

# The Minsk Times

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### Gérard Depardieu enjoys Belarus

The French actor with a Russian passport exchanged bohemian Paris for cosy Minsk for a couple of days **Page 6**



### Students of all generations face the same problems

For many students, summer is a time to gain some work experience and apply their training to allow them become familiar with some of the finer points of their chosen profession **Page 7**



### Counting on feedback and arousing exciting discussion

PROEKT sculptural exhibition successfully presented at the Belarusian Union of Artists' Gallery **Page 9**



ALEXANDER STARODUB

Collection of signatures for candidates for the post of Head of State was launched in Belarus on July 23rd

# The Central Election Commission has made a decision



# Big cars for definitely big deals

The principle of multi sector investment, underlying the Belarusian foreign policy, is largely due to the need to diversify markets for domestic products. The African continent offers huge potential for this. In recent years, for various reasons, Africa has faded into the background for diplomats and industrialists, yet many African states are in need of Belarusian products. Alexander Lukashenko, talking to the Vice President, Minister of Justice and Parliamentary Co-operation of the Republic of Zimbabwe, Emmerson Mnangagwa, said that this visit could open a new chapter in bilateral relations. Thanks to co-operation with Zimbabwe, we can reach a closer understanding with other countries in the region.

By Vladimir Khromov

There are many elements of Belarus that are novel to African guests: the nature, cuisine and well-developed infrastructure. But what they didn't have to get used to is the July climate. July is the coldest month in Zimbabwe; the temperature there at this time is about the same as ours. Ac-

climatisation was not a problem for the delegation. There is hope that there will be no obstacles to co-operation in the trade and economic sectors. The flagships of our domestic industry (MAZ, MTZ, BelAZ, BMZ) have worked for the Zimbabwean market for a while now and even managed to sign some contracts. In truth however, their

implementation leaves much to be desired. In recent years, the country has experienced a severe financial crisis. Inflation has reached a truly cosmic scale. This summer, one US Dollar was equivalent to 250 trillion Zimbabwean Dollars. But this is, presumably, a temporary difficulty. Zimbabwe has an abundance of natural wealth with com-

mercial production of iron, coal, gold, silver, nickel, platinum and diamonds. Alexander Lukashenko has offered to begin a programme of interaction, "I think that we should start with a few specific projects. It will be a message to entrepreneurs not only from your country but also other countries, with which you share a border."

Zimbabwe has relied on the development of the mining industry and the construction of its social and economic infrastructure. In this respect, they are interested in our experiences. The Zimbabweans are keen to purchase dumper trucks, as well as

road and construction equipment. Only the question of maintenance and servicing of the vehicles is an issue for them. Mr. Lukashenko suggested we should study the possibility of establishing a single powerful service centre in the region for all Belarusian equipment.

Emmerson Mnangagwa personally made sure of the quality of our products by driving one of the vehicles at BelAZ. He declared that he is probably the only man in Africa who is lucky enough to have been on such a heavy truck.

In Zimbabwe they have undertaken the mechani-



Emmerson Mnangagwa

sation of agriculture. The country grows a lot of quality cotton, tea and tobacco, one of the best on the continent. Local farmers will certainly like Belarusian tractors. African banks and the Bank of Development of Belarus are potential sources of financing for the purchases.

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS—2015

# The Central Election Commission has made a decision

Eight candidates are admitted from the applications for the nominations for the presidency

By Alexander Benkovsky

Considering 15 applications, the Central Election Commission chose eight of them for registration as action groups. Now candidates must pass through the following stages of selection. Until August 21st, their supporters will campaign around the streets, visit the apartments of voters and place members in agreed places in towns and cities with the purpose of drawing attention to the candidate.

Which groups will compete for the attention of the voters? The list contains eight names. Among them is the acting President Alexander Lukashenko, the Chairman of the left party 'A Just World' Sergei Kalyakin, and the leader of the Liberal Democratic Party Sergei Gaidukevich. Decisions on these candidates were made one week previously. Now they have been supplemented by active campaigner from the 'Tell the Truth' party Tatiana Korotkevich, the Chairman of the United Civic Party of Belarus, Anatoly Lebedko, the supreme ataman (commander) of the Belarusian Cossacks Nikolay Ulakhovich, a teacher from Brest Zhanna Romanovskaya, and also the economist Victor Tereshchenko.

There were also campaign groups that were not registered, among them: the kindergarten teacher from Minsk Tamara Biryukova, ex-candidate for the presidency of the 2010 campaign who is serv-



ALEXANDER STARODUB

Collection of signatures to support of candidates for the post of the President

ing a prison sentence Nikolay Statkevich, an entrepreneur from Novopolotsk Andrey Konovets, Novopolotsk photographer Alexander Yudaev, advertising expert from Minsk Irina Pershina, and also a certain Sergey Zablotzky. This latter candidate is unknown and remains a mystery even for the Central Election Commission.

The Central Election Commission was impartial at the session. If your application does not fulfil all the legislative requirements you will be refused. For example, it was discovered that businessman Andrey Konovets had a previous conviction in Russia. The Commission expressed its concerns about the disorganisation of competitors for the presidential post. In some cas-

es, the applications were made with mistakes, with confusion of surnames and addresses. Thus, Tamara Biryukova and Alexander Yudaev did not have time to give in all the necessary documents. The party of veteran Victor Tolmachev was not registered either. He presented his documents to the Central Election Committee on July 20th in spite of the fact that the last date for the submission of applications was July 17th.

Similar to the last elections, some names appeared for the first time in the political arena. Often these candidates make a decision to participate in the election campaign spontaneously or following their own aims. They do not have a serious political platform;

they simply want to promote themselves. "There have been instances when artistes and businessmen have applied for the presidency. It is not forbidden; there have always been such people. But it is a pity that when these characters nominate themselves for the presidency, they are thinking only of their own ambitions," said the Secretary of the Central Election Committee, Nikolay Lozovik. "People should think about dedicating themselves to the country and first perhaps proving oneself not at the highest level, but in a smaller post. By gaining the confidence of the population and being seen to do something worthwhile, they will have a better chance of realising their ambitions."



