore rifle shooting (three positions) and the women's acrobatic team of Yekaterina Borisevich, Veronika Nabokina and Karina



Y. Borisevich, V. Nabokina and K. Sandovich

Sandovich won two bronze medals: for balancing and twisting.

Interestingly, a record 49,000 fans attended 11 competition events, at the ten host arenas of the European Games. Meanwhile, the Olympic Stadium — which hosted athletics events — attracted 22,000 fans: a Games' record.

Victor Goncharenko heads Ural

By Igor Leshin

One of Belarus' most successful coaches changes his status of an unemployed (which lasted for seven months) after Kuban's heads dismissed him

Ural Yekaterinburg's official site informs that a three-year contract has been signed with Mr. Goncharenko. On June 20th, he is to arrive in Yekaterinburg. Some time later, his team will renew training for a new season after holidays. "Victor Goncharenko is a very good coach. We believe he would become the specialist able to train our team qualitative playing and ensure Ural's progress," optimistically comments Ural's President, Grigory Ivanov.

Belarusians have also grounds to be happy for one of their most successful coaches. After his headline-making dismissal from Kuban last November, Mr. Goncharenko was believed to join Tosno, Rostov, Amkar, Terek, Mordovia, Lokomotiv and Spartak. However, he actually was staying on holidays — which was truly nervous.

The period of uncertainty is in the past now and this is positive. Ural was close to leaving Premier League last season, preserving its place only due to matches against Tom. However, this fact should not disappoint.

Preserving place in Super League

Belarusian national athletics team ranked ninth at European Athletics Team Championships, hosted by Cheboksary, preserving their place in Super League

Over two days, athletes from 12 countries fought for medals across 40 disciplines and for the right to remain among the world's strongest track-and-field squads. The national team of Germany lost its championship position of last year to Russia, having to be content with second place. France was third.

Nine teams kept their places in the Super League, scoring the greatest number of points. Sweden, Finland and Norway have been knocked out, now moving to the first league.

Lessons from Mikhail Grabovski

By Yegor Glebov

Belarusian NHL player and national team forward Mikhail Grabovski spends half his holiday overseeing his Surrender annual training event, with 1999-born boys, who are candidates for the junior team

"Rather than teaching particular tactics and techniques, the camp prepares players for their transition



Mikhail Grabovski has much to share with youngsters

to professional hockey, showing them how to deal with the business side, and how to get the most from training sessions. Our task is to ensure they enjoy the experience," explains Mr. Grabovski, speaking of the event that has been held since 2011.

According to the hockey player, those attending the camp are the future of the team. He adds, "All are great, boasting their own strong features. Everything depends on them

playing at the highest level."

Over 40 ice-hockey players took part in daily intense training sessions at Chizhovka-Arena. All born between 1999 and 2000, they are candidates for the national junior team (U-17), gathered from across the whole country. There were also several legionnaires taking part in the six day training camp. Besides physical exercise, they enjoyed ice training, video work and several full matches.

Reaching play-offs from third place in group

Belarusian basketball squad loses to favourite France at European Basketball Championship (58:64)

Our Belarusian sportswomen, coached by Anatoly Buyalsky, were down by 16 points by the middle of the second quarter, with the score at 18:34. Nevertheless, they did not give up, managing to narrow the gap to three points by the end. Their attacks have, previously, lacked accuracy, bringing defeat at the hands



of the Czech Republic (70:73) and Montenegro (72:77).

Early stage matches saw the Belarusian team beat Italy (85:76), Poland (65:49), Turkey (67:52) and Greece (82:57). Their victory over Turkey and Greece helped in summing up the results of the second group round.

Mr. Buyalsky remains positive, saying, "Although we lost three times, each was down to just one or two throws. We lacked the luck we experienced at the beginning of the tournament.

