



# Earthly and cosmic life of artist Jazep Drozdovich

In the history of Belarusian culture, the personality of Jazep Drozdovich occupies a special place. Everything he did was of a cosmic, universal scope. It is from here that Drozdovich's creativity springs — which is once again reinforced by the exhibition held at the National Art Museum.

# Vector of partnership should be strengthened

Belarus and India should more decisively and actively develop economic relations, noted the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, as he met the Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the lower house of India's Parliament, Sumitra Mahajan

By Vladimir Velikhov

"Taking into consideration our common stance on the international agenda, mutual support at international organisations, first of all, at the United Nations, we need to act more decisively and actively in promoting economic relations, investment and so on," noted Alexander Lukashenko.

The Head of State noted that on the sidelines of the recent Shanghai Co-operation Organisation Summit in China, he met with India's Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, to discuss bilateral relations. The parties outlined promising areas for collaboration. "We talked a lot about Belarus-India relations," added the President.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that the visit of Sumitra Mahajan to Belarus testifies to the commitment of the leadership of the two countries to strengthen relations. "We would like these political contacts to rely on a strong trade and economic foundation," asserted the Head of State. "We have everything in place to move away from conventional trade (this is also important, of course) to joint investment and joint ventures both in India and Belarus."

Moreover, Belarus had invited India to establish a joint industrial park to manufacture high-tech goods following the model of co-operation with China. In addition, the country offers its transportation and logistics capabilities to transport Indian goods to the regions of the EU and the EAEU. "The

proposals remain valid. I know that your country welcomed them. We would like to proceed to the park construction in Belarus more quickly," noted the Head of State.

India is Belarus' biggest and most promising trading partner in South Asia. In 2017, bilateral trade exceeded \$455 million —



Sumitra Mahajan

up by almost 12 percent. Belarus has a trade surplus of \$161 million. In January-March 2018, Belarusian exports amounted to \$95 million — up by 39.2 percent over the same period a year before. Belarus' major exports to India are potash fertilisers, chemical products and processed leather.

After Alexander Lukashenko's visit to India in September last year, the two countries agreed to localise the production of Belarus' major machine-building brands in India, to set up Belarusian equipment demonstration centres and vocational training centres, to ramp up the production of drugs in Belarus using Indian technology, to boost bilateral trade and expand interaction in the services sector.

Belarus and India have also agreed to discuss the use of the Indian credit line of \$100 million to set up enterprises in the special economic zone at Bremino-Orsha. In June, a delegation of investors visited Belarus, including this site in their agenda.

Mutual support in the international arena is a symbol of Belarusian-Indian friendship, noted the Speaker, during the meeting with the President. "Our relations are based on many years of friendship. The support we lend each other in the international arena is, of course, a symbol and demonstration of this friendship," said Sumitra Mahajan.

Belarus and India have the same or similar positions on major issues on the international agenda. The countries maintain constructive co-operation in the human rights agenda of the United Nations.

## Twenty years progress in a year

On meeting the Speaker of the Senate of the Oliy Majlis, Nigmatilla Yuldoshev, the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, notes dynamic developing relations with Uzbekistan

By Vladimir Khromov



Nigmatilla Yuldoshev

"In little more than a year, speaking about the new era, as I often describe it to my friend Shavkat [Uzbekistan President Shavkat Mirziyoyev], we have made even more progress than in the past twenty years. And I have made a small contribution to it. This is the achievement of your president. He is a smart and talented person who saw the whole world as the prime minister, evaluated the situation not only on the Minsk-Tashkent axis but also in other directions, and did a lot to ensure progress," noted the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that the

main achievements of Uzbekistan are in the economy. "Diplomacy and politics are good things. It's always good to talk. But it is much more important to have tangible results. And you have made it. This is the greatest achievement of your government. The relations between Belarus and Uzbekistan testify to the breakthrough of Uzbekistan in the international arena and in international relations," added the President.

The Head of State spoke positively about the development of bilateral relations and fulfilment of plans. The leaders of the two states previously agreed that the

two sides should advance their co-operation before the presidents' meeting within the framework of the official visit. "So that we can put something on the table to the Uzbek and Belarusian nations," the President of Belarus noted.

Mr. Lukashenko remarked that, of course, there are problems in any state. However, he is convinced that Uzbekistan will manage to overcome their acute problems within five years because the country has a considerable human potential, good climatic conditions and is doing its best to modernise the economy and society.

"But you should remember that we aren't outside observers of these processes. Of course, we are happy for your achievements. We are active supporters and, if you want, can be the driving force for progress in Uzbekistan. You can count on us," assured the Belarusian leader.

In turn, Nigmatilla Yuldoshev stressed that people in Uzbekistan respect the Belarusian President very much and are happy for the country's achievements and its growing international authority. "We know and appreciate that you have paid great attention to the development of co-operation between our countries. We will always remember that at a time of deep sorrow for our nation you visited Uzbekistan to pay tribute to our first President, Islam Karimov," he said.

It was announced that the President of Belarus plans to arrive in Uzbekistan on an official visit in September.

## Issues for adjustment

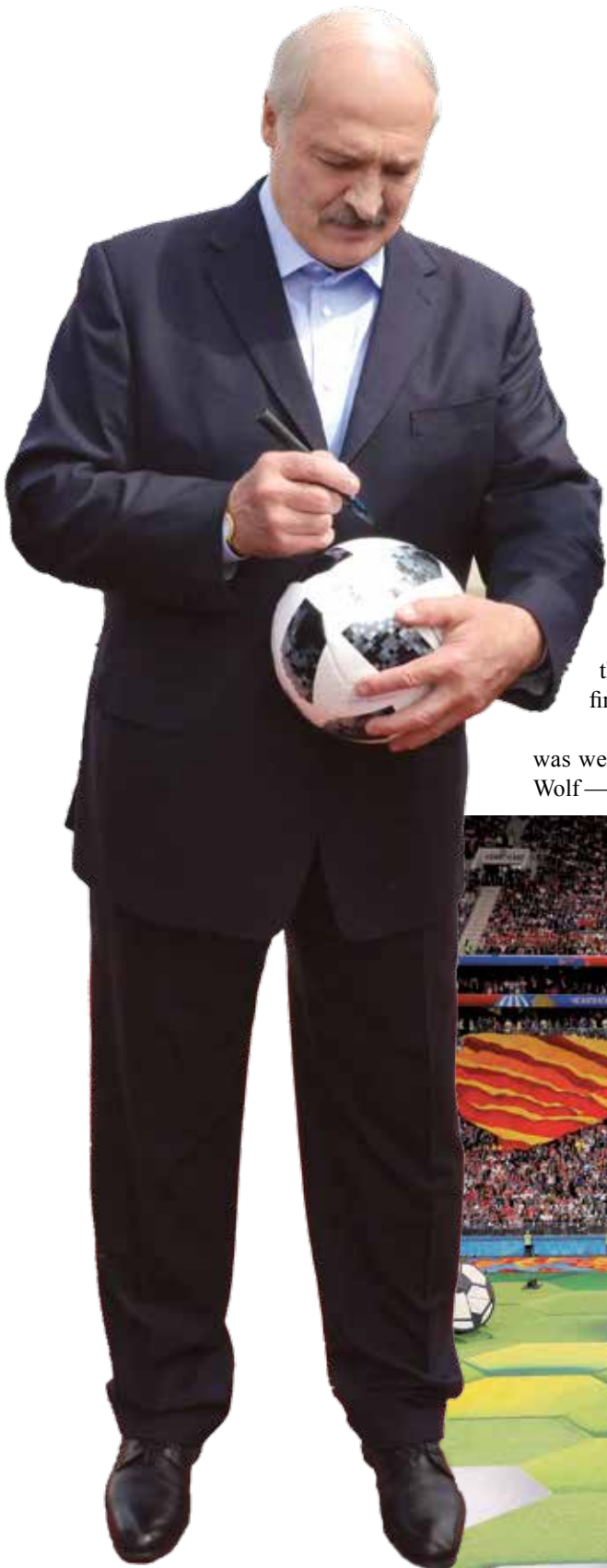
By Alexander Potvorov

**Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Shestakov met the Vice-President of Planning for Venezuela and Co-Chairman of the Joint Belarusian-Venezuelan Commission, Ricardo Menendez**

The two sides discussed acute state issues and prospects for co-operation in Belarusian-Venezuelan relations, as well as collaboration in the spheres of industry, construction and agriculture.