BELTA

## Deputies used to having to forget about holidays

By Vladimir Velikhov

**Presidential elections, the preparation of the Republican budget for 2016 and the moratorium in the tax area — these topics were the subject of the meeting between Alexander Lukashenko and the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly, Vladimir Andreichenko**

The speaker of the House of Representatives briefed the President on the outcomes of the seventh parliamentary session and plans for the near future. They are all necessarily related to the upcoming election campaign. It means that ministers will have to forget about their traditional vacation at this time. The President urged them to intensify their work in the constituencies, to help local authorities solve any local issues in the field. It is also important to be present to explain face-to-face any difficult moments in the election campaign.

Of course, any election race is accompanied with attacks against the state, provocation and populist slogans. It is important not to succumb to 'dirty' political techniques. Today people behave differently than in previous elections, and it's easy to make fun of the state though there will be those on the opposition who will

try. Alexander Lukashenko said on this occasion, "During Presidential elections, all candidates promise a lot but the one who will be elected will fulfil all the promises. I am sure that, even if another person is elected, people who are working now will do the work. It is a very complicated process — to prepare a public servant, the same official therefore, will continue to work, even if someone else comes to power from the opposition. A member of parliament is a person who enjoys the confidence of the population, and we need to talk with people. We must not promise anything extra and deceive people."

At the meeting they also discussed the agenda for the future autumn session of Parliament. Today in the parliamentary commissions there are about 40 bills being prepared for discussion. The main focus is on the package of documents for the adoption of the Republican budget for 2016. Mr. Lukashenko, in particular, pointed out that when the budget is adopted, the parliamentarians must draw their attention to the simplification of tax legislation, the effectiveness of tax incentives and optimisation of the financing of state programmes. Another order of the President is to consider the introduction of a moratorium on changes in tax law during 2016.



# Belarus' position on OSCE reform remains unchanged

Chairman-in-Office of the Organisation for Security and Co-operation in Europe and Serbia's First Deputy Prime Minister and Foreign Minister, Ivica Dacic, visits Minsk and meets the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko



Alexander Lukashenko and Ivica Dacic during their meeting in Minsk

By Vasily Kharitonov

There's nothing surprising in the visit, as our country has been a fully-fledged participant of Europe's largest international organisation for 23 years while interacting with its institutes. Belarus supports the OSCE's priority role (fixed in the Charter of European Security) in settling conflict within the area of its responsibility. The country respects the sovereignty and state integrity of the organisation's member states. As a result, Minsk's official foreign policy aims of developing dialogue, as well as the country's well-considered position on the Ukrainian issue, have been positively perceived by the member states and the OSCE Chairman-in-Office.

Belarus has provided the venue in Minsk for negotiations and for the achievement of firm agreements to de-escalate the situation in the east of Ukraine. This has helped to strengthen Belarus' image as a neutral state with serious peacekeeping intentions. Nevertheless, we are not complacent about our success. On the contrary, the President believes that other heads of OSCE member states could have made a more proactive contribution to the settlement of the Ukrainian crisis. "If there's a war, then the heads of state

should have met urgently to discuss this problem and take some decisions to implement various measures. Even if they were unable or unwilling to implement these measures, at least they would have a chance to discuss their opinions with the other states. So far this is not happening," stated the President of Belarus.

## WORD-FOR-WORD

### Alexander Lukashenko:

The role of the OSCE and other international organisations has been belittled. It's high time the UN, the OSCE and other organisations were reformed. Otherwise, these organisations will become marginal having no influence. Serbia may be able to do something in this direction. If you decide to address at least part of this problem, you can count on our support.

Mr. Lukashenko consequently has a somewhat ambivalent attitude towards the OSCE. He is convinced that the organisation could play a much more positive peacekeeping role, despite the difficulties it has itself within the organisation. "OSCE is doing its best to help regulate the conflict in the east of Ukraine. However, with the powers the OSCE has today and no support from the heads of state, the organisation is powerless in this situation. This is the reason why we have new formats like Normandy, Berlin, Minsk and others. It could have been done by one or

organisation, the OSCE. It is its function," noted the Head of State.

In return, Mr. Dacic pointed out that Serbia, currently presiding over the OSCE, is doing its best to promote the political process in the region, especially regarding the Ukrainian issue. Serbia also attaches equal importance to other

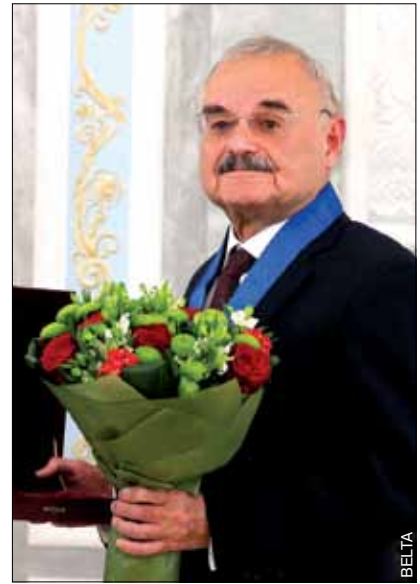
conflicts in Europe. The Foreign Minister was quick to confirm the peacekeeping contribution of Belarus, "Numerous agreements are reached here, in Minsk, with meetings of a trilateral contact group, as well as its working subgroups. In this respect, Belarus has made a huge impact on the peace process." It continues to do this and there have been discussions as to whether Belarus could take on the role of a secretariat in the negotiations process with Ukraine. Belarus' Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei confirmed, "Belarus completely supports the efforts of the Serbi-

an presidency in the OSCE, aimed at strengthening the organisation and enhancing security and stability within the zone of responsibility."

Mr. Dacic conveyed greetings from the Serbian President, Tomislav Nikolic, and the Prime Minister, Aleksandar Vucic, to Alexander Lukashenko and commented on the friendly relations between the two countries, "We're committed to developing the comprehensive relations between our two countries including in the political, economic, scientific, cultural, educational and defence sectors."

This isn't merely protocol or exchange of niceties. On June 15th-16th, the OSCE General Secretary, Lamberto Zannier, and Director of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR), Michael Georg Link, visited our country. They met Alexander Lukashenko to approve another package of projects for three areas of security. Constructive co-operation continues and, on being in the Belarusian capital, Mr. Dacic took part in a session of the trilateral group on the settlement of the situation in Ukraine. This can be seen as the first steps of the activation of OSCE's role in the region and it's symbolic that they have been made in Minsk.

