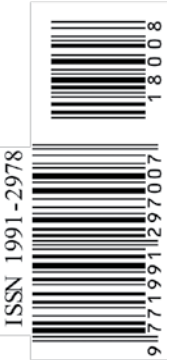


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INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times



**Socio-political Weekly**

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# Anna Guskova's gold and Darya Domracheva's silver in Olympic medal-box

Good news  
from Olympic  
PyeongChang,  
alongside  
disappointments,  
particularly,  
regarding  
judicial  
prejudice

# Elections took place, with deputies elected countrywide

18,110 deputies have been elected onto local councils of deputies in Belarus, reports the Central Commission of the Republic of Belarus on Elections and Holding Republican Referenda on its official website, on the morning of February 19th

On February 18th, Belarus hosted elections to local councils of deputies, with 5,870 polling stations operating countrywide. According to preliminary information from the Central Election Commission (CEC), 18,110 deputies have been chosen, with one constituency appearing to have failed yet to determine its candidate.

“Voting turnout was more than 77 percent nationwide, which isn’t a bad figure. As usual, the Vitebsk Region saw the greatest turnout, with Minsk placed last, with just over 60 percent of eligible voters casting their ballot,” noted CEC Chairwoman Lidia Yermoshina, speaking to STV TV Channel.

According to CEC preliminary data (reported by BELTA), 77.05 percent of the electorate cast their votes, with the Brest Region seeing a turnout of 79.16 percent. The Vitebsk Region led with 84.49 percent, while the Gomel Region saw 80.76 percent, the Grodno Region saw 79.81 percent of voters cast their



Voter turnout countrywide exceeded 77 percent

ballot and the Minsk Region saw 77.97 percent. The Mogilev Region saw a commendable 82.26 percent turnout while Minsk had just 61.41 percent. The results will be formally announced by February 23rd.

According to the CEC Chair,

young people have begun showing more interest in elections. She comments, “I liked the projects implemented by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union. I hope that we’ll be able to guide our young people towards taking part in elections, via alternative

and informal approaches.”

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, cast his ballot at polling station #1, in Vesnyanka constituency #39, in Minsk’s Tsentralny District, located at the Belarusian State University of Physical Culture.

In all, 22,289 candidates were registered as candidates for election to the role of deputy, vying for just over 18,000 seats, with political parties proving more active than usual. Women accounted for 49.1 percent of those standing for election, with just 5.3 percent of all candidates being aged under thirty. Meanwhile, 46.5 percent of those standing had been working as deputies of the current convocation. The greatest number of voters came from those employed in the spheres of education, culture, science, healthcare and agriculture, as well as those working for state bodies, industry, transport and construction.

Compared to previous elections, the number of seats remained relatively unchanged, although the average number of candidates rose slightly, with the greatest competition seen in the capital, at 4.4 people per seat. Local councils of deputies saw 2.3 people standing per seat, against 1.3 for rural councils and 1.1 for township councils of deputies.

## ‘The world has not become safer’

Alexander Lukashenko warns against complacency in responding to external and internal challenges

By Victor Mikheev

The President has noted that, for the first time since the mid-20th century, the world is only one step away from global confrontation, with the most unexpected consequences. Speaking at a recent meeting of the Security Council, the country’s military security was the main issue on the agenda, with the event addressing key issues of national security.

### The global situation

The President of Belarus asserts that the expansion of geography and the scale of conflict of interests between centres of power has brought almost constant instability.

The President states, “The world failed to resolve ongoing armed conflicts last year. Moreover, new hotspots of tension have emerged, and the political confrontation between states and coalitions has been formalised by national strategies. We haven’t heard this for quite a long time. For the first time since the middle of the last century, the world is one step away from global confrontation, with the most unpredictable consequences.”

Mr. Lukashenko expressed concern over speculation by some countries regarding nuclear weapons, the militarisation of the Eastern European region, and the un-



At session tackling security issues

precedented growth of military potential in neighbouring countries. “This pertains to both their armed forces and defence spending,” he added.

### The situation in Ukraine, and Minsk as a platform for negotiations

The President of Belarus remains concerned over the situation in neighbouring Ukraine, and Minsk continues to ensure necessary conditions for the conduct of regular sessions of the trilateral contact group. Last year saw nearly thirty such meetings. While some unexpected statements have been recently heard regarding Minsk as a venue for negotiations, it’s apparent that no real alternative exists.

Among alarming external factors, Mr. Lukashenko named the use of sophisticated forms of international pressure, including sanctions, blackmail, economic ‘cut-throat’ methods, and smear campaigns. Familiar mechanisms of maintaining international security almost never work.

### Allied relations

According to the President, under these conditions, Belarus’ allies acquire special importance. In this context, he noted the effectiveness of Minsk’s CSTO presidency last year, saying, “We’ve managed to adopt a whole range of measures, aimed at developing the armed forces of the CSTO and strengthening their military-technical co-operation, to reinforce our position in the world.”

Mr. Lukashenko is convinced that CSTO member states lack co-ordination in developing their national armed forces. He believes that the organisation underestimates the situation around common borders, with greater determination in joint modernisation of the armed forces being necessary. Of course, issues requiring significant expenditure are not easily agreed, leading countries to act in a disconnected way.

Mr. Lukashenko spoke about the need to adopt decisions to conduct joint events and to strengthen CSTO general defensive capacity.

### Military security and army equipment

Mr. Lukashenko noted apparent progress in the development of the Armed Forces of Belarus, saying, “Over the past few years, much has been done to maintain the combat readiness of the Belarusian Armed Forces. The army has received the latest technologies, both domestic and international, undergoing intense training. Of course, this costs a lot of money.”

The Defence Minister was pointed out to the necessity of keeping everything in perfect condition, from small arms and armoured vehicles, to aircraft and missiles.

“I’d like to warn you that reforms of the Armed Forces shouldn’t be seen as a substitute for the real development of the army. Only ongoing checks will allow us to assess the true state of combat readiness,” said the President addressing the Defence Minister.

The President asserted that the country has taken tough but timely measures for the development of the Belarusian military and industrial complex, including setting up a creative cluster of chief designers and specialists from military manufacturing plants.

### The enforcement of law and protection of citizens

A forthcoming session of the Security Council will be discussing law enforcement, as Mr. Lukashenko noted, saying, “The country is doing a great deal to ensure public security, which is a priority in Belarus.” He added, “We’re proud of Belarus being a relatively calm and safe country, but we shouldn’t become complacent.”

# Things are really good but greater growth is possible

Which measures should be taken to expand Belarusian-Turkish co-operation across all areas

By Vladimir Khromov

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has met the Prime Minister of Turkey, Binali Yildirim, asserting that major ministries and departments of our two states have established close and fruitful collaboration, while our trade turnover has neared \$1 billion. However, he stated, “This is only the basis for further development of Belarusian-Turkish relations. Let’s use this to expand our relationships across all areas. No closed topics exist for liaisons with the Turkish Republic; we’re ready to co-operate with you across the whole range.”

Prime Minister Yildirim said that, immediately prior to his meeting with the President, he met with the Prime Minister of Belarus, Andrei Kobyakov, discussing inter-state issues, including the development of interaction in economic, trade, transport and cultural spheres.