Considerable attention was paid to the expansion of bilateral trade, including the agreement and implementation of measures, envisaged by the programme *Road Map of Bilateral Co-operation for the Republic of Belarus and the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela for Medium-term and Long-Term Perspectives*.

Issues dealing with preparation for the conduct of the 8th session of the Joint Belarusian-Venezuelan Commission in Caracas were also tackled.



# Autograph with good wishes for the tournament

## President of Belarus visits opening of FIFA World Cup

On the invitation of the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, Alexander Lukashenko attended the FIFA World Cup opening ceremony and the first match, held in Moscow's Luzhniki Stadium.

At Moscow airport, the Belarusian Head of State was welcomed by officials and also by Zabivaka the Wolf — the official mascot of the current championship.

Alexander Lukashenko played a little with Zabivaka and signed a football wishing 'good luck to our Russian brothers'.

On the occasion of the FIFA World Cup, the Russian capital is being visited by many foreign leaders. The tournament is held from June 14th through until July 15th in eleven Russian cities.



# Goals for whole world

Minsk's Johannes Rau International Education Centre hosts *Strategies and Partnerships to Achieve Sustainable Development Goals* conference, gathering over 270 representatives of state bodies, business, public organisations and international experts

By Konstantin Bakun

Most importantly, over half of the forum's delegates came from the regions; they are actively contributing to the implementation of the SDGs at local level. Participants of the conference jointly discussed topical issues of Agenda-2030 which includes the implementation of 17 SDGs. In addition, Belarusian experts were able to study the experience of German colleagues who shared their best practices. According to the National Co-ordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and the Deputy Chair of the National Assembly's Council of the Republic — Marianna Shchetkina, the country is unlikely to become competitive without

sustainable development in the future.

"All European initiatives in the field of SDGs are supported by Belarus. Sustainable development is a complex task for the whole world. The enhanced level and quality of people's lives doesn't involve only incomes. These are effective jobs, healthy lifestyles, clean air and water, biodiversity and conservation. Moreover, Agenda-2030 should be accessible and correctly presented to the public. It's only possible to achieve the set goals with the participation of all citizens.

In turn, the Executive Director of the Dortmund International Educational Centre — Astrid Zam — stressed that the Belarusian forum is a logical continuation of the 18th annual



Participants of the conference

conference of the Council for Sustainable Development of Germany, "We are very pleased that work in the field of SDGs allows developing international relations, including between Belarus and Germany. The present conference in Minsk is also a good step for the implementation of new projects and fruitful co-operation."

During their debates, experts also noted that legal mechanisms

are needed for the participation of citizens and public institutions in the processes of developing programmes and documents related to the SDGs — as well as the implementation, monitoring and evaluation of any results achieved. For these purposes, according to Ms. Shchetkina, the issue of holding the National Forum on Sustainable Development is under consideration.

## Customs officers speak of unification and harmonisation

By Oleg Bogomazov

### Belarus and Netherlands to develop co-operation in customs affairs

An agreement between the governments of Belarus and the Netherlands on co-operation and mutual administrative assistance in customs matters has been signed by the Chairman of Belarus' State Customs Committee, Yuri Senko, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Netherlands to Poland and concurrently to Belarus, Ronald van Dartel. The document aims to establish a legal framework for bilateral co-operation, defining basic principles and forms of mutual assistance and the framework of co-operation in providing information necessary to prevent and investigate offences. "I believe that this agreement will help the customs bodies unify and harmonise customs procedures and fulfil their tasks more efficiently and effectively," Mr. Senko said.

# Debt and payment

Swiss NGO World Economic Forum (which organises meetings in Davos) publishes a map of world debt distribution across all countries. All owe debt to others, but the details are very interesting.

By Andrey Mukovozchik

The aggravated world debt stands at \$63 trillion, with the USA accounting for one third of this sum. The old financial truth is that the more funds one has the better it's for you to live beyond your own means. The modern economy is based on borrowing and investments while injections are actually lent money. Moreover, there's no need to repay everything at once and it's even possible to borrow more or launch new investment projects. When these give yields, the country's GDP will increase and the correlation of the sum of debts towards GDP will lessen, thus enhancing the attractiveness of the economy and attracting new investments. This is how the world economy works.

For example, the correlation of the US state debt against its GDP is 107 percent while in Japan this figure is 240, in Greece — 180 and in Italy — 130. Even in Lebanon — not often mentioned from the point of view of economic achievements — this correlation is almost 150 percent — i.e. 1.5-fold more than the country produces annually.

Belarus isn't reflected on the world debt chart because of the scale of the debt. As of



early 2018, our foreign state debt was less than \$17bn while our GDP reached almost \$53bn last year. According to the forecast of the World Bank, this year, GDP will increase by 1.8 percent more and next year — by 2.4 percent.

“Our debt is relatively small, and this is good, though recent times have seen a tendency towards growth,” said Professor Alexander Luchenok, who heads the Economy Institute's department at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. “The reasons for this are that not all projects generate the expected profit

or promised return. Consequently, we need to have a serious attitude towards loans for projects whose efficiency is in doubt. There's also no need to take loans just because they have low percentage rates.”

On the one hand, countries with debts may live rather well, take Japan for example. On the other hand, it will take a very long time to persuade a normal Belarusian that large debts can be an advantage for the economy and there's no guarantee that they will believe it. This is because our life approach is that it's necessary to live within one's own means. This

was also mentioned by the President during the session tackling the report of the Government, the National Bank, regional executive committees and the Minsk City Executive Committee about the results of their work last year.

“Foreign debt restricts our opportunities, especially social. To give around 10 percent of GDP to service the state debt is an unnecessary luxury,” said Mr. Luchenok.

So, it's good that Belarus is absent on the world debt chart and that in future, the compilers of this map won't have space for us.

## Road without forced outage

By Alexey Fedosov

**Initiative of Belarusian Agronadzor on digital tracking of fruit and vegetables is to be introduced through the Eurasian Economic Union. Such measures should eliminate reasons for disputes during supply and transit transportations of agricultural produce between EAEU states.**

In practice, this means that along with the cargo, all information about it will also move. A special digital seal is fixed on a vehicle at the starting point, connected with the GLONASS system. Such digital corridors will make the route trouble-free, excluding stops at points of rest, for instance, at customs points.

This is especially acute during the transit of vegetables and fruit from the plot, as a long road with frequent stops badly affects the freshness and quality of ‘live vitamins’. Digitalisation should reduce this time.

“The whole route of containers with such seals will be viewed immediately to hand in the online regime,” notes Karine Minasyan, member of the Board (Minister) for Domestic Markets, Informatisation, Information and Communication Technologies of the Eurasian Economic Commission. “What happens to the cargo will be recorded as well as an unauthorised opening, unscheduled stops, and deviations from the designated route. But the seals are only an example. In future, we should discuss what the project needs to involve. It is important to decide how much the state will handle and how much the private sector will take responsibility for.”

Yes, there are still questions and issues to be solved, but representatives of all interested sides are confident that a compromise can be reached. At present, the project is planned to be launched after 2020.