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has honoured Azerbaijan's Prime Minister, Artur Tahir oglu Rasizadeh, with the Order of Friendship of Peoples



## Award for Azerbaijani Prime Minister

"Awards such as these are often accused of having political subtext but there is no hint of that in your case. You have done a great deal for diplomatic relations between our countries, probably more than any other citizen of Azerbaijan," said the President.

Mr. Lukashenko reminded the audience that he has enjoyed friendly relations with the leader of Azerbaijan. "There are few other heads of state that I have had such relations with," noted the President. Artur Tahir oglu Rasizadeh has made a considerable

contribution to achieving this level of mutual understanding between the two countries.

The Belarusian President expressed his conviction that the Prime Minister of Azerbaijan will appreciate the prestigious award and will always be proud of it.

Artur Tahir oglu Rasizadeh was awarded the Order of Friendship of Peoples in recognition of his considerable personal contribution to the development and strengthening of economic, trade and humanitarian ties between Belarus and Azerbaijan.

## Social state is not merely a slogan

By Vladimir Velikhov

Retirement age will not be raised in Belarus, President Alexander Lukashenko informed a meeting devoted to social security matters

"You know my opinion on the issue. We told people that with a certain retirement age we would have a certain amount of the pension fund that will be divided between all pensioners," the Head of State said. He explained that the number of working people who make social contributions from their salaries decreases every year. "People know the situation. There is no need to go over the issue continually," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko believes it's inadmissible to dismiss retired employees who are able to work for longer. "The media often report on the position of some business leaders and policies that allow them to dismiss people

as soon as they reach retirement age. They say the situation is not easy now. This should not be allowed! If a person wants to work, if they can work — then let them. Otherwise, the slogan of the social state will remain just a slogan," the President stressed.

"We need to be humane in our dealings with our workers. If some business managers don't understand this then they should be fired. They would not be able to find jobs without the authorities' notice. I urge you against a formal approach to implementing my instructions," Mr. Lukashenko added.

The President also reminded those present that the needs of pensioners and other vulnerable people should always be reconsidered. "There is no thought of the coming elections in my opinion on this issue," he added.



# Investors will come and

Even the richest countries are keen to attract new investment. These investments work for the economy by promoting the creation of new jobs and allowing for the implementation of modern technologies. The development of new business can be both beneficial and rewarding to net investors. Belarus has recently announced at the highest level that new businesses are to be welcomed with an attractive package of offers and various privileges. This is justified by the need to awaken interest in investors and encourage them to put their money into Belarus. In today's conversation, we focus on the advantages of investing in Belarus. The participants in a special round table meeting will have a chance to outline the favourable conditions for new entrepreneurs in the country. Representatives of the business sector will describe their personal experiences of investing in various industries. We will also consider any difficulties that are likely to affect new businesses in Belarus. The participants of our round table discussion are:

**Vladimir Ulakhovich**, Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry;  
**Rimantas Purtulis**, Head of projects at ARVI Group (Lithuania);  
**Alexander Shchurko**, the official representative of ARVI in Belarus;  
**Svetlana Zaburueva**, Head of the Department of Foreign Economic Activity at the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry.

**The Minsk Times:** Let us begin by explaining the rationale behind Belarus' desire to attract foreign investments to the country?

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** A high level of investment activity is an indicator of the level of development of the economy. Often, this relates not only to financial business, but also to the field of technology. The most advantageous investments are linked to the transfer of technology, and the development of industrial co-operation. I would primarily outline these as our peculiarities. In the early 1990s, investments were mainly in the form of privatisation, to 'clear out' the competitive environment. Unfortunately, we are aware of many examples in neighbouring countries (in the Russian Federation, and Ukraine, for example) when rather successful enterprises were privatised but quickly disappeared. Belarus today has a significantly different approach. It seems to me that our concept of 'pin-point' (selective) investment in our country is justified. We place heavy emphasis not only on the financial assets, but the reputation of a partner or investor, who will guarantee the most effective development of our enterprises. If we try to assess our experience, we must primarily consider this factor. Moreover, this unique conceptual approach has justified itself already, and is in line with the social profile of our state, which aims to preserve businesses even when this might be difficult. Essential key enterprises are retained and privatised on the basis of effective management. This brings us closer to similar implementations in the European Union.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** There are those who are of the opinion, incorrectly I believe, that investors will come if they are promised piles of money. For example, there're some discounts for income tax, but first this income must be earned and only after that should you receive discounts. Why did our group come here? We are not a large, global company that would step on others on its way to the top. In Belarus, as in other countries, some technology appears before it is seen in other countries but in other cases, it's long after. Our enterprise is leading in one sphere but may lag behind in another. We had no plans to invest in Belarus 'at any cost', but as we were invited, it was to our mutual benefit. Business must be beneficial for both sides. It

is a question of state-private partnership. This is a real advantage of investing in Belarus and it is clear that the state supports its partners.

We have a specific manufacturing process, which was not privatised in Lithuania; our new technology was created from scratch. Our main business is the processing of animal waste.

Our second field of activity is the creation of a large complex for the cultivation and manufacture of turkey meat. Why do we come here with turkeys? Young chickens are available everywhere, this industry is already well developed in your country, and similarly in Lithuania. Poultry grows quickly, within a month, and provides for the demand for affordable meat. Of course, turkey meat does not belong to the luxury products market, but it is already developed to

happy, as the latter have the opportunity to buy quality useful meat. This is the essence of our concept which we're developing with the help of the state; it's a classical example of state-private partnership.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** You have touched upon a very good theme. I want to focus attention on the fact that there are niche markets that are not obvious, but investors can discover new directions. This is a very interesting role played by investors. There are many other examples of absolutely new manufacturers in Belarus. It is not simply ready cash, when someone buys assets. It is very important to us to have the dynamics of development and new opportunities.

**Alexander Shchurko:** Ecological safety is of paramount importance today. We all know the situation on waste disposal, espe-

important issue of environmental safety. There is also the food safety question to which the Government of Belarus pays a great deal of attention. Poultry, beef and pork is good but are we 'spoilt' with turkey meat? According to the experts however, turkey is a very useful meat for our diet, good for children, and it does not contain cholesterol.