“Of course, I’m late with the visit to your country as prime minister, but I’m now availing myself of the opportunity to convey greetings from our President, Recep Tayyip Erdoğan. He’s pleased with the good relations between our states but believes that we have untapped



Alexander Lukashenko and Binali Yildirim meet in Minsk

## DIRECT SPEECH

Alexander LUKASHENKO, the President of Belarus:

There has been a Renaissance in Belarusian-Turkish relations in recent years, with very good co-operation established in the fields of trade and economy; this is the foundation of all good relations. Our political relations are better than ever before.

potential and opportunities to develop collaboration,” noted the Head of the Turkish Government.

Following inter-governmental negotiations, the two sides have signed a whole range of documents aiming to expand collaboration. These include agreements on mutual promotion and protection of investments, on international combined cargo transportation and on co-operation in the sphere of sports, as well as a protocol of exchange of ratification instruments of the treaty between Belarus and Turkey regarding legal assistance on civil, economic and criminal cases.

The Prime Minister of Turkey met with the Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikov, and the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko. Moreover, the programme of Mr. Yildirim’s visit envisaged his participation in the opening of the Belarusian-Turkish Business Forum, and a visit to Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant and the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park.

Turkey is one of the most important foreign trade partners for Belarus, being ranked ninth for trade turnover. In 2017, mutual bilateral trade exceeded \$940 mil-

lion, with Belarusian exports up almost 60 percent (compared to 2016), reaching \$134.4 million. Belarus supplies potash fertilisers, steel semi-finished goods, petrochemical goods, synthetic fibres and threads, as well as agricultural produce. Over the first nine months of 2017, Turkish investments into the Belarusian economy totalled \$40.4 million (showing 165.6 percent growth against the same period of 2016). Around 300 legal entities with Turkish capital are currently operating in Belarus.

Only one Belarusian commodity distribution network is working in Turkey, established by Minsk Automobile Works (part of Belneftekhim Concern), in December 2016. Work is now underway to launch assembly production of Gomselmash harvesters, Amkodor construction and special machinery, supplying BelAZ machinery to the Turkish market.

## Emphasis is now placed on small enterprises

Around 300 people take part in Belarusian-Turkish Business Forum

By Alexey Fedosov

“Representatives of about seventy leading companies from Turkey, and more than 140 Belarusian enterprises took part, showing that we have very high potential,” underlined the Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry (BelCCI), Vladimir Ulakhovich.

He believes that Belarus and Turkey are co-operating well in developing new areas for joint work. “We have many years of experience of collaboration and a number of Turkish companies have success stories on the Belarusian market. Our current prospects include industrial in-



During the work of the forum

teraction, Turkish investments in modernisation, the creation of new manufacturing facilities, and the development of new technologies,” he explained.

The BelCCI Head comments that logistics and sci-tech co-operation are possible spheres for interaction. Speaking of the development of co-operation between small and medium-sized businesses. Mr. Ulakhovich states that, not long ago, Belarus adopted two important decrees. Decree #7 initiates the develop-

ment of private entrepreneurship while supporting small and medium-sized enterprises. Belarus is export-oriented, and even the smallest enterprise must consider where its products will find customers. Emphasis is thus on the support and development of foreign economic co-operation for small and medium-sized businesses.

Half of the Belarusian forum participants were from small and medium-sized enterprises, as Mr. Ulakhovich emphasised.

## Evident benefit from profitable collaboration

By Alexander Pimenov

Annual growth of Turkish investments into the Belarusian economy may reach up to 30 percent in coming years, notes the Co-chairman of the Belarusian-Turkish Business Council, Dmitry Dichkovsky

The Co-chairman of the Belarusian-Turkish Business Council underlines that Turkey has been actively investing in Belarus. In particular, Turkish investors are joining Belarusian economic zones, where they can enjoy preferential taxation rates. “They see the potential of the EAEU and opportunities in Belarus due to its geopolitical location,” he asserts.

Mr. Dichkovsky notes that Turkey has some well-developed industries which can seri-

ously assist economic progress in Belarus. “These include the automotive industry, construction industry, and everything connected with the textile industry. These are the sectors where Belarus needs new competences, resources, investment and innovations,” he stresses.

The Belarusian-Turkish Business Forum in Minsk was attended by Belarus’ Prime Minister, Andrei Kobyakov, and his Turkish counterpart, Binali Yildirim. During a plenary meeting and a business matchmaking event, the business communities of our two countries discussed prospects for economic co-operation in a number of areas of mutual interest, including machine building, the chemical industry and textile industry, woodworking, logistics, and IT.

# Hard labour and worthy salaries as valid arguments

Processing companies are vital to future prosperity of small settlements and towns, notes the Head of State as he spoke with workers of the Yeast Plant and Sugar Plant, located in Slutsk

By Vladimir Velikhov

Workers asked about the development prospects for villages and measures being taken to retain young specialists in small towns and villages. The Head of State responded that there is great competition on the labour market in cities, making it less easy to command high salaries. “You shouldn’t think that it’s easy to live in the city,” he commented, adding that life in agro-towns and small towns, such as Slutsk, is interesting and comfortable. He believes that, thanks to governmental efforts, living conditions in rural areas will become more attractive and comfortable.

In particular, the state has provided benefits to those launching enterprises in small towns and villages, making them almost exempt from taxation. Accordingly, ever more small production facilities are being set up.

“This is the path we’ll take. We’ll be setting up modern processing facilities in small settlements and district centres,” underlined the President. He stressed that, although a lot has been done, more work lies ahead. A number of Slutsk-based enterprises have been upgraded, now manufacturing high-quality goods.

“The environment itself and the opportunity to get a good job will encourage people to remain in their hometowns, rather than heading to bigger cities,” believes the President. Good salaries and housing are solid arguments for people to stay.

Teachers’ salaries could double in coming years, as the President an-



At Slutsk Sugar Plant JSC packing facility

nounced during his working trip to the Slutsk District. He urged newly qualified teachers to remain in education jobs, and noted his acknowledgement that salaries for kindergarten staff and medical attendants are also too low, despite huge workloads. “Salaries need to be increased gradually. Both highly-paid and middle-rank workers will be receiving a pay rise. My primary concern, however, is the low-paid categories.”

The Head of State underlined the importance of local councils of depu-

ties handling problems, noting their ability to communicate promptly with authorities. “A problem can be solved faster with the help of a local deputy,” stressed Mr. Lukashenko, adding that deputies adopt the local budget, which includes wages for healthcare and education workers.

“We’ll strengthen the institution of local councils of deputies,” assured the Head of State, noting that he was once asked to get rid of local councils of deputies, but refused to do so, which

has proven wise. “Belarus intends to branch out into the Chinese sugar market,” Mr. Lukashenko told employees of Slutsk Yeast Plant and Slutsk Sugar Plant. China has opened its market to Belarusian meat and dairy products, and there are plans to supply sugar. The President chose these enterprises for his attention, wishing to discuss problems and advocate for the launch of advanced technologies. He views Slutsk Sugar Plant as the best (out of four) in its sphere.

# Raising attractiveness of saving deposits in national currency for population

By Yevgeny Kononov

**The country’s financial market saw a curious trend last year, as individuals’ fixed deposits in Belarusian Roubles rose by more than 13 percent. The refinancing rate fell from 18 to 11 percent and is likely to fall by another 0.5 percent soon, resulting in loan rates becoming cheaper while Rouble saving deposit rates grow. How can this be explained? Financial analyst Alexander Mukha reveals all.**

“Demand for Belarusian saving deposits has been observed against a background of gradually rising incomes, while inflation rates have slowed and the exchange rate of the Belarusian Rouble has steadied. Saving deposits in national currency remain most at-

tractive from the point of view of diversification of savings and to reap the best income,” notes Mr. Mukha.