## Heavyweights go to fields

By Dmitry Ampilov

**On the 72nd anniversary of its founding, the Minsk Tractor Works has made a present to itself and the country: the 500HP ‘BELARUS-5022’ tractor (L)— currently the most powerful in the CIS — has been assembled.**

**Guests could get to know it, admiring the wheels, which exceed the height of a human. A prototype was offered on show for visitors to the plant. Before such a model is put into mass production, it will pass a long path of testing and improvement. For example, its predecessor — the 450HP ‘BELARUS-4522’ — first appeared in public three years ago but will only be offered for sale by late 2018.**



“By releasing such powerful machinery, we are fulfilling the country's food security programme and helping to reduce the cost of bread,” said the plant's General Director — Fiodor Domotenko.

Constructors talk about modern trends: in a single pass, the tractor would perform as many operations as possible and process the maximum possible area (up to several hundred kilometres). Potential buyers include Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine.

Meanwhile, chief designer

Nikolay Zezetko admits that even a 450HP tractor will not be able to fulfil all tasks, “Much depends on the soil. For example, Kazakhstan's soil sticks to aggregates. In the Saratov Region, it's necessary to process heavy clay and loam; these all create additional resistance. In Tatarstan, such a tractor will be useful because of the sowing technology popular there: a ‘BELARUS-5022’ can loosen, plant the grain, roll it and immediately pierce it with a special 12-meter machine in a single pass.”

## Beneficial logistics

**Indian businessmen have positively assessed the investment potential of the Bremino-Orsha Multimodal Industrial and Logistics Complex in Bolbasovo. Representatives of the delegation shared their opinions with journalists as they visited the complex's construction site.**

“The site has a good location from a logistical point of view. Being situated on the border of the two countries opens up opportunities for the organisation of production activity and trade with the countries of the EU and EAEU,” noted the Indian Ambassador to Belarus, Sangita Bahadur. She believes that the participation of Indian companies in this project will facilitate the expansion of direct investments between the two states.

According to the Director of Bremino Group Ltd., Vasily Dementiev, the first stage of the complex will be ready by the end of the year. It envisages the launch of the automobile terminal and the creation of conditions for the work of customs, border, phyto-sani-

tary and veterinary services. The volume of investments planned for 2018 is to exceed \$20m.

The visit of the Indian businessmen to the Orsha District took place as part of agreements reached during the Belarusian-Indian Business Forum, between representatives of the Confederation of Indian Industry and Bremino Group Ltd. on the promotion of the Bremino-Orsha project. The delegation included companies producing electrotechnical goods, textile, automobiles and agricultural chemicals.

Indian businessmen also conducted a business meeting in the Orsha District Executive Committee where a presentation of the district's industrial complex took place. During the discussion with local authorities on the prospects for collaboration, opportunities for Indian companies in Bremino-Orsha were also discussed, as well as the creation on its premises of a production cluster, alongside issues of the development of joint educational programmes and interaction with the Orsha Linen Mill.

# Finding yourself in IT

## Can Belarus become a second Singapore

By Valeria Gavrusheva

According to Bloomberg, the IT sector was the most profitable branch of the economy last year: 57 people — who earned over \$1bn — increased their savings by one third. This sphere is now attracting not only individual businessmen: the development of the digital economy is a task of national importance in many countries. Belarus is also moving in this direction. Since April, Decree No. 8 ‘On the Development of Digital Economy’ has been implemented; this unique document is likely to transform Belarus into one of the best sites in the world for the development of high-tech businesses.

German programmer Lucas Kühn’s social networks are full of reports of news from Belarus. Around six months ago, our country was an unknown quantity for him, but he can now name a dozen major Belarusian cities and enterprises. He is planning to come to Minsk and visit the High-Tech Park. In the future, Lucas intends to launch his own chain start-up. “In the future, your country could become the best jurisdiction in the world for creating similar projects. I’m inspired. Moreover, from a day-to-day point of view, this is a great place to move to,” he said.

Many countries are trying to create comfortable conditions for IT businesses and this is not surprising: according to Gartner analysts, the global IT market exceeds \$3.5 trillion and the figure continues to grow. Nobody wants to lose potential money. Cyprus for example — known to all as an offshore territory — has long since changed its path. At present, the country claims the title of an IT paradise: a special IP Box regime has operated here for six years — creating a favorable climate for intellectual investments. Poland also has a growing number of techno parks being put into operation, in addition to business incubators and accelerators. They receive funding from the state and universities.

Those who started earlier now serve as examples. Singapore is a city-state with an area of only about 720 square kilometers. Every year, around 2,500 high-tech start-ups are created here — attracting over \$1bn of investment. The *Smart Nation* programme is being implemented and the country is becoming a platform for testing new technologies.

Another example is Israel. This state is close to Belarus in terms of area and population. It exports about \$40bn of IT ser-



vices; in turn, our High-Tech Park exceeded \$1bn for the first time only last year. The gap looks insurmountable. Speaking of whether the country will manage to repeat the success of IT powers, Igor Mamonenko — the General Director of the BelHard Group of Companies — says Belarus is at an interest-

Several weeks ago, our HTP registered 46 new companies as residents; never has there been such a great increase. Moreover, qualitative growth is also being seen: companies engaged in the development of software in the field of artificial intelligence and augmented reality, large amounts of data, the Internet of things and

the classical sectors by redirecting them to this industry.”

However, here there are some nuances here. On the one hand, according to McKinsey&Co estimates, while maintaining the current pace of robotisation and automation by 2030, over 375m people will be left without work globally: they will be replaced

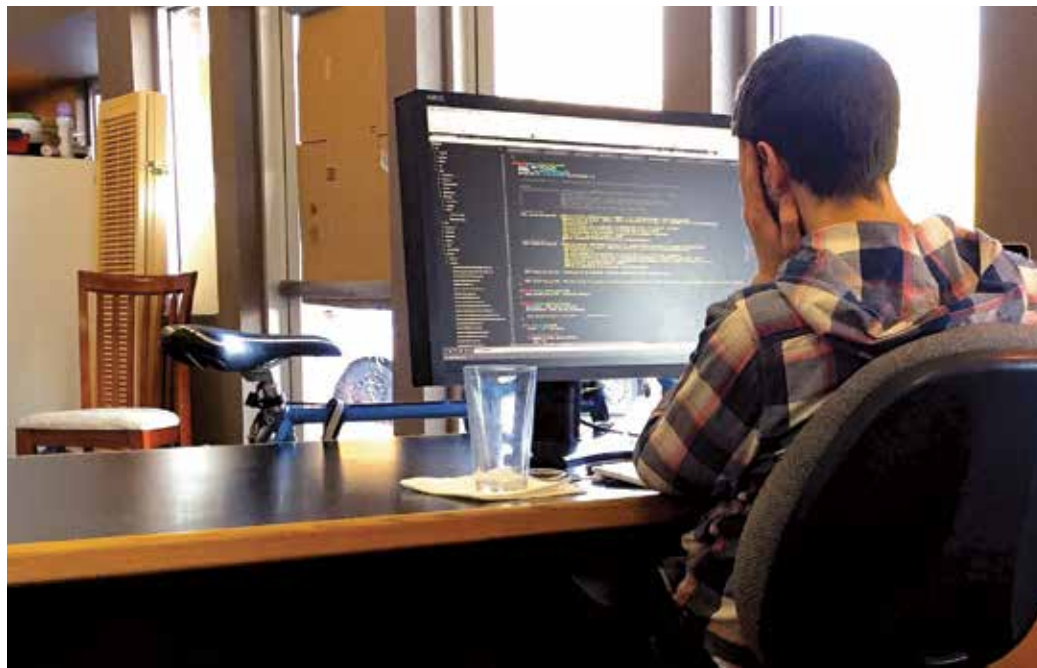
idea that doctors, engineers and teachers are retrained to be programmers.”