As far as recycling is concerned, we are now constructing a recycling plant, with proposals for the Mogilev district, the Minsk Region's Soligorsk and the Grodno Region. Waste free production is a state responsibility: a recycling plant will utilise manufacturing wastes from turkey breeding facilities, including the feathers. Aside from this project, we are also building a feed mill. A recycling plant produces protein tankage which is then supplied to a feed mill to produce forage and forage additives. In turn, turkeys eat this and meat is the final product. As a result, a closed cycle is created, with no production waste.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** It's important to add that if a car manufacturing plant is established, for example, it does not mean that other similar enterprises wouldn't be allowed nearby. A group of small enterprises such as rubber and component manufacturing would enhance the development. In Lithuania we work with the regional authorities, and investigate where a feed mill can be located. It should be located not merely in areas where factories operate but in areas where farming enterprises are well developed is. We aren't afraid of competition with the farmers, as they have small capacities, but the more turkeys we breed, the more meat people buy. We sell young turkeys to farmers (in line with agreements), providing them with forage. We are trying to build relationships with farmers to ensure they become our assistants.

**Alexander Shchurko:** Production employment is an important issue. However, farm construction has another aspect to consider, the provision of accommodation, usually provided for workers on the farm. Additionally, we have a large amount of fish waste produced by such enterprises as Santa-Bremor, Belyba and others. ARVI run a facility processing fish waste in Latvia, which produces cod liver oil as a result. The latter is purchased by companies, who go on to make Omega-3 poly-vitamins from it. This year, we plan to increase the plant's capacities three fold while also studying the issue of processing fish.



Vladimir Ulakhovich



Alexander Shchurko

## DYNAMICS OF INVESTMENTS

In the first six months of the year, Br92.5 trillion of investments have been used into basic capital, with major share of injections coming into processing industry (29.6 percent), agriculture (11.4 percent), transport and communications (9.3 percent), production and distribution of electrical energy, gas and water (6.2 percent). Construction and installation works amounted to Br51.2 trillion.

Remarkably, the amount of investments into construction is falling, with construction and installation works accounting for 55.4 percent of the total volume of injections into basic capital. Over this period, investments for the purchase of machines, equipment and transport vehicles stood at Br29.9 trillion (32.3 percent of the total amount).

a higher level of industry. At first, this was also at a low level in Lithuania and we were the only enterprise to turn this into an industry. As result, the consumption of this meat increased from 300g per head a year to 2-3kg, while the average European indicator is about 8-10kg a year. In Belarus it is approximately 1kg. Turkey is more expensive than young chicken, but we believe in the purchasing capacity of the population. We have seen our niche, we have been promised good conditions, and we have met with local authorities, and signed the investment agreement. As a result: both investors and consumers are

cially that of animal origin. It also concerns mortuaries, which are criticised constantly by the President. We have had discussions with the Natural Resources and Environmental Protection Ministry. We need to bring everyone's attention to the question that all economic entities should recycle animal waste through the businesses that have been already created in the country. In the future it will be necessary to focus attention on this question. These are also questions of ecology and safety when disposing of carcasses. People receive many different illnesses from meat. Therefore, the recycling question is a very

**The Minsk Times:** Certainly an investor has the right to personally choose where they inject their capital. They'll probably turn to the areas with the most profitable returns. What features does Belarus have to attract foreign investors, from the point of view of those around the table?

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** Our clear advantage is our geographical location and our country's economic focus. We have a good base for future development. There are many opportunities to modernise businesses from currently operating facilities — such as car component production, as an example. We have enterprises that produce small parts that should be steadily expanded. It's possible to create a separate industry entirely for the production of car spare parts and components. A German businessman told me that investors and their money love peace and that he enjoys staying in Belarus where everything is ordered and stable. Last year, we had a business forum in New York, attended by our Prime Minister. I was asked to deliver a speech. I told our partner that I would quote him when he said, "I'm happy to run a business in Belarus as I love being here. It's calm and I employ well-trained personnel. The city is peaceful, beautiful and clean. However, I'd like to give you a piece of advice: you should be more aggressive in promoting your image, your opportunities and your potential". There are aspects in Belarus not set in the law. This is the quality of life. If your daughter went to Minsk's Gorky Park at 11pm, she would be safe, not something that



# stay if they feel welcomed



Rimantas Purtulis



Svetlana Zaburueva

own country it will be easy for them. Investors repeat their experience in Belarus with state support. Belarus is a neighbouring and familiar country for us — a Lithuanian company, and it's easy for us to see opportunities here. There're no big conglomerates here which don't let strangers. In my opinion, anyone who is needed for the industry becomes friendly.

**Svetlana Zaburueva:** Lithuania is a relatively small state, but occupies third place as far as volume of investments into Belarus is concerned.

**The Minsk Times:** Investments are focussed on the centre of the country. This is probably because any difficulties are easily solved here: agencies and ministries work in the capital and the local infrastructure is more developed than in the regions. We would like to clarify the situation for investors in other regions of the country. What is their investment competitiveness in comparison to the centre? Are there any advantages to investing in such areas?

**Rimantas Purtulis:** Your opinion is outdated really. Investors are often reluctant to locate in large cities — except for highly sophisticated technology. Generally speaking, the regions are characterised by greater flexibility and freedom. They have more jobs and great interest is shown in them. Minsk is already a 'crowded bus'.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** The regions have a different atmosphere to the rest of the country but it is also a problem that needs to be solved. The Economy Ministry is now developing a strategy of direct foreign investment attraction for 2016-2020 and investment development in the regions is one of this programme's aims. According to our statistics, regions receive 20-25 percent of all investments. Many investors have come to Minsk, which is an industrial and financial centre, but there are excellent opportunities for business in other parts of the country. The programme also outlines clusters, the so-called inner division or co-operative areas. For example, the Brest Region's Pinsk area is a wood-processing centre. Food and textile industries are concentrated in Brest, while Mikashevichi is known for its mining industry. Alternative energy, industry and textiles are developed in the Vitebsk Region and Gomel boasts a new industrial park. Each regional centre has its own free economic zone and an investment portfolio. Grodno is a chemical base. Everything has a clear focus and we promote businesses joining these sectors. The situation should be managed in a more concentrated way to ensure balanced development.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** I believe Minsk is attractive for those who need a high concentration of science intensive rather than energy intensive facilities.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** I can describe what major investments were made last year and what