The National Bank confirms its intention of preserving interest rates for fixed rate deposits at a higher level than annual inflation. Mr. Mukha tells us, “Interest rates for deposits in Belarusian Roubles have remained above inflation for the past

year, protecting savings from depreciating.”

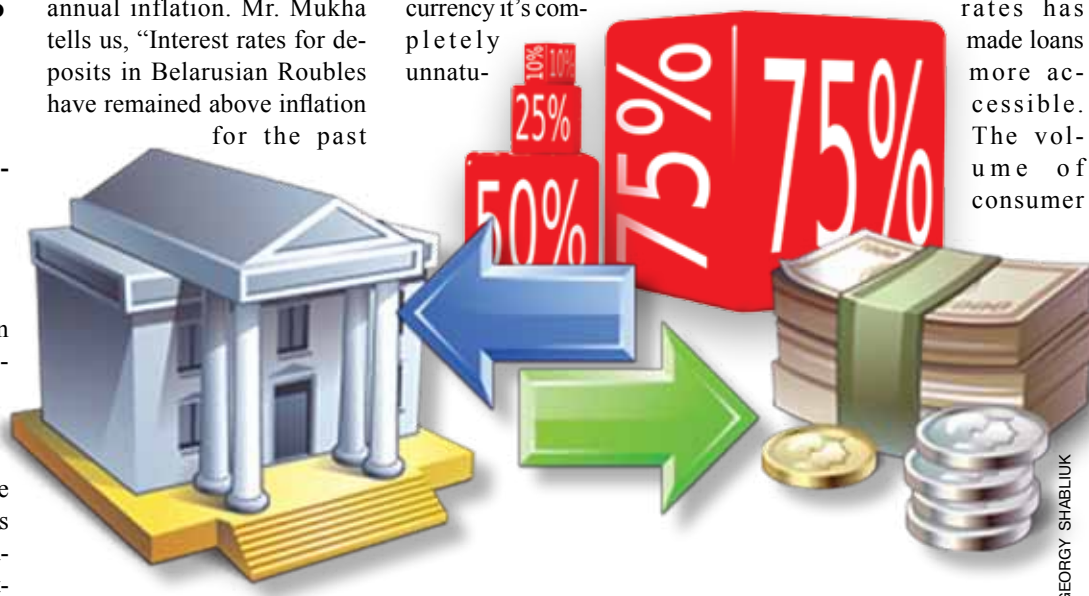
Speaking of state monetary policy and de-dollarisation, financial consultant Mikhail Grachev explains, “When more than half of the broad money supply is occupied by foreign currency it’s completely unnatu-

ral for any financial system. The National Bank is tasked with reducing this figure as much as possible, to promote the attractiveness of the Belarusian Rouble, strengthening trust in it as a currency.”

The reduction of interest rates has made loans more accessible. The volume of consumer

credit given by banks within the past year has increased by 75 percent. This is encouraging domestic demand, while maintaining rates of economic growth. This inevitably increases the share of consumer imports but the National Bank doesn’t see cause for concern. Mr. Mukha comments, “Despite reduced interest rates, monetary conditions remain severe. Existing growth rates of broad money supply correspond to the purchasing power of money, as placed by the economy.”

According to expert forecasts, unless volumes of consumer borrowing create financial risk and problems for the balance of payments, the National Bank won’t interfere. If imports increase excessively, leading to rising inflation and pressure on the exchange rate, the regulator is likely to reduce the amount of credit and loans.



# Simply charge the battery

Passenger cars — mass produced for the first time in the post-Soviet era — could be released under the ‘Made in Belarus’ trademark.

Though assembled from Chinese components, this does not diminish their value.



Belarus-made experimental electric car

By Vladimir Yakovlev

In the driver's seat, I press the gas pedal and the 5m long sedan smoothly and noiselessly accelerates. This comfortable car can seat five and its boot is the same volume as the petrol version. A charger kept in a small bag makes it possible to recharge the battery using just an ordinary socket.

There is a great need for vehicles such as these, as they can be used either as fleet or family cars or taxis.

The advantages are obvious: electric cars produce no toxic emissions, are easy to maintain and have low operational costs per kilometre... The other novelty is that these models are intended for two passengers and are likely to

arouse great interest among young people.

“We'll begin selling in May,” explains the Chairman of the Supervisory Board of Unison JV (which produces e-cars) — Alexey Vaganov. “A car costs \$17,000-22,000 but the price can be significantly reduced thanks to state support — as seen abroad. We know how to replace some of

the Chinese components with Belarusian ones, such as software, tyres, composite materials and seats. Further developments by Belarusian scientists will also increase demand.”

Iya Malkina — the First Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection — adds, “An e-car is a very important environmental factor now and we

hope production of these first electric vehicles will be followed by development of the necessary infrastructure in our cities. We need to evaluate the potential of this market in order to understand what kind of support our state can render. Such regulations will stimulate not only vehicle production but also increase customer demand.”

## Payments without borders almost a reality

By Anna Savelieva

**The model of a closed banking system — when financial market operators decide what services to render and on what terms — is becoming a subject of the past**

Since January 1st, EU customers are not obliged to liaise with banks directly: they can now hire intermediary firms to manage their accounts. Moreover, such companies should not conclude a contract and pay any commission: a bank simply needs to create an open interface.

Liberalisation of the financial market is an inevitability which our National Bank already understands and is trying to take appropriate steps towards. Conditions for the development of such products as currency futures, options and swaps are created by the bank's decree which abolishes restrictions on the targeted purchase of foreign currency by enterprises and individual entrepreneurs. Businesses are allowed to buy Dollars, Euros and Russian Roubles as needed. Even terms for this money's use are not specified. Entrepreneurs simply need to indicate the code of money spending, in the statistical returns. According to the National Bank, this will ensure greater freedom for businesses, while

reducing administrative costs, creating conditions for the development of derivative financial instruments and harmonising the Belarusian currency legislation in the EAEU.

In addition, a bill has been prepared and, in early 2018, a draft law on payment services will be provided for approval;



such services are expected to become a business not only for banks and financial organisations. Briefly, development of digital technologies creates the possibility of quick and easy payments, including in favour of third parties. For example, a customer using a mobile phone application (which does not depend on a particular bank and a particular payment system), sends information on their payment with details. The payer's bank — after login — sends the money to the recipient and informs the mobile application. The scheme makes it possible to work directly with the client's bank account and save commission-related money

(taken by payment systems for their services). This measure is topical for craftsmen, couriers, taxi services, portals which attract customers and accept payments for medical services, resorts, lodges and hotels — such as booking.com.

The list of planned innovations is much wider. The National Bank plans to cancel limitations related to the movement of company capital, acquisition of real estate and investment funds abroad. In turn, citizens will be able (without permission from the regulator) to open accounts abroad and buy or sell currency at the exchange — initially with the participation of banks and later on their own. All these freedoms are envisaged in the forthcoming law on currency regulation. At the same time, it is expected to minimise the use of foreign currency in the country as a means of payment and cover the cost of the measures.