Victor Prokopenya — the Executive Director of VP Capital — mentions some figures: one IT specialist role creates 3-4 jobs in other areas not related to information technology. In turn, companies from regional cities and practically from any district of the country can become HTP residents. “The decree is not a ‘magic pill’ against all problems existing in the economy,” he says. “Interestingly, in connection with its adoption, we will observe several processes at once.” On the one hand, there will be growth of the IT industry, on the other — penetration of technologies in other areas of the economy, including industry, trade, medicine, education and others.

Modern farms already use automatic processes of watering, fertilising and many others. A decision to grant a loan, hiring, investing on the stock exchange is the task of artificial intelligence.

Mr. Prokopenya believes that the introduction of technologies into traditional sectors of the economy is a guarantee of their competitiveness in regional and world markets. It is important that the state encourages this process. “How many companies in Belarus now use Big Data in their business? How many IT systems are in place to manage business processes? We still have much to do in this direction. And the presence of a strong IT sector in the country will only help this process,” the expert adds.

After the implementation of the decree, work on the construction of an IT-country will not stop. On the contrary: the Council for Development of the Digital Economy has recently been established; in the future, a profile ministry is likely. These are important and necessary steps. High technologies change the world; this is undeniable and to remain competitive in a global market, speed is of the essence.



### REFERENCE

Several weeks ago, the HTP registered 46 new companies as residents; never has there been such a great increase. Moreover, qualitative growth is also being seen: companies engaged in the development of software in the field of artificial intelligence and augmented reality, large amounts of data, the Internet of things and accurate farming have come to Belarus. Over half these new firms were created with the participation of foreign investment.

ing stage, “We can be compared to India which was once the largest service country, developing software to order. In the process, their own ideas and product IT firms were born — occupying their own niche in the world market. We are now also adding the product model to the service one. In this respect, the Republic has great potential. It is not discussed openly but there are many Belarusians in Silicon Valley who are realising their own ideas. We need to become a test platform where not only our own but also world start-ups will be tested. We are moving towards this.”

accurate farming have come to Belarus. Over half these new firms were created with the participation of foreign investment. This is only the beginning.

Believes Mr. Mamonenko, “When the idea of creating an IT-country was originally sounded, it was planned that hundreds of thousands of people would come into the sphere. Now we are talking about millions. It’s becoming increasingly difficult to withstand competition in traditional sectors of the economy. Development of the field of information technology gives a chance to provide employment for those people who will be released from

by machines. This is primarily about those who are engaged in manual labour or whose work is related to performance of typical tasks: i.e. cashiers, call centre operators, ordinary accountants. On the other hand, no matter how close the digital future is, it is obvious that technologies cannot yet completely replace teachers, doctors and engineers. Economist Anton Boltochko explains, “Will it not turn out that the IT sector will win over to its side good specialists, concentrate part of the capital — not allowing other industries (which also need resources) to develop? We should not be guided by the



NADEZHDA PONKRATOVA

# Batteries need graphite

## Belarusian scientists believe lithium dependence can be overcome

By Sergey Muravsky

In recent years, there have been rumours that the era of energy sources based on hydrocarbon materials is coming to its logical conclusion. The earth's deposits are depleted, and oil is soon to come to an end. The most dramatic forecasts say that, given the present volumes of production and the dynamics of the consumption of fossil fuels, there is barely enough for a hundred years. The electric engine is poised to replace the internal combustion engine, but technological progress is limited by the shortage of material for production of the main components of the new accumulator batteries. This is lithium. Analysts have named this rare alkali metal 'the new oil' and see it as a good area for investment. At the same time, humanity is reasonably wary of being at the whim of a monopolist mining industry for the material — and is looking for alternatives.

Sergey Poddubko, the General Director of the Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, shares his view, "We are well aware that electric transport is no longer a fantasy. Moreover, the global car industry will soon rely on it." These are not mere words. Recently, our scientists presented an electric car based on the Belarus-assembled serial Geely SC7 car. How is the process of creating a domestic model of the 'future' devel-

oping? They've taken all the motor-related equipment out of a second-hand Geely and connected the power steering, braking and auxiliary systems to electricity. The battery itself was sourced from our foreign partners. In the long term, it is expected there will be a strong dependence on the world's mining companies. However, the General Director of the Scientific and Practical Centre for Materials Research Centre at the National Academy of Sciences' Institute for Solid State Physics and Semiconductors — Valery Fedosyuk — is optimistic about the future. "The volume of this metal is limited. Sooner or later (considering present technological development, sooner is likely), its reserves will deplete. In addition, there is already a monopoly for its extraction. The major stocks of lithium are concentrated in China. There, against rapidly

rising demand, its cost has been raised dozens of times in recent years and it has not yet reached its limit. Accordingly, humankind needs to search for alternative options. We are not shying away from this global



goal," he commented.

The focus on Belarusian knowledge has been recognised not only in the EU but also in China. Scientists have developed a new graphene-like material: it is very quickly,

simply and extremely cheaply produced from ordinary graphite. Prototypes of super-capacitors of a new generation have already been produced based on it. Lithium batteries are advantageous as lithium has an index of accumulated specific power of 200 watts per kilogram of dry matter. Super-capacitors of previous generations — based on crushed graphite — were much more 'modest': only about 3 watt-hours per kilogram. Meanwhile, Belarus' graphene-like material has made it possible to develop prototypes with accumulated specific power rating reaching 20 watt-hours. Considering a penny market value and the ubiquity of the raw material (graphite), this seemingly small advantage is impressive.

The difference between the capacitor and the battery is significant: the former is designed to quickly accumulate

and return energy and the latter — 'long-life battery has a chemical reaction. In studies, scientists of the Scientific and Practical Centre for Materials Research Centre have also discovered that not only physical but possible chemical 'work' can characterise our new graphene-like material. This discovery has made it possible to develop samples of something resembling a capacitor and a battery with the accumulated specific power of 60-70 watt-hours per kilogram. This is less than classic lithium batteries but is several times more than lead analogues.

Mankind is looking for alternatives to established technologies — including ways to avoid reliance on lithium. Previously developed lithium batteries are not ideal. "The major advantage of Li-Ion is that they have a large capacity. However, their major drawback lies in a limited number of charge-discharge cycles: about 1 thousand," added Mr. Fedosyuk. "Over time, crystallisation develops and the layers close. After that, the battery can be thrown away. From this point of view, our super-capacitors are almost everlasting: millions of cycles are possible. Ultimately, one thing is clear: if we simply repeat what has already been invented in the world, we will always only catch up. It's necessary to make a product so innovative that it is ahead of its time. In the end, this is the matter of our country's energy security."

### CHARGE FOR STEERING WHEELS

The development of super-capacitors — ultra-high energy storage with the ability to charge quickly — is overseen not only by the Academy of Sciences. This year, the production of new format batteries is planned to be established at the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. As expected, products will be in demand primarily at Belkommunmash — for use in the production of trams, electric buses and trolleybuses.

## Discussing construction of nuclear plant

On meeting Darius Skusevičius, Foreign Vice Minister of Lithuania, in the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry, Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister Oleg Kravchenko discussed issues, raised by Lithuania, dealing with the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant

By Alexey Fedosov

Along with the statement of a number of significant disagreements in the assessments of the Belarusian and Lithuanian sides, the Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus informed the press about the necessary security measures taken by Belarus during the construc-

tion and future operation of its nuclear power plant and about the fulfilment of international obligations and appropriate interaction of Belarus with the related international organisations, including co-operation with the IAEA.

Mr. Kravchenko also described the ongoing process of reviewing the results of stress

tests of Belarus NPP during partner verification, which is conducted in accordance with the obligations voluntarily accepted by Belarus and in accordance with the algorithm agreed with the European Commission.

Moreover, the current state of affairs and prospects for the development of Belarus-EU



At the meeting in the Lithuanian Foreign Ministry

collaboration and Belarusian-Lithuanian relations was also discussed.