spheres they covered: those were transport and logistics (the major share), trade (primarily, in the capital) and industry. The logistical cluster is now actively developing: as soon as a large barrier-free market opened, it became easier to launch a business in Belarus. It's now possible to register a company in just one day, where this may be connected with various difficulties in some other countries. Moreover, it's more predictable to run a business in Belarus. A Belarusian driver's salary and a logistical service would cost less than in Europe while the quality is the same. Accordingly, we are experiencing a boom in logistics. Belarus is beginning to realise its new role.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** It's clear that the regional authorities are quick to overcome any issues. They know their area and its needs well. The issues which come under the jurisdiction of governors and regional executive committees are settled rather promptly. Meanwhile, there are some problems that cannot be so easily solved, where issues are of a centralised nature. In this case, decision making might take some time. Whilst our investment is welcomed in the regions, this is not the case in Minsk itself. The capital needs projects relating to the major electricity stations; outside Minsk, areas might need just 5km of electricity cable laid but the local authority does not

**The Minsk Times:** Considering the facts already mentioned, we can speak about Belarus objectively as an attractive country for foreign investors. What are its advantages compared to other countries in the post-Soviet region?

**Rimantas Purtulis:** We are situated close to the European Union where an industrial nucleus is located, with new technology and financial resources. We are close to the centre of European dynamic development. Although our paths of development differ, our starting point was the same. Our mutual experiences enable us to occupy our own niche and find our own place. The market is not large in Lithuania; moreover, there is no language barrier there. The industrial potential also matters. Of course, it's easier for us to enter the markets of the Customs Union and the Eurasian Economic Union via Belarus than via the Kaliningrad Region.

**Alexander Shchurko:** I'd like to add some practical experience. In Belarus, it took three months to register and a year to realise an investment agreement. In some neighbouring states, this procedure takes much longer.

**The Minsk Times:** What does the experience of foreign investors in Belarus demonstrate? Is there a need to change our approach when dealing with them?

is of paramount importance at the moment. We do have a disadvantage in that the state governs a major part of the economy. However, the state is sometimes able to act as an umbrella to support enterprises and inject resources into them. Our managerial personnel have enjoyed a privileged position: they did not have to struggle to increase their market, as they were well aware that the state would not abandon them. As a result, we lack a good deal of experience of working in very competitive markets. Of course, we need to ensure a staff potential of a slightly different level: to be able to work with partners and achieve technologies and funds coming into the country and its serious, strategic branches. We need long-term investments, not companies who will leave as soon as they turn a profit. There are several governmental documents aimed at enhancing our marketing services and improving the quality of people who work on the global markets, this is necessary for us to compete effectively in the modern world.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** I think the state is not fully utilising its financial tools. Many companies used to receive subsidies or investments from the government. However, developed enterprises would be satisfied with more complex financial packages rather than cash, such as governmental guarantees or guarantees of sales. So far, these measures are not used to the full, in comparison with other countries even Russia and Kazakhstan. Certain flexibility in this issue would make it possible to attract more financial resources.

**The Minsk Times:** Investors rely on a greater share of the market than Belarus offers. Do the Customs Union, the Eurasian Economic Union and other associations offer increased possibilities for investors?

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** This summer is the busiest we have ever seen. In a single week, we hosted a business forum with China's Quinghai Province — featuring around 100 Chinese enterprises. A Japanese delegation has also visited representing the flagships of the Japanese business: Hitachi, Panasonic, Mitsubishi and JTI. A Moldovan delegation visited as part of the Moldovan President's visit to Belarus. The majority of our guests are interested in how they could co-operate with Belarus to break into the vast market of the Eurasian Economic Union. This is our great advantage as our own market is not large; our economy is export oriented. As an example, several years ago, I read a thesis paper by a Russian author who spoke of the indices of the export-oriented economy. According to him, Belarus is second in Europe after Belgium. In some areas, especially dairy produce and machine manufacture, our small country is a global market player. We have excellent opportunities for investors who come here.

By Victor Mikhailov,  
Yulia Matusevich



ARVI waste recycling plant in the Grodno Region

have the power to authorise even small projects such as this. We do not have the time to wait for numerous permissions from Minsk; the regions should be given more powers in this regard.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** We do have an administrative policy where each governor needs to be responsible for investment attraction, but this must be centrally regulated to begin with. They have indicative figures, which should be achieved and this inspires them to reach these goals.

**Alexander Shchurko:** You are right. A governor signs an investment agreement on behalf of the Republic. However, during the process of this investment agreement realisation, subdivisions of central management are involved and often, it's not so easy to deal with them. There are issues that can be settled only at the highest level.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** It is never the case that nothing needs changing. In this case, business activity ceases. Of course, it's always necessary to move along the path of improvement, optimisation and perfection. Speaking of the current situation, I believe it's vital to truly fulfil investments in the strategic areas, which have been outlined, such as car manufacturing and the production of components and spare parts. The industrial base is key. We also have increased availability of markets. It's now not a problem to sell Turkish or Chinese made products to Russia or Kazakhstan. In the meantime we can look forward to the possibility of manufacturing quality produce domestically. If this aim were realised, then our machine manufacturing would reach a new level. It's necessary to breathe new life into our holdings and the realisation of these goals

can be said of many European capitals. The quality of life is certainly an attraction, as is the quality of our staff, working conditions and confidence in the future. We are sometimes criticised for our extensive administrative resource; however, this can be an advantage. Investors are very pragmatic and shrewd. They pay little attention to political analysts' commentaries but study the real situation. They consider the history of business successes and real opportunities.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** Of course, investors read newspapers but treat political-economic analysts with a pinch of salt. An analyst can be passionately in favour of a policy one minute, then shortly afterwards, just as passionately explaining the reasons why it has failed.