## Stadler trains to appear on metro

By Dmitry Ampilov

**This year, trains of the Minsk metro — familiar to us since Soviet times — will be diversified. In the third quarter of 2018, the Stadler Minsk company will supply a new carriage for the Minsk metro. It's expected that these trains will be working on the third metro line (currently under construction). It's still a long time before it opens so accordingly, Stadler will initially service the second line, running between Mogilevskaya and Kamennaya Gorka stations.**

Minsk metro's Deputy Director Andrey Mikhailovsky, noted that these trains will include four carriages, with an opportunity to walk-through from beginning to end. The train is adjusted for all needs and is equipped with anti-vandal seats, convenient handrails, information electronic systems and an automatic train operation system which can ensure a stop with accuracy of +/- 20cm, as well as modern security systems.

“At first, the train will be trialled in the Mogilevskaya electric depot and then will on an empty metro line. After the train receives a security certificate it will carry passengers in a test situation. I think it will happen by the end of the year,” he said.

**REFERENCE**  
In 2018-2019, Minsk transport workers plan to purchase **300** more buses and **60** electric buses



Same trains as are running on Berlin's metro



GEORGY SHABLJUK

## Fifteen years: a considerable age

Time moves rapidly, but we catch it, in essence, in our weekly edition. Old newspapers tend to fade and yellow but I notice that my first issue of *The Minsk Times* remains as fresh and white as on the day it was printed, with its bright colours. At that time, our key editorial task was not only to surprise our readership but to launch a bold new edition. Happily, we've achieved our mission!

I remember, just a few editions after our launch, we received an e-mail from Belgium, from a professional journalist working for several Brussels editions, who was so impressed by our newspaper that he asked if he might join our team. It was unexpected, but the greatest form of flattery.

What was written in the first issue of *The Minsk Times*? It was a welcoming invitation to Belarus — a young sovereign state at the heart of Europe, where super-giants like BelAZ are produced. Some readers were interested to know about our currency, and which foreign currencies were in circulation. Belarus had an order from the Nike Corporation, making sports clothing for the brand, and there were some wonderful illustrations of Mir Castle, that historical and cultural monument.

Over these fifteen years, so much has happened. Looking at the cover page of that issue, I can't help but feel proud of our achievements. I often pass the Railway Station in Minsk and always think how beautiful it is. Back in February 2003, it was newly opened, as was reported on the front page. Made from glass and concrete, it was ultra-modern and remains so today, its windows still reflecting the sun. A girl in national costume stands in front, against the caption, in red lettering: Welcome to Belarus. Everything coincided wonderfully: the event and the symbol of Belarusian hospitality — launching our project.

That was the beginning. I'm grateful to have been at the helm during that launch. Our weekly newspaper continues to be filled with interesting content. Has it changed in these fifteen years? Definitely, since stagnation is to be avoided. Most publications find their niche, attracting readers with certain interests, while *The Minsk Times* has aimed to reveal the richness of life countrywide. This remains topical, since an increasing number of people are eager to learn more about Belarus. *The Minsk Times* captures this mood, convey to readers (especially those from abroad) the Belarusian palette of events, phenomena and human characters. We focus on the rich history and culture of our country.

*The Minsk Times* continues to grow and develop, acting as a compass to foreign guests. Seeing foreigners — businessmen and tourists — on Belavia, or on other airline routes, reading the newspaper with interest, I know that they're gaining their first impression of us. I'm sure that their meetings on the ground don't disappoint.

**Victor Kharkov,**  
*The Minsk Times* editor

# European Games to stress national flavour

## Forthcoming European Games-2019 could become a powerful PR-campaign for Belarus and its rich culture

By **Dmitry Ampilov**

Many visitors are expected to arrive for the event: at least 30,000 foreign tourists in addition to athletes, journalists and judges. The organisers are extremely busy. They describe the difficulties of choosing from the rich abundance of Belarusian history and cultural heritage sites within such a short period of time.

"One of our tasks is to make memorable opening and closing ceremonies, showing Belarus to everyone," said Anatoly Kotov, the Deputy Director of the Foundation 'The Direction of the Second European Games of 2019'. "In general, if we look at the stylistics of the European Games, everything is centred around the 'fern flower' and the corresponding ancient Belarusian legend which we'd like to bring to the whole world."

How are you planning to do this? It's a secret. Production director Alexander Vavilov explains that his



SERGEY LOZVUK

Variety of tours designed for capital's guests

portfolio has a 150-page guidance dealing with the creation of ceremonies. One of the most important items in it, is secrecy.

"The cultural programme will also be presented in the hospitality zones and fan zones, near the major sports grounds. Museums and exhibitions will be open for guests and Minskians; we're thinking about their opening hours, so that people can visit in the time free between sport events," explains Alexander Shestakov, the Deputy



Head of the Culture Department at Minsk City Executive Committee's

Main Department for Ideology, Culture and Youth Affairs.

Promotion of the Belarusian language is a separate topic. According to Pavel Legky, Belarus' Deputy Information Minister, it should be harmoniously connected with the popularisation of culture and the creation of a comfortable environment for guests, allowing them to see Belarus as a hospitable host country and a beautiful and interesting part of Europe.

## Complete Belarusian literary classic

By **Alexander Pimenov**

### First volume of the personal Yanka Kupala encyclopaedia presented at Minsk's Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum

The book was printed at the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House in late 2017. This richly illustrated edition includes approximately 1,500 articles — including those with a literary focus. The latter concentrate on the Belarusian poet's creativity and the people who played an important role in his life, as well as the personalities whose fates were greatly affected by Yanka Kupala.

Back in 1986, a one-volume Yanka Kupala encyclopaedia was published, but over the last three decades, new information about the poet's life and artistry have



BELTA

At presentation of encyclopaedia

become known, in addition to facts from his social and literary activity. As a result, the investigation of his personality has reached a scientific scale, and it was decided to continue the work to create a large-scale publication about the national classic writer.

The Yanka Kupala personal encyclopaedia is an international project containing information not only about Belarusian figures of culture and art, but also foreigners who had some relation to

the poet. Among them is the Chinese artist Ao Te (who painted a portrait of Yanka Kupala) and Khizri Asadulaev who was the first in Belarusian literature to translate Kupala's poems into the Karata language. The book tells us about the translators of Kupala's works into Russian, Kazakh, Georgian, Bulgarian, Tatar, Chuvash, Turkmen and other languages, with several special topics: Armenian Literature and Yanka Kupala, The English-

Speaking World and Yanka Kupala, Azerbaijan Literature and Yanka Kupala, and others. In addition, the book contains information about the cities he visited: in Russia, Georgia, Slovakia and Finland. With assistance of the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, the publication also includes articles about Lev Dashkevich (who created Kupala's artistic portraits in 1923 and 1924) and over 300 illustrations.

Among the book's authors are scientists from the National Academy of Sciences and some Belarusian universities. The ambitious project is not yet complete: this year, the second volume of the encyclopaedia is expected to be published, in addition to a book of Yanka Kupala's poem — Who is Going There? — translated into 100 languages.

# Robot-cat crossing the road brings good luck

It's taken seven years for the Belarusian Union of Youth to establish its prestigious national competition, where inquisitive minds know no bounds!

By Kristina Khilko

## Smartphone for cows

A hand-made telescope, a glove-simulator for recovery after a stroke and the solution able to extract excessive antibodies were among the developments presented at the *100 Ideas for Belarus* start-up competition. Young inventors continue to impress. Over the past seven years, almost 9,000 talented young people have demonstrated their talent.