The two sides also noted their mutual interest in main-

taining a high level of economic co-operation and underlined the importance of holding regular Belarus-Lithuania economic forums.

# Train and car are good but plane is truly better

By Ruslan Proleskovsky

## Direct flights launched between Moscow and Gomel

650km separate Gomel from Moscow. It takes almost eight hours to cover the distance by car and twice as much by train. However, from now on, only an hour and a half may be needed for a trip: in early summer, a direct flight was launched between the two cities. Guests at Gomel airport were greeted by the Slavic tradition of bread and salt.

There were no clouds to be seen: the weather was perfect for flights. A cheerful green Embraer-170 appeared in the transparent blue sky. While passengers in the cabin were applauding the pilots, vehicles of the Emergency Ministry — facing each other — turned on their powerful jets and formed an arch under which the plane passed while leaving the runway. This is a professional ritual used by aviators to welcome the first journey of a new regular flight.

Passengers descending the steps looked a little embarrassed as so many cameras were looking at them. Alexey — who came with his daughter — shared his thoughts, “We



Renewal of air route between Moscow and Gomel became an important event for air passengers

used this first flight unexpectedly but everything was done at the highest level. The flight lasted for an hour and twenty minutes and the service was great. The ticket price is less than for a train compartment and, according to my calculations, it is cheaper than travelling by car. In addition, it takes 6-8 hours to drive which is very tiring.”

Alexey comes to Gomel regularly as his parents live

here. Happily, he’s got an opportunity to visit them more often.

Flights between the cities have actually operated since 2007. This time, the route has been serviced by the Siberian Airline. Departures from Domodedovo are planned for three times a week until October 27th; if the service attracts enough passengers, it is expected to continue.

After landing in Gomel

at 11.20, the plane departs at 12.05; the one-way ticket costs around equivalent \$55. Tickets can be bought through the Internet, at Siberia’s ticket offices and at travel companies. Moreover, they are available directly at the airport, two hours before departure.

Gomel’s Mayor — Piotr Kirichenko — noted the significance of the event, “The Moscow Region is one of the largest partners of our local

economy, accounting for about 30 percent of our exports. This regular flight will be a good help to businessmen and company heads who regularly keep in contact with their Moscow colleagues. Actually, it’s the gateway to the shortest route not only to the regions of Russia but also to the countries of Europe. Of course, we are also waiting for tourists.”

Gomel’s airport began work in 1967 and, in 1993, it received international status. Its technical capabilities make it possible to accept aircraft weighing up to 191 tonnes. The capacity of the terminal is 500 people per hour. To increase the speed and improve the quality of service in the near future, it is planned to reconstruct the departure zone for passengers.

Moreover, only Gomel’s airport works round the clock among the other regional airports of the country. Its customs and border guard services, a sanitary and quarantine station and a meteorological station follow the same schedule. With this in view, the airport acts as an additional base for aircraft making transit flights — similar to Minsk airport.

## Good acceleration is seen on the runway

By Vladimir Velikhov

### Concept of development of regional airports promoted in Belarus

According to the Minister of Transport and Communications, Anatoly Sivak, a normal level of technical capability has been created and is being maintained in all regional airports. Sufficient money has been invested to allow the airports to reach international status. “We are now about to approve the concept for the development of the airports in the regional capitals,” said Mr. Sivak.

According to the plan, every regional airport will take be responsible for a specific area of expertise. For instance, the Transport and Communications Ministry expects Brest airport to grow thanks to the city’s tourism appeal, particularly in the eyes of visitors from China. The extension of the local runway is nearly complete. Once it is done, the airport will be able to welcome more varied aircraft types.

Gomel airport will be developed as a backup airport for Minsk National Airport.



“Minsk National Airport may become responsible for the workload of Gomel airport in the future,” added the Minister.

“Vigorous negotiations are in progress with the government of Russia’s Smolensk Region on using Vitebsk airport as the main one for this Russian region, for flights to the Russian Federation and several other countries,” said Mr. Sivak. “Since the Smolensk Region has no international airport of its own, Vitebsk airport may be able to offer not only charter flights but regular ones, too.”

According to the Head of the Transport and Communications Ministry, the position of Grodno airport is a difficult one due to its proximity to Polish and Lithuanian airports. The ministry expects the number of charter flights from Grodno airport to rise.

In 2017, Belarusian regional airports reported a decrease in passenger numbers. However, positive dynamics began to emerge in 2018. “We don’t yet intend to consider subsidising the tariffs on aircraft maintenance and passenger flights in these airports,” noted Mr. Sivak.

## National airport to show high class

By Alexander Pimenov

### During 2nd European Games two runways will be in use at Minsk National Airport

According to the Transport and Communications Minister of Belarus, Anatoly Sivak, as part of the preparations for the 2nd European Games, three projects are the most promising for the transport industry. “The first, of course, is the second runway. We could have serviced guests with the first runway but it wouldn’t be the best solution. The new runway is being launched this year and it should be functioning during the Games,” said the Minister. “Moreover, we have no plans to close the first runway.” The airport will offer a higher class of services since two runways have been designed in such a way that they will be able to work simultaneously, enabling a more convenient schedule to be established for both regular and charter flights.

The M6 Minsk-Grodno highway is the second large-scale project. The road will be opened to traffic along its entire length this year. “This motorway should work for the benefit of both citizens and visitors. It should help enhance the country’s transit ap-



peal,” noted Mr. Sivak.

Renewing the transport fleet is the third project. The Belarusian air carrier Belavia is busy implementing an investment project to buy three Embraer-195 aircraft and to renew its aircraft fleet. The Minsk company intends to buy about 300 buses and 60 electric buses for transporting visitors. As the host country, Belarus needs to honour its commitments concerning the transportation of participants of the 2nd European Games. As many as 105 intercity-class buses will be bought with this in mind. “We’ll have to transport some guests by car: about 300 cars will be bought for this purpose. The vendor has not been determined yet, but I can say that the vehicles will be of Belarusian make,” added the Minister. In total, all branches of the transport industry are involved in preparations for the 2nd European Games in 2019. The railway administration is expected to sign the traditional documents with partners from neighbouring countries to arrange additional trains.



# Trump and Kim hold truly historic summit

US President Donald Trump and North Korean leader Kim Jong-un were meeting in Singapore, a historic opportunity to peacefully end the North Korean nuclear threat. The summit began at 9 am on the resort island of Sentosa.

The two held a 45-minute one-on-one meeting and then moved to expanded bilateral talks involving their top aides. Trump told reporters the first sit-down was 'very, very good' and called their relationship 'excellent'. He added that the two of them would 'solve a big problem, a big dilemma'.

Denuclearisation was sure to top the agenda. The US seeks the complete, verifiable and irreversible dismantlement of the North's nuclear weapons programme, whereas the North advocates a broader definition that also includes the removal of the US nuclear umbrella over South Korea and Japan.

After it Trump, Kim sign agreement following historic summit. North Korean leader said that the world will see a 'great change'. Trump mentioned that denuclearisation process to begin 'very quickly'.

The meeting with the North Korean leader was 'better than anyone expected', the US Pres-

ident said. He also wanted to invite Kim to visit White House. The on-again, off-again summit was reinstated on June 1st after an envoy of Kim's brought Trump a personal letter from the North Korean leader. Trump had called off the meeting the previous week, citing 'open hostility' from the regime.



## Macron and Conte hold news conference after a migrant row

**Emmanuel Macron invited Italian Premier Giuseppe Conte to Elysee Palace in Paris to defuse tensions following a diplomatic spat between their governments over migrants**

The pair discussed migration policies and Eurozone reforms at the presidential residence before holding a press conference.

Last Wednesday, the French President slammed Rome's 'cynicism and irresponsibility' after they turned away a boat carrying over 600 migrants from

North Africa to Europe earlier this week, saying nearby Malta should take them in instead.