**Vladimir Ulakhovich:** In recent decades, much investment went to China which is, in turn, a key investor. Nobody then spoke of the country's tough public relations or serious punishments. Nobody paid attention to that. When the possibility emerged, investments were placed there. As a result, all major market players operate there and transnational companies run their own production facilities.

**Rimantas Purtulis:** Belarus and Lithuania are close from the point of view of geography. The countries are tied historically. Around twenty years ago, our industries were at almost the same level. At present, Belarus leads in some areas and Lithuania tops in others. If investors see that they are in need and can repeat the process they've already followed in their



# G rard Depardieu enjoys Belarus

The French actor with a Russian passport exchanged bohemian Paris for cosy Minsk for a couple of days



G rard Depardieu signs autographs for employees at the Ozeritsky-Agro agricultural enterprise

By Yuliana Leonovich

On the evening of July 21st the flight with the 66-year-old actor on board landed at Minsk National Airport. Naturally, the celebrity passenger did not remain unnoticed, the legend of French cinema was recognised on visa inspection. However, entrance visas into the country were not needed, as he is a citizen of the Russian Federation. While the actor diligently smiled at journalists and showed them his passport with the entry stamp, the Belarusian Ambassador to France, Pavel Latushko, explained the purpose of his visit, "His plans include discussion of shooting the film *Normandy-Niemen*; which filmmakers from Belarus, France and Russia are currently working on. In addition, G rard, having farming and restaurant businesses of his own, wished to familiarise himself with the agriculture of the country and visit one of our agro-towns, which he has heard a lot about."

At the beginning of July, on the eve of Independence Day, G rard Depardieu visited the Belarusian embassy in Paris. Speaking to Mr. Latushko, the actor discussed the importance Belarus gives to the economy and agriculture. In response, the Ambassador invited the legendary actor to see Belarusian agro-tourist projects. Depardieu accepted the invitation and decided to visit immediately. Plans were organised in record time.

The two day programme was very informative: on the evening of his arrival, the actor had time to visit a performance by the State Academic National Orchestra named after Zhinovich, to taste our draniki and cranberry liqueur ("It's a real treat! We do not have things like this in France!" the actor said). He also enjoyed a Belarusian fruit drink and asked for a bottle or two to take back with him.

On the following day, the actor

went to the Smolevichsi District to a commercial dairy farm belonging to the agricultural enterprise Ozeritsky-Agro. The actor took a child-like pleasure in the farm, showing interest in production technology, enquiring about bull-calves and cows and felt hay and got himself dirty. "Belarus reminds me of a little Switzerland: the same pure open fields, small cottages and a very good infrastructure. Even the agricultural technology is similar. I have noticed that Belarus has all the resources to become a cheese mak-

Mr. Depardieu was asked whether he had thought about transferring part of his business to Belarus. "It would not be profitable for me as a producer of wine: Belarusian conditions are not suitable for the cultivation of grapes. But the country has everything necessary for a high quality of life: a beautiful environment, tranquillity, natural milk, tasty meat and beautiful women, what else is necessary for a peaceful old age? I'll probably consider your offer when I'm older."

**The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, met with the famous French actor and restaurateur G rard Depardieu on July 22nd. Mr. Lukashenko and G rard Depardieu met in informal surroundings and discussed the themes of supporting agriculture in the modern world and the development of technology to cultivate ecologically safe foodstuffs. They also touched upon possible areas of co-operation between Belarus and France in the field of culture and art.**

**The Head of State arranged a short excursion for Depardieu to the official Residence of the President of Belarus, Ozerny in Ostroshitsky Gorodok. He was shown some examples of Belarusian agricultural machinery and trained in the skills of manual mowing.**

ing country. Taking into account the large quantity of milk that you have, and the desire to learn, you only lack the relevant specialists. If you choose French experts you are bound to be successful."

Depardieu appears to know a lot about Belarus, having previously heard and read much about it. And now he has seen it with his own eyes, "I have heard about the beauty of Belarusian landscapes, they are really incredible! All of Europe knows about the high level of your agriculture. I have never seen such technological farms, even in the Russian city of Saransk where I have a home. It is obvious that the President pays much attention to the development of agriculture."

While the actor was speaking, workers on the farm queued up for his autograph. It was easy to see how pleased they were to meet the well-known visitor. Such famous celebrities have never been here. Olga Shimanovich, the head of staff at the commercial dairy farm at Zadomlya, did not hide her emotions, "We did not know that it would be Depardieu who would come. We were just told that a delegation of important guests would arrive today. We were not surprised: we receive visitors practically every month. When we saw the actor we didn't recognise him at first. He appeared very pleasant, and kind and happily gave autographs to everyone!"

Advice from Dr. Zhukova

## A simple piece of advice will improve health

What preventive measures will help to avoid diseases?



O. Timofeeva, Kobrin

The number of acute enteric infection cases increases dramatically with the approach of summer.

Acute enteric infections represent a large group of infectious diseases common to humans; they progress from the digestive tract, caused by bacteria, viruses and protozoan microorganisms.

Infection with enteric diseases may occur from contact with ill people or bacilli carriers, the use of infected water or foodstuffs. Flies, cockroaches and rodents transfer the causative agents of these infections. These are often called 'dirty hand illnesses' as the bacteria are spread in this way to products and tableware for example, leading to distribution of the infection. Bathing in unsanitary open reservoirs is also a cause of infection.

The bacteria that cause the illness are insensitive to exposure and can remain in the environment for a long time, up to 3 months in tap water and from 5 days to 14 weeks on vegetables and fruit. Foodstuffs, especially dairy and meat products, and also kitchen utensils and cold dishes are a favourable environment for the disease. On these items, microbes of salmonellae and Sonne dysentery bacillus can breed at temperatures ranging from 20 to 40 .

Salmonellosis is caused by salmonellae bacteria, which are widespread in nature. Salmonellae cause diseases in livestock, pigs, poultry, etc. The basic source of the infection is poultry, especially waterfowl.

Salmonellae are insensitive to all factors in the environment. Being in foodstuffs they can remain viable for many days and months. In meat, fish and dairy products, salmonellae breed well, without changing the flavour of the product. The optimum temperature for the reproduction of salmonellae is 30-37 . At temperatures above 50 , reproduction stops, and when heated to 60  the bacteria die in an hour, at 70  this is reduced to 30 minutes and at 80 , 10 minutes, at boiling they are destroyed instantly.