The 2018 fair, hosted in Minsk, included Yevgeny Vershilo — a student at the Belarusian National Technical University. He showcased his special prosthesis, explaining, “My bionic hand helps people with disabilities return to normal life. Foreign devices cost over \$20,000, while mine costs only about \$1,500. Made of plastic, aluminum inserts and rubber, it can be ‘tailored’ by scanning a print of a healthy hand.”

In the sphere of agriculture,



Head of M-robot company, Maxim Masalsky

an agro-company from the Zhodino District asked the Minsk university to find a method of weighing cows without obliging them to stand on a scale. The animals become nervous and milk yield suffers as a re-

sult. “Scales can be replaced by a smartphone,” explains Sergey Kravtsov, a graduate student of the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics. He tells us, “A special mobile application

helps to determine the weight of a cow, a calf or a pig, with accuracy to the nearest kilogram. The scheme is simple. You photograph the animal from all sides, using the video to create a three-dimensional model. An

algorithm then calculates the volume and surface area, with measurements automatically sent to a database, to determine weight.”

Employees of the National Academy of Sciences’ Scientific-Research Centre for Food also demonstrated some non-traditional methods and materials, with Yelena Krasovskaya making fish paste from carp and fucus seaweed. She notes, “It’s not only delicious but nutritious, as fucus is a valuable source of iodine, vitamins, amino acids and polyunsaturated fatty acids, which our bodies sometimes lack. These normalise digestion, clean the intestine and strengthen the immune system.”

These are only a few of the striking examples of developments presented at the annual national start-up competition. All six regions of Belarus will present the greatest ‘breakthroughs’ at the Republican finals.

# Place for your own pleasure!

By Natalia Tychko

**The German word ‘Bierdeckel’ is not used in our language, though many know what it looks like: it is a special coaster for a mug or a glass, made to absorb the condensation droplets. Brewing companies have long since used these to advertise their products, while for fans of the frothy drink it has become a collector’s item.**

## Collection begins with bottle tops

The word ‘Bierdeckel’ is translated from German as ‘beer mug cover’, although from this, one would expect the mat to be on the top instead of underneath the glass. It is all a question of tradition. ‘Bierdeckel’ became

common in Europe in the 19th century. At the time, wealthy citizens could afford to top their beer mugs with a tin or even a silver cover intended to protect the drink against insects and other debris. While poorer people took their beer in the usual mugs with a felt disc which was used like a cover for the beer when drinking outside. Whilst indoors the mat was put underneath to soak up

excessive foam and spilt beer.

Cinema critic Anton Kolyago has collected coasters for 3 years. He says that he has not counted his collection recently, but it totals nearly 3,000 exhibits, a large collection by any standards.

“At first I wanted to make a collection of beer bottle tops. At the start, I asked friends to bring me them. Then I learnt that many breweries have a very positive attitude to collectors and if you send a letter with the request to send several tops, they will happily oblige. So, I tried this and sent letters to some plants and breweries. Some sent me only caps,



while others also sent ‘bierdeckel’ coasters. As a result, I have two collections, but the collection of bierdeckel items grows much faster, and it is also more interesting to collect.

Drinks coasters are more often made of dense cardboard. Coated on both sides with a special film that protects the material from moisture. One-use, non-watertight covers are known as beer-

mats, while the more dense and durable type are coasters. Sometimes it can be difficult to distinguish between the two so neither description would be wrong.

## It is not a sweet wrapper

Looking at Anton’s collection, I notice beer mats from different countries. Inscriptions in foreign languages give clues from which part of the world this coaster has arrived: Poland, the Netherlands, China or India. There are also local items. As a rule, these are branded coasters from our breweries. Anton jokes that such objects are found naturally. When you go to a bar — take a souvenir. As a rule, they can be found on counters or tables. Besides, you can always ask a barman or waiter for several to exchange with collectors from other countries.

“I even have some very unusual items with gold tooling, irregular shapes, etc. But it does not depend on the country or manufacturer. It’s not only large companies like Carlsberg, but also small Madagascan bars might issue something interesting,” Anton notes.

The coasters in unusual shapes might seem very interesting but are often inconvenient



Tours of Minsk’s Olivaria Brewery proving very popular

and cannot carry out their function of being a glass coaster. If you are interested in the practical side, it is better to choose standard forms: round or square.

“When the shape of a coaster is unusual, then most likely, it is a collection item issued specially for beer festival,” says Anton.

## Cardboard circles for the soul

At the beginning, he did not consider his collection to have any value. He took coasters from wherever they were available — if they were not freely offered, he was not upset. About a year passed, and his collecting got carried away. While friends got used to bringing coasters as gifts from holidays and business trips.

The cinema critic’s collection contains items of special importance, his favourites. For example, a complete set made in the form of black vinyl records, or items which were brought from

as far away as Alaska and Tahiti island.

“The brewery Grolsch has very beautiful coasters, I can call them my favourites,” says Anton.

Anton enjoys the practical possibilities of his collection, sometimes a duplicate can be found, but they can always be used according to their basic purpose — and you can utilise them for a cup of tea or hot plate.

Even though the coasters have a part in Anton’s life, he already has problems with storing and displaying them, “Now I store them in a box. In the future, I want to start sorting them: and display them according to countries, brands of beer and importance.”

Anton doesn’t have any special aim of collecting up to five or ten thousand. He likes the process of collecting. In the future, he wants to add to the set with coasters from Cuba, Brazil or New Zealand.



# Warning after Swiss avalanche hits skiers

A father and daughter were among four killed while skiing in France last Sunday, and two skiers were hurt in Switzerland — as avalanches struck the Alps

A father and his 11-year-old daughter died as they were swept away by an avalanche at Val d'Isere in the French Alps last Sunday, mountain rescuers reported.

The 43-year-old man and his daughter, who came from the Paris region, were skiing on a piste that had been closed because of the risk of avalanches, the authorities said. The two vic-

tims were found at lunchtime in an area surrounded by cliffs at an altitude of nearly 3,000 metres. The exact circumstances of the accident are not known.

Also, a cross-country skier was killed near the resort of Giettaz-en-Aravis in Savoie, when a ledge gave way under his weight in an off-piste zone.

A 19-year-old man also died in the Pyrenees while skiing with

his father.

Meanwhile, an avalanche in the Swiss Alps injured two skiers, police said.

Earlier they had reported that ten people were missing after a witness raised the alarm, unaware that the group were safe.

"There was indeed a group of ten skiers, but at the moment the avalanche struck, eight of them were ahead of the snowslide and

the one who raised the alarm believed they had all been swept away," said police spokesman Steve Leger. "Rescuers found the two injured people and transported them to hospital," he added. They were later said to have only minor injuries.

Police say the group were not hiking but were on touring skis, which can be used to climb and descend slopes.



# At least 17 dead in high school attack

**A gunman, armed with an assault rifle and smoke grenades began the shooting spree outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland before opening fire inside**

A gunman began the shooting spree outside Marjory Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland before opening fire inside.

Said to have been wearing a gas mask, the shooter set off a fire alarm in a bid to draw students from their classes.

The suspect has been named as 19-year-old Nikolaus Cruz, who was arrested an hour after the rampage took place.

"He is in custody. We've already began to begin to dissect his websites and the things that social media that he was on, and some of the things that come to mind are very, very disturbing," Broward County Sheriff Scott Israel announced.

"He was a former student of Douglas High School. He got expelled for disciplinary reasons, I don't know the specifics."