His comments irked Italy's Deputy PM and Interior Minister Matteo Salvini, who demanded a formal apology from Paris, and the French Ambassador in Rome was summoned. But hours later, a remorseful Macron called Conte to apologise, saying he had 'no intention to offend Italy or the Italian people'.

Conte was quick to dismiss the spat, telling the media that 'the case is closed'.

## Voice of Stephen Hawking will be broadcast into space

**The voice of world renowned physicist Stephen Hawking will be broadcast into space after his memorial service takes place**

Hawking died in March this year after a lengthy battle with motor neurone disease and revolutionised the scientific understanding of black holes.

The Professor's ashes are being interred in London, at Westminster Abbey with a thousand members of the public present for the ceremony.

A specially-written composition featuring Hawking's famous synthesised voice will be beamed into space by the European Space Agency satellite dish at Ceberos in Spain. The late scientist's words 'have been set to an original score by composer Vangelis, most famous for his *Chariots of Fire* film theme'.



Hawking's daughter, Lucy, called the music a 'beautiful and symbolic gesture that creates a link between our father's presence on this planet, his wish to go into space and his explorations of the universe in his mind'. She said, "The broadcast will be beamed towards the nearest black hole, 1A 0620-00, which lives in a binary system with a fairly ordinary orange dwarf star. It is a message of peace and hope, about unity and the need for us to live together in harmony on this planet."

## Erdogan facing a tough election

**President Erdogan could be facing a tough battle to win the Turkey elections on June 24th**

That's according to recent polls. It comes as the lira has plunged in value and with soaring inflation, it makes it very difficult for the 64 year old for the first time in his 15 years leading the country.

According to this opinion poll for the parliamentary election, it shows that Erdogan might not win the first round with less than 50 percent together with the Nationalist Movement Party.

This means there could be a run-off between the Republican People's Party, CHP with Edrogran's biggest challenger Muharrem Ince seen here.

## Qualcomm extends cash tender offer to buy NXP shares

**Qualcomm Inc. has extended by a week its cash tender offer to buy all shares of NXP Semiconductors NV for \$44 billion, the chipmaker said**

The offer is now scheduled to expire on June 22nd, the latest in a series of extensions since October 2016 when the company announced its initial offer for NXP.

## Magnitude 6.1 quake in Japan's Osaka area kills three

**A magnitude 6.1 earthquake shook Osaka, Japan's second-biggest metropolis, early on Monday, killing three people, halting factory lines in an industrial area and bursting water mains**

No tsunami warning was issued. Prime Minister Shinzo Abe said authorities were assessing damage and their top priority was the safety of residents. About 150 people were injured.

Quakes are common in Japan, part of the seismically active 'Ring of Fire' that stretches from the South Pacific through Indonesia and Japan, across to Alaska and down the west coast of North, Central and South America.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# Space universe of artist Jazep Drozdovich

In the history of Belarusian culture, the personality of Jazep Drozdovich (1888-1954) occupies a special place. Everything he did was of a cosmic, universal scope. It is from here that Drozdovich's creativity springs — which is once again reinforced by the exhibition held at the National Art Museum of Belarus.

By Veniamin Mikheev

Many contemporaries appreciated Yazep Drozdovich primarily as a graphic artist; this part of his heritage differed from everything else he created and was valued most highly. The graphic heritage of Drozdovich is impressive: in quality, diversity and quantity. None of his trips were completed without sketching of the local architecture: Vilno, Minsk, Mir, Novogrudok and many villages scattered throughout Belarus... As always, Yazep did not want to act purely as an artist: he accumulated historical information everywhere, showing interest in local legends and sometimes engaging in archaeological experiments.

Ironically, the travel geography of Yazep Drozdovich is very limited. He avoided distant lands and long journeys, avoiding travelling to exotic foreign states. Naturally, this was apart from flying into the cosmos, which he did virtually every night.

The defining year in Yazep's life was 1921 when the Belarusian Museum was established in Vilno. It was the richest fund of diverse materials in Belarusian history and culture; thousands of items were kept. A series of graphic works by Drozdovich — samples of ancient architecture and portraits of Polotsk princes — was among the first presents to the Belarusian Museum. From that time on, Drozdovich's name was again and again associated with the museum. He sent all his works there and, thanks to this, his legacy of the 1920s-1930s, unlike early and post-war works, has been quite well preserved. Drozdovich's fascination with the history of Belarus was reflected in a range of works: graphic, pictorial and literary.

The artist's pictorial heritage is not as extensive as the graphic. Probably the reason is that, in contrast to graphic works most of which are performed in



Space by Drozdovich



Saturn Women (1932)

arouse no less interest than his graphic pieces at present...

In his artistry, Yazep Drozdovich easily plunged into the past or flew into outer space; the events 'here and now' seemed less interesting to him from

strict accordance with 'classical standards', Yazep Drozdovich's paintings always tread a shaky path between professional and naive art. Such 'borderline' phenomena can sometimes confuse and confound since they do not fit into any system. However, this 'borderline' feel, special charisma and the 'imperfection' of these works attract and fascinate. That's why Yazep's paintings

the point of view of artistic interpretation. However, he always retained the realistic principle, the method of depiction, the accuracy and meticulousness of detail. In the 1930s, Yazep Drozdovich began experiencing troubles with money, the tricky social position this put him in paradoxically led to a unique result. Yazep looked into the Cosmos. In turn, the Cosmos looked inside him. This



as 'the founder of the space theme in Belarusian art'. It must be acknowledged that Yazep Drozdovich was one of a kind in this respect: he was unique not only for Belarusian art.

The unprecedented nature of Drozdovich's work in this field is that he attached to his sketches and notes on space travel not purely artistic significance but also scientific. However, he sometimes suggested that he observed not acting life on the planets he visited in his dreams, but their future. Moreover, everything he saw on other planets suspiciously reminded him of Belarus. After all, everything is compared with the surrounding Belarusian realities.

In 1931, Yazep Drozdovich published a scientific brochure — *Celestial Running*, with his own handmade linocuts. In the 1930s, science did not know that the Cosmos was uninhabited; it was believed that other planets had life, though in different conditions.

Since 1933, the artist settled with his older brother Konstantin and was engaged in wood carving. He made staffs with images of people and animals, chests, snuffboxes, also carving figurines of saints and angels. Yazep also produced bas-relief portraits. At that time, Drozdovich often stayed for a long time in neighbouring villages where he was fascinated by the creation of wall painted carpets: malyavanki.

He died just before the year when man flew into space: in 1954, villagers found him unconscious on the road. They brought the artist to the nearby hospital where he died. Yazep was compared with many outstanding personalities — such as Leonardo da Vinci or Roerich. However, all these comparisons do not seem very believable. Perhaps, we must simply admit that never before has such a person as Drozdovich lived.

The present exhibition demonstrates the main collections from Belarusian museums and is also dedicated to one of the first researchers of Yazep Drozdovich's skill: Arseny Lis, author of *The Eternal Wanderer*, a book about the artist.

merger produced an exceptional result for Belarusian culture.

Drozdovich was convinced that he had the gift of clairvoyance. With this in mind, he easily immersed himself in space — doing that in the same manner as he treated

the remote past of his land. He used to spend long days at the library, eagerly reading astronomical literature. Afterwards he plunged into magical dreams — going on an extraordinary journey. He travelled to distant stars and planets — the Moon, Mars, Saturn, Venus. He saw beautiful landscapes, incredible plants and animals, visited unknown countries and cities, watched the daily life of local people. In the morning, he scrupulously wrote down everything he saw in his diary and special notebooks, later sewing them in albums. Some of those graphic sheets were later transformed into paintings.