Recently, eggs, egg products and poultry have become the prime cause of salmonellosis. Bad or/and broken eggs can be particularly dangerous. With lengthy storage, salmonellae can travel from the surface into the egg yolk where they breed quickly at a favourable temperature.

A frequent cause of salmonellosis disease is the use of meat and meat products. Meat from slaughtered animals is often a cause. This is intensified in the processing and preparation of minced meat. Minced products, pastes, jellied meat and fish or meat in aspic, liver and blutwurst sausages and navy-style macaroni are particularly dangerous.

The incubation period for salmonella fluctuates from 6 to 48 hours. The disease can progress in different forms and with varying degrees of severity. A rise in the body's temperature to 38  or higher is followed by abdominal pains, aches, weakness, vom-

iting and diarrhoea are characteristic.

The cause of dysentery is dysentery bacilli of the Shigella type. Their source can be infected people and bacilli carriers. Recently, a frequent cause of dysentery has been identified as dairy products. The Sonne dysentery bacillus is capable of breeding and accumulating in starters and dairy products. It remains in milk for more than two weeks, in sour cream for 11-86 days and on vegetables and fruit for 3-8 days. Sonne dysentery often has an easy, shortened course, but many of those who have been ill with it become carriers.

On the whole, the general symptoms of enteric infections are sluggishness, weakness, and loss of appetite, nausea, vomiting, diarrhoea, abdominal pains and a rise in temperature. When a patient suspects an enteric infection, it is often necessary to call a doctor. It can be dangerous to self-medicate enteric infections in children, as fluid loss develops quickly and can lead to life-threatening complications.

### Basic measures to prevent enteric infections:

- Observe the rules of personal hygiene (wash hands with soap after using the lavatory and before meals).
- Wash berries, fruit and vegetables carefully before eating.
- Children could eat thermally processed berries, vegetables and fruits.
- Do not store or use products past their expiry date, observe the rules of storage, and put perishable products in the refrigerator.
- Separate products from each other during shopping, in the refrigerator, and on the kitchen table. Pathogenic microorganisms can transfer to products from fruit and vegetables, which are not washed and thermally processed before eating (bread, cheese, etc.).



- Never allow flies, which are carriers of infections, to rest on food.
- Boil any water taken from open reservoirs for drinking, washing of fruits, berries or tableware.
- It is not recommended to use unpasteurised milk.
- It is not recommended to buy foodstuffs (in particular berries, fruits, vegetables, milk and dairy products) in places of unlicensed trade.
- It is forbidden to bathe in reservoirs without knowing if they follow a sanitary code.
- Following these simple recommendations will help to avoid acute enteric infections and will keep you and your families in good health!

By Tatiana Zhukova  
Doctor of higher category,  
M.D. Ph.D.



# Students of all generations face the same problems

For many students, summer is a time to gain some work experience and apply their training to allow them become familiar with some of the finer points of their chosen profession. For some, this will confirm whether or not they have made the right decision in their choice of career.

By Kristina Khilko

Students from the Belarusian institutions of higher education complete the practical element of their training outside the country, as well as in placements at home. The development of foreign partnerships for this purpose is encouraged within our universities and colleges. The Belarusian State Medical University, for example, co-operates with various foreign educational establishments and research organisations. Each year more than twenty medical students undergo practical training in Poland, Germany and Russia following an international exchange agreement.

The students have to work hard to achieve the goal of a foreign placement; they are required to have high examination results, a bank of experience in the medical sphere and be able to demonstrate their active participation in the university's public and scientific life. Final year medical student Tatiana Naumenok considers herself lucky to have obtained a place this summer at the First Moscow State Medical University (named after I.M. Sechenov), one of the most authoritative medical institu-

tions in the CIS, and perhaps in Europe. Tatiana however, has made her own good fortune and has earned this privilege, telling us, "I have good average grades, and am active in university life so I decided there was no harm in applying for training in Russia. I was very pleased when I had a call from the Dean's office offering me the chance to go to Moscow in July. Of course, I immediately agreed. I have already had training in the hospitals in Minsk, we assisted doctors during surgeries, examined patients and helped with diagnosis. I am sure that this experience will be useful for me, both in practice in Moscow, and in my future work."

Whilst students about to enter their final year try to find time to combine both work experience and pleasure, graduates from the institutes of higher education struggle with their search for work. Students of state-financed education have already chosen their guaranteed first two-year placement in spring at the postgraduate work assignment. This posting does not always coincide with the student's dream position. To illustrate, the majority of the graduates from the Institute



Internship helps familiarise new employees with the nuances of their future profession

of Journalism at the Belarusian State University, dreamt of working in mass media organisations in the capital city but most have been assigned to posts in various parts of the country including Gomel, Rechitsa, Polotsk, Krichev and Zhodino.

According to the education guidelines, the students

can lawfully refuse working at the place assigned to them, but will then have to compensate the government for the considerable cost of the university expenses for their education. The choice is limited, pay the bill or resign oneself to the romance of a life in the provinces for a short time.

In Belarus almost every

fifth young person is a student. While each generation has its own identity, the problems they face are basically unchanged. They worry about how to pass exams and where to buy a cheap lunch, as well as how to find work and juggle their busy timetables in a day that never has more than 24 hours in it.

## Businesses need good logistics

By Alexander Pimenov

**Belarus and China have been studying the possibility of opening direct flights between Minsk and Gansu Province (in China's central region); the news was announced following the Belarusian delegation's recent visit to the Chinese province**

The First Deputy Transport Minister, Yevgeny Rogachev, signed a memorandum on mutual understanding with the Head of the Aviation Department of the Gansu Provincial People's Government. A direct flight between the province and Belarus will contribute to the further development of bilateral relations and Belarus welcomes the possibility of the launch of flights by a Chinese airline. Officials stress however, that time is needed to complete market analysis before the project is realised.

Whilst visiting China, the Belarusian delegation held talks with the heads of local ministries and companies, meeting the Governor and Secretary of the Gansu Province's Party Committee. The Belarusians also met with the Head of the Beijing Hualu Info Technology Co. to study the system of transport management and possible Chinese developments in Belarus. While talking to representatives of China Road & Bridge, the delegation learned about high-speed highway construction. Our specialists also hope that exports of transport services will rise, as well as the popularity of Belarus' transit potential.