A teacher at the school said staff had undergone training for such a situation six weeks ago.

It's the sixth deadly school shooting in the US this year and one of the worst since 20 children were killed in Connecticut in 2012.

# Engine cover blows off the Hawaii-bound United flight in midair

**High over the Pacific Ocean last Tuesday, the casing blew off one of the engines on United Airlines Flight 1175**

Passengers heard a loud bang and felt the plane shake violently. Those seated on the right side looked out their windows and saw pieces of metal flying. By the time the plane touched down safely in Honolulu around 40 minutes later, the engine was bare, its innards on full display.

It was not clear as of Tuesday evening what had caused the malfunction. Ian Gregor, a spokesman for the Federal Aviation Administration, said the agency was investigating.

Haley Ebert, who was in a window seat above the right wing, said she had raised her window shade after hearing a "huge bang" that she likened to a gunshot.

"Everyone on our side flung open their windows just to see what it was," Ms. Ebert said in a phone interview. "The casing to the engine had sort of flown off. There were



pieces flying into the ocean, nuts and bolts flying out a little bit. A bolt hit the wing, and it just made this huge bam."

United said in an emailed statement that the plane, traveling from San Francisco to Honolulu, had made an emergency landing after the engine cowling, or covering, came off. "Our pilots followed all necessary protocols to safely land the aircraft," it said. "The aircraft taxied to the gate and passengers deplaned normally."

# Taiwan President wishes China Happy New Year, gets warm response

**Taiwan President Tsai Ing-wen wished 'friends' in China a Happy Lunar New Year, drawing a surprisingly warm reaction from Chinese state media which is more used to disparaging her as a dangerous separatist**

Taiwan is one of China's most sensitive issues and a potentially dangerous military flashpoint. China has become increasingly hostile to Taiwan since Tsai won election in 2016, believing she wants to push for the island's formal independence, a red line for China.

# Google's app network quietly becomes huge growth engine

**Google makes ads show up in more smartphone apps than any other technology company. That is the core of a resurgent business for parent Alphabet Inc.**

Google's ad network unit has posted three straight quarters of year-over-year double-digit sales increases. The business is nearing \$20 billion in annual revenue, making it as important to Google's top-line as its hardware, cloud computing and app store groups combined.

Google has lured app developers from competitors by lowering commissions and simplifying software. And it is increasingly satisfying advertisers with hot new formats such as video.

# Britain submits proposal for new Typhoon jets to Belgium

**Britain submitted its final offer of Eurofighter Typhoon jets to Belgium, the UK's Defence Ministry said, in a proposal which includes 34 planes and support services**

The Eurofighter Typhoon is a joint project between British defence group BAE Systems, France's Airbus and Italy's Leonardo, and Britain said the proposal had the support of all three nations plus Germany.

"These proven jets offer Belgium a formidable capability which forms the backbone of European air power, as well as a comprehensive long-term defence and industrial partnership with the UK," Defence Secretary Gavin Williamson said in a statement.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# Collector makes beautiful gesture which can become an example to follow

Works by modern Belarusian masters donated to National Art Museum, by Monaco collector Georgy Khatsenkov

By Veniamin Mikheev



Belarus' Culture Minister, Yuri Bondar, spoke at the donation ceremony, hosted by the museum, thanking famous collector Georgy Khatsenkov for his generous gesture. Sadly, the art historian and candidate of historical sciences was unable to attend, as noted by the Belarusian Ambassador to France, Pavel Latushko. However, Mr. Khatsenkov has plans to return to Belarus at a later date.

The donation is a worthy contribution in returning the historical and cultural heritage of Belarus; the Culture Ministry has been working hard on other such initiatives.

Mr. Latushko and his embassy staff facilitated the organisation of the event, which saw the donation of works by People's Artist of Belarus Alexander Kishchenko, by Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus Vladimir Slobodchikov, by sculptor Galina Gorovaya and by painter Alexey Marochkin.

The *Gifts to the Museum* public exhibition is being hosted by the National Art Museum for only a few days in February before going for further study, attribution and restoration (if necessary). Pieces will then go on show in personal and thematic



exhibitions organised by the National Art Museum and other museums.

Mr. Khatsenkov was born in Belarus but studied in Russia, where he worked as a radio and television reporter. Since

the 1990s, he has been an entrepreneur. He began collecting works of art in the 1980s, with collecting becoming his lifelong love. Today, the MC Fine Arts Gallery in Monaco, founded by Georgy Khat-



**Crowds gather for ceremony**

**New works by Belarusian painters and sculptors added to museum collection**

**Works worthy of spectator interest**

senkov and his wife Tatiana, boasts more than 5,000 works, created by around 500 painters.

"In recent years, much has been done in our country to develop culture; however, the return of cultural treasures from abroad (for historical, political and financial reasons) is important. This year, the Head of State has instructed us to work hard on such returns, signing related agreements," underlined Mr. Latushko, speaking at the ceremony at the museum. He emphasised that the current event confirmed that 'Belarusians never lose ties with their Homeland'.

## Libraries exchange gifts

By Oleg Bogomazov

**Around 1,500 books donated to National Library of Belarus, by President of Turkey's National Library, Zulfı Toman**

Books on various subjects have been donated, as Mr. Toman noted at the ceremony, helping readers discover Turkey as a country with long traditions, rich culture and tourist potential. Also on show was a collection of historic photographs: *Traces of Istanbul: From Empire to Republic*.

The Director of Belarus' National Library, Roman Motulsky, sees the donation as a step forward in the development of co-operation between our two states' libraries. Several documents on the expansion of co-operation in various spheres between Belarus and Turkey



Zulfı Toman at National Library of Belarus

have been signed, including a memorandum of understanding between the National Library of Turkey and the National Library of Belarus. The document aims to strengthen co-operation between the two libraries professionally, supporting the establishment of corporate bonds in the fields of science, culture and distribution of scientific information.

The National Library of

Belarus presented an e-book by English diplomat, historian and traveller Paul Rica, entitled *Turkish Monarchy*. Published in 1678 by Slutsk Publishing House, on the territory of Belarus, the original is kept at the National Library of Belarus. In addition, a facsimile edition of *Francysk Skaryna Heritage* is to be donated to Turkish colleagues this year.

## 'Chyrachka' ritual welcomes the spring

By Mikhail Veremeev

**Holiday of spring calling held last Sunday in agrotown of Tonezh, in Gomel Region's Lelchitsy District**

The 'Chyrachka' ceremonial feast is an intangible historical and cultural treasure of Belarus — celebrated on the last day of Pancake Week. It always brings together large numbers of guests from Belarus and beyond.

On the eve of the holiday, villagers bake 'chyrachki' pastries, in the shape of birds, following ancient recipes. On Sunday, residents and visitors gather to decorate a fir tree with homemade flowers and ribbons, followed by walking to Chernitsovskaya Hill, near the village. Older people travel in carts while the rest process on foot, all singing folk

songs and greeting others with cries of 'chyrachka'.

The main action takes place on the hill, where people dance, play folk games, sing spring-themed songs and burn old possessions. The decorated fir tree is hung from a tall oak, since it's believed that the closer the fir tree is to the sun, the faster spring will come, as will the 'chyrachki' (ducks). To ensure a safe and healthy year, participants ride down the hill on sledges, or on small rugs if there's no snow. The holiday finishes with a feast on the hill, with every family bringing a dish, to share with the gathering, placed on a linencloth-covered table. Tonezh has long cherished this tradition, which has been passed down through the years, as a unique cultural tradition.