Yazep left a wealth of evidence about his night flights to space: in painting, graphic works and texts. He was widely known

# Prima Donna with vigour

## Belarusian opera star Oksana Volkova talks about herself and her profession

By Maria Babalova

**You've performed at the best global theatres — such as the Metropolitan in New York, Covent Garden in London and La Scala in Milan. This summer, you'll be at the legendary summer festival in Salzburg — performing Pauline in the premiere production of *Queen of Spades*. Taking these into consideration, can you say that all your wishes have come true?**

*I've not sung major parts in these theatres, so I still have something to strive for and dream about. I've never performed in Paris, Sydney or Berlin. I want to sing Charlotte in 'Werther', Princesse de Bouillon in 'Adriana Lecouvreur' and Adalgisa in 'Norma'. I can extend this list further. I would also like to have more opportunities to tour with my family and show the world to my children. Unfortunately, school dictates its own rules and often separates us.*

**Is it difficult to be a prima donna and a mother with many children?**

*I have only two children: a daughter, Renata and son, Arsen. Are they many children? I do my best to devote as much time to my children and to my career as possible. Of course, this would hardly be possible without the help of their grandmothers and my husband, but all my relatives support me. My children also understand the complexity of my work, so I can do what I love. Secondly, I want to note that being a prima donna is not natural for me. I hate it when people think they are superior just because of some success on the stage. I speak to many opera stars and I see that the majority of them are friendly and easy-going people.*

**Once you wanted to represent Belarus at the Eurovision Song Contest. How did this idea come about and why has it not been implemented yet?**

*This was a very interesting idea to me. However, it is a song contest, and someone needs to compose the song first.*

*It's not yet been realised, and I don't think now that it will ever happen. You've won many competitions. Is this the evidence that it's taken you so long to gain recognition?*

*I was not*

*too lucky at contests. I won only a few and didn't participate for the sake of recognition. When I was a student, I really liked the competitive atmosphere: the excitement, preparation of the programme, competitive spirit. I also gained experience of other singers and new contacts. It was necessary to analyse what is valued in the world, how winners sing and what I lacked. When I finally realised that I could do something myself, the competition age had passed. I then had to go to auditions for plays — which I really do not like.*

**Why?**

*This is because in a short period of time you need to show everything you can do and there's no chance to go back and*

*correct your mistakes. I once made a mistake which I will always remember: I was not very well at the audition coming straight from the plane; I made a mistake with the programme. I hoped that I would not need to sing the most difficult aria, but I was asked to. I was squeezing out the sound like toothpaste*

*from a tube, until, at the most inopportune moment, my voice broke. I think the theatre had never heard such a bad mistake. As a result, I never sang at that theatre, but it was a good lesson for me.*

**Did you want to become a singer since childhood?**

*No, in my childhood I wanted to be a cartoon-maker. I imagined it as a very important profession. I thought it was unusual and only a few people wanted to do it; I thought I would have more chances to show off. Actually, on growing up, I did not have a clear plan of what to become. I always loved the musical theatre, but it seemed to me that it was for other — more perfect — people. I did not believe that it would be so easy to become a singing actress. I was preparing for a more serious institution — the Technological University, the Faculty of Certification. I even al-*

*most finished the preparatory courses and only failed in chemistry. My mother always reminds me that I owe her a million: that was the price of lessons at that time. At the same time, I was planning to enter the Music Academy to study vocal signing. I really fell in love with the theatre. I was fascinated by the beautiful world of the Kalman operettas and so gradually the desire to be involved in this beautiful world was formed.*

**Interestingly, your characters are mostly fatal temptresses...**

*It's great when a woman has a mystery and energy that attracts people. It's really interesting to perform such roles; these women always have a strong character and 'vigour'. It would be difficult for me, for example, to play a convincing Juliet or Gilda if I were a soprano. I have a completely different temperament and character. It is good that nature correctly distributes the roles.*

**Is your favourite Carmen?**

*Of course, it's Carmen — three hundred percent. This is my character — regarding voice and temperament. I get great pleasure from this opera, I'm always looking for new colours, shades in the voice and features, details of the character. This opera could hardly be spoiled with direction, because the main thing in it is the story of Carmen and Jose. I love modern productions of Carmen because they are not only relevant today but also very expressive.*



### CALLING CARD

Oksana Volkova was born in Minsk. She graduated from the Belarusian Academy of Music, specialising in vocal singing. In 2002, Oksana was invited to the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of Belarus and, from 2009-2010, worked for the Youth Opera Programme of the Bolshoi Theatre of Russia. Opera singer Oksana Volkova was the first Belarusian woman to open the season at the New York Metropolitan Opera in the last 100 years. She performed Olga's part in *Eugene Onegin*. Oksana has been awarded with the Grand Prize of the Special Fund of the President of the Republic of Belarus for the Support of Talented Youth, the Francysk Skaryna Medal for 'prominent artistic achievements, high professional skills and merits in the development of national culture and art', and others.

## Primarily following the documented chronicle

By Alexander Pimenov

**Titanic ballet being prepared for staging at Belarusian State Academic Musical Theatre**

A young ballet-master and stage producer of the Belarusian State Academic Musical Theatre, Sergey Mikel, is working on the performance. Speaking about the future performance, he noted that the idea of the *Titanic* ballet came up thanks to an idea of the theatre's Director Alexander Petrovich, which was supported by the whole stage troupe.

The libretto, composed by

the ballet master and stage producer himself, is based on stories of people whose lives were broken by the catastrophe. All books, written about the crash of the *Titanic* liner, and all films are based on real events of that night. The new ballet also follows the documented chronicle and 'cites' some facts, proven and comprehensively researched.

Sergey Mikel uses the image of *Titanic* as a metaphor for a society which lives using the principles of class division, division according to financial wellbeing, race, ethnic and faith belonging, and its representa-



Titanic to be staged at Musical Theatre

tives are subject to all human evils. Therefore, the ballet is presented not only as a tragedy of separate people. The crash

of the *Titanic* is interpreted as the destruction of a model of society which had been established for centuries. Moreover,

the performance raises the topic of the alienation of a person, the crisis of his internal world against the background of sci-tech progress, urbanisation and industrialisation.

The musical material for the ballet is created directly by the Belarusian composer, Oleg Khodosko. His music will use the English Christian hymn of the 19th century *Nearer, My God, to Thee* and *Autumn Dream* waltz by Archibald Joyce, which were supposedly playing during the sinking of the *Titanic*.

The new ballet is expected to be premiered in July.

# In anticipation of a big football festival

By Natalia Klementieva

By the time this issue of *The Minsk Times* weekly is released, the football festival — the FIFA World Cup — will be in full swing. We are looking at the opening ceremony and the first day's game.

The first goal of the FIFA World Cup was scored by the defender of the Russian national football team, Yuri Gazinsky. In the 13th minute he hit the Saudi Arabian net. Two more goals in the game were scored by Denis Cheryshev, while



A moment of game between Russia and Saudi Arabia

Artem Dzyuba and Alexander Golovin also scored once each, bringing the score to 5:0.

The game was preceded by a ceremony which saw speeches by the President of Russia and the FIFA President. Vladimir Putin said that 'love of football unites us in one team! Differences in languages, faith or anything else have no hold here and this is the power of football.' FIFA President Gianni Infantino assured the crowd in Russian, Arab and English that 'football will conquer Russia and then — the whole world!' and so the tournament began.

## Gaining a foothold in the yachting sports elite

### Yachtswoman Tatiana Drozdovskaya wins final race at 2018 World Cup Series Final in French Marseilles

By Oleg Samsonov

The final stage in France included 11 races. In the Laser Radial Tatiana Drozdovskaya qualified for the final race where she finished first. In total, the Belarusian scored 78 points to be placed fifth in the World Cup standings. The third position is occupied by the Finnish athlete Tuula Tenkanen (73 points), followed by the Hungarian Maria Erdi (with 54 points). The final top score was by Emma Plasschaert of Belgium (48).