Shot of the week



International Yoga Day celebrated at Central Children's Park (named after Gorky) in Minsk

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

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

Until 13th July. *Summer Holidays:* exhibition by Vasily Peshkun

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*

NATIONAL HISTORY

MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 5th July. *Magic of Eastern Brush*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY

MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

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

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

MINSK CITY HISTORY

MUSEUM

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street

Until 29th June. *From Me:* exhibition by sculptor Vladimir Zhbanov

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 27th August. *Spirit of Religious Tradition and Printed Icon*

Until 31st August. *Feeling of the Colour*

Theatres

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

26.06. Nights of Bolshoi Theatre at Radziwill Castle: The Firebird; Scheherazade

27.06. Nights of Bolshoi Theatre at Radziwill Castle: Pagliacci

28.06. Nights of Bolshoi Theatre at Radziwill Castle: gala-concert by the Bolshoi Theatre stars; Kapellmeister; La Serva Padrona

29.06. Opera Is Laughing

BELARUSIAN STATE

ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

29.06. Yunona and Avos

30.06. Blue Cameo

01.07. Women's Revolt

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL

ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

26.06 and 02.07. The Black Lady of Nesvizh

28.06. Paulinka 29.06. Office

30.06. Not Mine 01.07. People of the Marsh

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL

ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

26.06. Viva Commedia! 27.06. An Ideal Husband

28.06. Oedipus 30.06. Bridegrooms

01.07. Taming of the Shrew 02.07. Pane Kokhanku

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue

26.06. The Makropoulos Case

27 and 28.06. An Unnamed Star

30.06. Robbery at Midnight

01 and 02.07. #13

REPUBLICAN THEATRE

OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

29.06. Adam's Jokes 30.06. Silent Love

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

27.06. Prostokvashino Holidays

30.06. A Midsummer Night's Dream or King Lear

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

June and July of decades and centuries past come to life

June 26th. In 1970, Belarusian callisthenics gymnast Marina Lobach was born in Smolevichi. An Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR and an international category judge, she took gold at the 1988 Olympics, was European champion and claimed silver in some exercises.

June 27th. In 1967, Belarusian discus throwing champion Vasily Kaptyukh was born. He won bronze at the 26th Olympics (1996, Atlanta, USA).

June 28th. In 1923, Belarusian architect Vladimir Chanturiya was born: a historian of architecture and a teacher, he helped design the historical centre of Grodno and Vitebsk.

June 29th. In 1950, musician and composer Vasily Kupriyanenko was born in Mogilev. He collected traditional folk songs and, since 1978, has headed the *Khoroshki* folk dance group. The Honoured Artiste also headed *Svyata* state folk group (which he also established) from 1984-2001.

June 30th. In 1920, Doctor of Pedagogical Sciences, Professor Ivan Kharlamov was born in the village of Sharpilovka, in the Gomel District.

The scientist, teacher, academician wrote scientific papers on didactics, theory and methods of upbringing.

July 1st. In 1925, Honoured Architect Vasilisa Shilnikovskaya was born. She designed recreation zones near

classical music for folk groups.

June 26th. In 1580, Polotsk's Jesuit Collegium — dating from the 18th-19th century — was founded. Since 2005, it has housed Polotsk University's Historical-Cultural Department.



the city of Minsk and the water reservoirs of Krinitza and Drozdy, and was among those who planned the eastern districts of the city, around Slepianka water-park.

July 2nd. In 1920, Honoured Figure of Culture Mikhail Lisitsyn was born in Vitebsk. The musician, conductor and teacher arranged

June 26th. In 1941, Soviet pilot Nikolay Gastello died, with his entire crew. The Belarus-born squadron commander dived his plane into fire from Nazi fascist tanks. A monument stands near Radoshkovichi to honour the pilot's bravery.

June 26th. In 1888, the first stone was solemnly laid into the foundations of the city theatre,

in Alexandrovsky Park.

June 26th. In 1945, the BSSR joined other anti-Hitler coalition states to found the UN; it signed the UN Charter (ratified by the BSSR Supreme Council) on August 30th, 1945.

June 26th. In 1974, Minsk received its Hero-City title.

June 27th. In 1978, the Soyuz-30 spacecraft was launched, with an international crew on board: Belarus-born commander P. Klimuk, a USSR cosmonaut, was joined by Polish cosmonaut-researcher M. Germaszewski.

June 28th. In 1979, Belarus' Red Book was established, listing rare and endangered plants and animals.

June 28th. In 1958, Molo-dechno's M. Oginski Musical College opened. A monument to M. Oginski stands in front, unveiled in 2001.

June 29th. In 2002, a monument was unveiled to Boriov's founder, Boris Vseslavich, marking the city's 900th anniversary.

June 30th. In 1995, a metro section was launched connecting Minsk's Frunzenskaya and Pushkinskaya stations, linking remote residential districts with the city centre.