# World Cup Trophy brightly flashes with great victories

## Most honourable football trophy comes to Minsk

By Denis Komarov

There is nothing more iconic in football than the World Cup Trophy, which is awarded to winners of world championships. It's been held by such legends as Maradona, Rossi, Zidane and Ronaldo. All players dream of the day on which they might win the trophy, from experienced masters to young novices.

In July, the World Cup Trophy will be awarded once more. In anticipation, it is visiting ninety-one cities across fifty-one countries, inspiring millions of fans. This is the fourth trip of its kind, with Belarus joining for this first time, the trophy initially being set in the Palace of Independence, and received by the President, joined by players of various ages: youngsters, veterans and Olympians. Only heads of state and champions are allowed to touch the trophy so, as soon as Alexander Lukashenko had placed it upon the pedestal, the trophy was covered by a transparent box. It's hoped that it will inspire our players to bright victories.

The German team currently owns the



ALEXANDER KUSHNER

Numerous football fans able to view the cherished trophy

statuette (which larger on television, and even more symbolic); it is made from 18 carat gold and mounted on a malachite base. This summer, we'll learn who'll join the six teams who have already won the trophy (England and Uruguay received only an initial version of the Cup: the Jules Rimet Prize). In addition, this year, Russia will host the World Championship. In the meantime, the trophy is visiting Minsk.

One of the best Belarusian players, Alexander Hleb, admits to having followed the latest world championship matches closely, and regrets being unable to par-

ticipate. Sergey Borovsky came close to the trophy in 1982, playing for the Soviet squad, and reaching the semi-finals of the World Championship, hosted by Barcelona's Camp Nou Stadium. He admits that seeing the Cup has revived old feelings, saying, "This trophy is of major importance for world football fans. I'm always envious of seeing a team raising this championship prize. Every footballer wants the opportunity to touch the trophy. I had the chance, of course, but it was only later, after becoming a coach, that I realised why the USSR team failed to reach

the finals in 1982: not all national team players were suitably motivated, which is crucial."

Minsk is one of the ninety-one cities across fifty-one countries hosting the trophy's world tour, organised by FIFA prior to the launch of the championship in Russia. The idea is to attract maximum attention for the event. The Belarusian team, which is ranked last in its qualifying group, has been able to see the trophy and Sergey Borovsky notes that it's never too late. "Who knows, perhaps our guys will have the chance to touch this trophy."

## Defeat, but victory also

By Alexey Smolin

### Women's basketball team plays two games at home as part of qualifying round for 2019 European Championship

In the first match, held at Minsk's Sports Palace, our Belarusian women's team lost to Turkey, facing tough opposition from the very beginning from the European double medallists. The Turkish squad quickly reached 17 points, with the Belarusians lagging behind by 15 points (35:50) by the final quarter. Coached by Natalia Trofimova (recently returning following the birth of her son), the team caught up a little, leaving the final score at 54:64.

Yelena Levchenko, playing a centre position, and Alex



During Belarus-Poland match the final whistle.

Bentley, in defence, proved to be the most productive in scoring, despite being only recently returned themselves.

Four days later, the Belarusian squad defeated Poland — 71:50. The hosts' advantage was obvious, conceding only six points in the first quarter, and taking firm control of the match, to lead by 21 points by

The final stage of the continental tournament will feature the winners of the eight groups, in addition to the six best teams finishing second. Latvia and Serbia don't need to participate for a place, since they'll be hosting the women's continental championship in summer 2019.

## Tsmoki-Minsk through to FIBA Cup play-offs

### Tsmoki basketball players played the final match of the second group stage of the FIBA European Cup — leaving no chances of success for the Montenegrin team Mornar Bar (84:45)

For the 'dragons' to reach the quarter finals, the Minskians needed to win with a difference of no less than seven points: in the first match against Mornar, they

lost 76:83. However, Alexander Krutikov's team trampled their opponents into the parquet of Minsk-Arena — winning with a 39 point lead. As a result, Tsmoki celebrated three victories in six matches, and was placed second in Group C.

The Danish Bakken Bears (with four victories) was through to the FIBA Cup play-offs in top position.

## Noble nomination

By Dmitry Orekhov

### Darya Domracheva nominated for the prize named after Pierre de Coubertin — the World Fair Play Awards

An application was sent to the Fair Play International Committee after the World Cup in Antholz. At the end of the race she accidentally stepped on Dorothea Wierer's ski pole, but

chose not to run ahead of her at the finish line — allowing the sportswoman to finish in second place.

The decision on the award for fair play will be made in late 2018. Previously, Belarusian Alexander Medved (1983), Vladimir Samsonov (2005) and sambo fighter Stepan Popov (2016) were awarded Fair Play diplomas.

# Incredible jump towards Olympic gold

Anna Guskova becomes champion in ski acrobatics, following tough fight

turned home with awards. However, gold came only in 2010, claimed by Alexey Grishin, in Vancouver, while Sochi saw Anton Kushnir and Alla Tsuper taking gold medals. Twenty years have passed since that first medal, and we are now seeing success in PyeongChang.

In the first jump of the finals, both — Anna Guskova and Alla Tsuper — performed brilliantly, sending them through to the second final (of six jumpers), with Alla in third position and Anna leading. It was then a matter of keeping their nerve.

“If you’re not afraid, then something’s wrong with you!” Anna Guskova once said. There’s no doubt that the sport is dangerous. Anna’s final attempt didn’t come off as planned, with a bad landing, which upset her, despite her having overcome adverse weather conditions, but her jump was enough to claim gold, and ulti-

mate victory.

Others also fell and gnashed their teeth in frustration, including Alla Tsuper who failed in pulling off her most difficult jump as accurately as in Sochi, leaving her in fourth place, despite her heroic determination: Alla has twice returned to the slope after giving birth. Of course, we hope she stays with the team for the Winter Games in Beijing, in 2022.

Anna Guskova cried and laughed simultaneously on realising her success, as if hardly able to believe she’d achieved her goal. Anna’s persistence has paid off. She has marked herself as a professional, of whom the country can be proud.

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, congratulated Anna Guskova on winning gold at the Winter Olympics in PyeongChang:

“Dear Anna!

In defending the sporting honour of our country, you’ve given the Belarusian people true moments of joy. With racing hearts, we’ve been following your amazing, brave performance, which has brought us the first, long-awaited gold of the Olympics in PyeongChang.

Having demonstrated an unrivalled level of mastery and confirmed the highest class of the Belarusian freestyle school, you’ve brought victory to the whole country.

I congratulate you, confer-

# Shining with silver glint!

Belarusian team claims second Olympic medal in PyeongChang, with Darya Domracheva earning silver in biathlon mass start

By Igor Grishin

For most of the distance, Domracheva followed close behind Anastasiya Kuzmina of Slovakia. After missing a target at the third firing range, our triple Olympic champion fell back but Darya kept pushing hard, doing brilliantly at the last firing range. This Olympic medal is her fifth: she has three gold medals from Sochi-2014 and a bronze from Vancouver-2010.

After the race, Ms. Domracheva commented on her possible participation in the next Games, admitting that it’s too early to say, but that it’s likely she won’t attend the Olympiad in Beijing. “I can’t think about this now; it’s too early to plan ahead. I can’t say for sure but I think that

this is my last Olympiad.” As to how long she’ll spend in biathlon, she responded, “I need to finish this season before thinking of future plans. The next races at the Games are a priority. It’s important to focus attention.”