The World Cup final in Marseille wrapped up the 2018 series, which included the three largest international regattas in Japanese Gamagori, US Miami and French Hyeres.



At the final race during World Cup Series Final

The final competitions were held in ten Olympic disciplines. Taking part in the competitions

were over 200 athletes from 34 countries: Olympic medallists, world champions and leaders

of the international rankings. 24 sportswomen competed in the Laser Radial event.

## Records in fast water in Berlin



Paralympic athlete Igor Boki

By Svetlana Savelieva

**Paralympic athlete Igor Boki sets five world records at IDM Berlin 2018 swimming competitions**

In the beginning of the tournament Igor Boki set a world record in two S13 disciplines. In the final swim he clocked 2:09.8 in the men's 200m backstroke and 1:52.40 in the 200m freestyle. The Belarusian improved the world time among Paralympians to 26.36 seconds in the men's 50m backstroke qualifying and surpassed it in the final (26.21 seconds). The Belarusian

swimmer took victory in the men's 200m butterfly in 2:04.06, improving the achievement established 28 years ago by the Canadian Michael Edgson.

"I know the swimming pool in Berlin very well. There are good conditions here which help us achieve great results. Though I do have things to strive for in the swim lane so we'll continue working on these with the coach," noted the swimmer.

Igor Boki — who performs among athletes with visual impairment, is an 11-time Paralympic champion, as well as multiple world and European champion.

## Handballers fail to qualify

By Yegor Vetrov

**Belarusian handballers fail to qualify for the final stage of the 2019 World Championship — losing to Austria in two matches**

After the home draw (28:28), Yuri Shevtsov's trainees had nothing to lose and the match in Vienna began well. In the 17th minute, Belarusians brought the gap to four goals — 8:4 — and the score before the break was 16:13 in favour of the guests. However, afterwards the situation changed dramatically: 13 minutes before the finish, the Austrians advanced by 3 goals — 23:20 — to fully control the situation. As a result, they won — 31:26 — to qualify for the



Pressure from Austrians

2019 World Championship.

The world event will be held from January 9th-27th in Germany and Denmark. In previous years, Belarusian handballers have played four times in the company of the 24 best teams in the world. The best result of the Belarusian team is the 9th place of 1995 (Iceland); the team was then coached by Spartak Mironovich. At the last World Championship in France, Yuri Shevtsov's trainees finished 11th.

## Thanks to our good reputation

**Minsk to host 2020 Euro-Hockey Indoor Championships (Women)**

The decision was made by the Executive Committee of the Indoor Hockey European Federation. When discussing the future venue, the officials took into account the excellent organisation of the continental championship in 2016 at Minsk's Sports Palace.

The 2020 EuroHockey Indoor Championships for the strongest women's teams will be held from 24th to 26th January in Minsk. Apart from Belarusian hockey players, teams from Austria, Belgium, Germany, the Netherlands, Ukraine, the Czech Republic and Switzerland will take part.

The Belarusian women's indoor hockey national team is currently ranked third by the International Federation. This high position has become possible thanks to our successful performance at the European Championships and the World Cup in 2018 where we won bronze medals.

## Improving positions

By Sergey Petrovsky

**Belarusian tennis players Arina Sobolenko and Alexandra Sasnovich improve their positions in WTA rankings**

Compared to the previous list of best players, Arina Sobolenko moved from 48th to 46th position of the rating, boasting 1,135 points. Alexandra Sasnovich was up by four positions and is now placed 51st (with 1,065 points). Meanwhile, Vera Lapko occupies 84th place (782 points) and Victoria Azarenko is ranked 86th in the list (with 771 points).

The ranking is topped by Simona Halep of Romania, who has significantly strengthened her position after victory in Paris at Roland Garros (boasting 7,970 points). The best tennis player from the post-Soviet region, Elina Svitolina of Ukraine, is placed fifth in the WTA ranking.

## Festival of the week



The Great British Festival held in the centre of Minsk, featuring bagpipers

### EXHIBITIONS

#### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> June. *Chinese Painting of Ideas*

#### NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 K. Marx Street  
Until 20<sup>th</sup> June. Jiří Karas Jr. and Tereza Šlápotová: exhibition of Czech photographers Until 8<sup>th</sup> July. *Multi-Colour of Tatar National Culture* Until 11<sup>th</sup> July. *Thieves' Money, or History of Counterfeiting*

#### EXHIBITION HALL OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street  
Until 3<sup>rd</sup> July. *Song Birds and Pigeons*

#### MUSEUM OF MODERN BELARUSIAN STATEHOOD

38 K. Marx Street  
Until 26<sup>th</sup> June. *Man. Cosmos. Belarus*

#### GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 13<sup>th</sup> August. *Piotr Masherov: His Heart Beats for People*

#### CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street  
Until 31<sup>st</sup> August. *Summer Season at Cat Museum*

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> July. *My Homeland — Tale of Times project* Until 31<sup>st</sup> August. *Enlightenment. Experience. Progress* Until 15<sup>th</sup> September. *ABCs from Around the Globe*

#### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street  
Until 17<sup>th</sup> June. *Peaceful Time*: exhibition of Piotr Taranda

#### VANKOVICH'S HOUSE

33a Internatsionalnaya  
Until 18<sup>th</sup> July. *Dreams of the Past*

#### CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

84/1 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 30<sup>th</sup> June. *Legacy of Belarus: Dedicated to Minsk's 950<sup>th</sup> Anniversary*

#### ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

6 Kirill and Mefody Street  
Until 1<sup>st</sup> July. *MotoVeloMinsk: Two-Wheeled History*

#### MUSEUM OF FOLK ARCHITECTURE AND EVERYDAY LIFE

Ozertso village  
Until 18<sup>th</sup> August. *Folk Images of Belarus*

### THEATRES

#### NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street  
14.06. *Queen of Spades* 15.06. *The Nutcracker, or Another Christmas Story* 17.06. *Tosca* 18.06. *La Bayadère*; *Have You Heard...* 19.06. *Eugene Onegin* 20.06. *Don Quixote* 21.06. *Carmen*

#### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street  
14.06. *Cherry Orchid* 17.06. *A Thousand and One Nights* 19.06. *The Clandestine Marriage* 20.06. *Merry Widow* 21.06. *Jane Eyre*

#### YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street  
14.06. *My Little Enchantress* 15 and 18.06. *Thumbelina* 19.06. *Wolf and Seven Goats* 20.06. *My Little Enchantress* 21.06. *Doctor Aybolit*

#### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street  
14.06. *Circle of Love* 15.06. *Hot Mothers* 16.06. *Oedipus* 19.06. *Husband Leaves His Wife* 20.06. *How to Become Rich* 21.06. *Tricks of Khanuma*

#### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
14.06. *School of Taxpayers* 17.06. *The Black Lady of Nesvizh*; *Tolerance* 18.06. *Inspector* 19.06. *The Seagull* 20.06. *People of the Marsh* 21.06. *Not Mine*

#### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue  
14.06. *Robbery at Midnight* 15 and 20.06. *Even a Wise Man Stumbles* 16.06. *Night of Anton Chekhov's Miniatures* 18 and 19.06. *#13*

### CONCERTS

#### BELARUSIAN STATE PHILHARMONICS

50 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
19.06. *Voice, Harp, Organ* 20.06. *Rooney Bois (Canada)* 20.06. *Masterpieces of World Organ Music: Olga Kemova* 21.06. *Classic Avant-garde in concert* 21.06. *State Academic Symphony Orchestra of Belarus* conducted by Alexander Anisimov

#### UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square  
14.06. *Summer Musical Nights in Upper Town*  
14.06. *Summer Mood: Classic Jazz Trio*  
15.06. *Steel Jazz Jam*  
16.06. *Major British Festival*  
20.06. *Cycle of concerts: 32 Sonnets for Pianoforte. Ludwig van Beethoven*