The President of Belarus has congratulated Darya Domracheva on her silver medal in PyeongChang, writing: ‘Dear Dasha! We were pinning great hopes on you and were looking forward to a worthy performance at the biathlon track in PyeongChang. Having shown brilliant nerves, you conducted the mass start race in wonderful style and earned Olympic silver! Thank you for this victory. I’m convinced that our girls can show high results in the relay race. May good fortune be with you!’



By Igor Grishin

Our freestylers — coached by Nikolay Kozeko — are bringing home gold from the third Olympics in a row. It’s an incredible success! With seven Olympic medals under their belt, the team has proven its capability.

Starting from Nagano-1998, Mr. Kozeko’s trainees have always re-



Anna Guskova on the medals podium



Darya Domracheva racing over the distance

# Judicial unscrupulousness has smeared the overall impression of the Olympiad

PyeongChang sees men’s ski acrobatics conclude

By Sergey Selin

The only representative of Belarus in the main final was Stanislav Gladchenko, who did well in the preceding two finals, to join the top six freestylers. In his last attempt, Gladchenko took a risk, performing a very difficult jump. Sadly, he landed badly, leaving him in sixth place. Gold went to Ukrainian Alexander Abramenko (128.51), while Russian Ilya Burov’s bronze was also worthily deserved. Belarusian freestyler and past Olympic champion Anton Kushnir failed to reach the final, among puzzling circumstances.

The head coach of Belarus’ national ski acrobatic team,

Nikolai Kozeko, complained about refereeing during the qualification stage, telling Belarus 1 TV Channel, “Sadly, the judges were settling old scores with us, getting rid of a strong competitor at the qualification stage. You’ve seen who sat among the judges: Switzerland, Russia, China... Their representatives were competing with us. None of the coaches understood, exactly, what Anton Kushnir’s mistake had been, and neither did Anton. Alas, there is no chance of protest, as there’s no procedure for this. It’s impossible to appeal against judges’ decisions.”

According to the results of the second qualification stage,



Anton Kushnir

Anton Kushnir was just 0.45 points short of reaching the final. The last place went to a Swiss sportsman; incidentally, a Swiss judge gave the lowest grade to Anton.

After casting his vote at Minsk’s ballot station, President Alexander Lukashenko shared

his thoughts on the performance of Belarusian freestyler Anton Kushnir and the injustice of judges. He commented, “They simply threw out their main rival. What’s happening? We’ve gone to PyeongChang to compete, attentively followed by all: Chinese, Russians, Americans, Canadians, Australians, and Swiss. This is a sport where a single mistake can cost a great deal. A sportsman needs nerves of steel. Kushnir jumped without error, being a strong man. They [the judges] realised that he was not just a finalist but an Olympic champion again; they realised that it would be impossible to fight against Kushnir.”

Mr. Lukashenko noted that the panel of judges featured representatives of Russia, China and Switzerland: all with athletes in the final. Moreover, the

Swiss athlete, who was placed sixth in the qualification round, was just 0.45 points ahead of Anton Kushnir.

President Lukashenko has sent a complaint to the President of the International Olympic Committee, Thomas Bach, about the refereeing of Belarusian freestyler Anton Kushnir. “Our federation tried, afterwards, to file a protest, to talk kindly with its colleagues in PyeongChang — the international federation. The reply was clear. I had to call up the Foreign Ministry at night and involve our embassy in the Republic of Korea, to immediately send a government telegram to Mr. Bach. I told him everything I thought, in mild language. We will make this public. We won’t hide it,” the President has announced.

## Holiday of the week



At the 'Chyrachka' holiday to welcome spring, in Tonezh agro-town, in the Lelchitsy District

### EXHIBITIONS

#### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street  
Until 11<sup>th</sup> March. *Between Word and Image*

#### NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> February. *Solar Height*  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> February. *Traditional Artistic Culture of Belarus*

#### GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

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

#### NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> February. Exhibition of experiments: *Science Museum* Until 15<sup>th</sup> April. *Fiodor Yastreb's Poetic Palette*

#### STATE MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> February. *Secrets of Moment*  
Until 16<sup>th</sup> April. *Timkovichi: Treasury of Inspiration*

#### MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> February. *Lev Borodulin: Legend of Sports Photography*  
Until 4<sup>th</sup> March. *Yan Rozental's Artistic School*

#### LEONID SHCHEMELEV CITY ART GALLERY

10 Revolutsionnaya Street  
Until 11<sup>th</sup> March. *Famillia*

#### NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

47 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
Until 27<sup>th</sup> February. *Table art project*

#### UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square  
Until 21<sup>st</sup> February. *Looking at Your House*  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> February. *Marat Gadzhiev's Zunzul Chani*

#### CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> February. *Romantic February*

#### GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 4<sup>th</sup> March. *13<sup>th</sup> Wonder of the World*

#### MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street  
Until 25<sup>th</sup> March. *Water Residents*

#### REPUBLICAN SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL LIBRARY

7 Pobediteley Avenue  
Until 28<sup>th</sup> February. *Reserved Corners of Belarus: Vitebsk Region*

#### BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS

32 Nezavisimosti Avenue  
23.02. Ice Fairy Show

### THEATRES

#### NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street  
23.02. Viva la Mamma! 24.02. Tosca 25, 27 and 28.02. The Nutcracker 01.03. La Traviata

#### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street  
22.02. Cherry Orchid 23.02. Tristan and Isolde 24.02. Little Red Riding Hood. Generation NEXT; Jane Eyre 25.02. Jungle. New Year; Clandestine Marriage 27.02. Tales from the Vienna Woods 01.03. Without a Dowry

#### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street  
22.02. Red Hot Mamas 23.02. Divers 24.02. The Twelfth Night 25.02. Private Lives 27.02. Zoika's Flat 28.02. Double Eternity 01.03. Tricks of Khanuma

#### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
22.02. Pan Tadeusz 23.02. School of Taxpayers 24 and 25.02. The Black Lady of Nesvizh 25.02. Two Souls 27.02. Pinsk Gentry 28.02. Jeweller's Jubilee

#### YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street  
22.02. Doctor Not Upon One's Own Will 23.02. Blue Bird 24.02. Poliana 25.02. Cat's House 01.03. Savage Hunt of King Stakh

#### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue  
22.02. Wolves and Sheep 23.02. Abduction of Yelena 24.02. Who Laughs Last 25.02. Two Arrows 26.02. Master and Margarita 27.02. Pygmalion 28.02 and 01.03. #13

#### REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street  
22.02. Woe from Wit 23.02. Doctor Raus' Career 24.02. Wolf-Sailor; An Uninvited Guest 25.02. Concrete 27.02. From Life of Insects 28.02. Eternal Song 01.03. This Is All She

#### YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street  
22.02. Departing Nature; The Fool 23.02. Zhmurik; Bigamist 24.02. Masculine, Singular 25.02. Sanya, Vanya and Rimas 27.02. The Fool 28.02. Simple Story 01.03. Bankrupt

#### BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street  
22.02. Silk 23.02. Belvedere 24.02. Little Red Riding Hood 25.02. Morozko

#### MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street  
22.02. Behind Closed Door 27.02. Comedy

#### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street  
24.02. Ili-Ili band in concert