The Belarusian delegation, led by Deputy Prime Minister, Anatoly Kalinin, was invited to take part in the 21st International Investment Fair in Gansu's Lanzhou.

# Syabry community invites

By Irina Sudas

**More than 3.5 million Belarusians are resident in various countries around the world, with more than 130,000 living in the Baltic States**

Lyudmila Annus was born in Mozyr, in the Gomel Region, and studied in St. Petersburg. She then went to work in the Estonian city of Narva, where she met her husband (also from the Gomel Region). In the early 1990s, hundreds of people became 'Belarusians abroad'. Lyudmila believes that, in such cases, Belarusians create their Motherland in miniature, being nostalgic for their original home.

In the late 1990s, the Narva Belarusian community of Syabry was established (now headed by Lyudmila Annus). For the past 15 years, Estonians have been able to learn

more about Belarusian culture and traditions, while our citizens have been able to preserve their national identity while abroad. Of course, they tend to often visit Belarus. On the eve of May 9th, Syabry members joined representatives of the Union of Belarusians in Latvia to visit Minsk, at the invitation of the Board for Religious and Nationality Affairs. Whenever possible, it supports close ties with Belarusians abroad, helping our countrymen create national costumes and native tongue literature, as well as organising meetings at various levels.

According to official data, more than 3.5 million of our compatriots live abroad: almost a third of the current population of Belarus. Counting their descendants, the number exceeds 9 million. Many ethnic Belarusians are members of various 'expat'

associations: over 200 exist worldwide, supporting business and cultural contacts with Belarus, helping representatives of the diaspora, and holding concerts, exhibitions and fairs. Such organisations also issue printed editions, and organise trips to Belarus. With 130,000 native Belarusians residing in the Baltic States, the diaspora is active there.

The Yanka Kupala Belarusian school operates in the Latvian capital, helping disseminate information on Belarusian culture, law and tourism, among other aspects. Vilnius also has the Frantsisk Skorina school, teaching Belarusian language, while the Lithuanian University of Educational Sciences has a sub-department of Belarusian language and ethnic culture. In Tallinn, children can attend a Belarusian Sunday school named after Vladimir Korotkevich.



Lyudmila Annus (far right) with her fellow countrywomen

Days of Belarusian Culture are being organised in Latvia: this year, they are devoted to the anniversary of Frantsisk Skorina. During the *Eastern Partnership Summit*, hosted by Riga, there was a conference on the role of national societies in developing the state. In particular, participants from Belarus were invited to share their experience with neighbours.

The Chair of the Board of the Union of Belarusians of Latvia, Lyudmila Piskunova, notes, "We love Latvia because we live here, but the diaspora loves native Belarus too. We always remember and are keen to follow what's happening. We aspire to be perceived not simply as Belarusians abroad, but as an integral part of Belarus."



# French farmers union slams product dumping across EU

As many as 15,000 farmers came together to protest in Lyon and they were joined by Xavier Beulin, the President of the FNSEA, the main agricultural workers union

He explained the situation facing the industry in France, "We have production costs that are far higher than our European neighbours. Not just at the farming level, but across the food chain from the abattoirs to the processing plants. There is often a five or six Euro pay difference in terms of salary within these companies. We also have regulatory constraints, which go further than any European regulations and they hurt us. We saw a year ago, as a result of the Russian embargo, some product dumping from our partners they would send French products back in order to sell their own goods on the domestic market. If that is Europe it has failed. Again there have been other instances of product dumping. Last year, the nectarine cost one Euro in the Madrid markets, they were sold in France for 40 cents. So if there is dumping between European partners what kind of Europe are we constructing?"

The union met with French President Francois Hollande, who lent his support to their cause and called on supermarkets and abattoirs to work with farmers to increase meat and milk prices for the producers.

Around 800 turned out in Lyon to vent their anger at apparent discrepancies between what they are



French farmers block the A6 highway in Limonest, near French Lyon

paid and the amount supermarkets and other retailers charge for their products.

Dairy farmer Aline Cabaussel was among those protesting, "Let me give you some facts and figures. Milk production costs, on average, 325 Euros per thousand litres. At the moment, we sell our milk to the

dairy industry at around 300 Euros, so around 30 cents per litre. But you, the public, buy it at 56 cents per litre. What happens to the difference?"

During the demonstration, bottles of milk were thrown on the road. They say that prices are expected to be discussed and further action will

be taken if what is announced does not match farmers' expectations.

Recent polls suggest a growing number of farmers are leaning towards the far right-wing National Front Party. Traditionally right-wing, they have become increasingly annoyed with the Socialist government's policies.

## Pearson sells *Financial Times* to Japanese company Nikkei

**British publisher Pearson has confirmed it has agreed a deal to sell the *Financial Times* Group to Nikkei ending days of speculation**

The price is 844 million Pounds Sterling around 1.2 billion Euros payable in cash, Pearson said in a statement. The deal does not include the FT Group's 50 percent stake in the *Economist* magazine.

"I am extremely proud of teaming up with the *Financial Times*, one of the most prestigious news organisations in the world," said Tsueno Kita, Chairman and Group CEO of Nikkei. The company describes itself as the largest independent business group in Asia. Pearson had owned the FT for almost 60 years.

## Jobless rate in Spain falls to lowest level in over three years

**The jobless rate in Spain for the second quarter has fallen to the lowest levels in over three years**

But at 22.4 percent the unemployment rate is still higher than anywhere else in Europe with the exception of crisis-hit Greece. It has not dipped below a fifth of the workforce in five years even after Spain exited recession in mid-2013.

Just over 400,000 jobs were created in the April-June period as summer hiring in the services got underway. Despite the drip in numbers out of work many Spaniards say they are yet to feel the benefits of this recovery. Wages in some sectors have dropped and many of the new jobs are temporary.

## Forensic scientists reveal ancient text on charred biblical scroll

**Israeli archaeologists have discovered writing on a charred 1,500-year-old piece of parchment, using advanced digital imaging technology**

The object was found 45 years ago in the same area where the Biblical Dead Sea Scrolls were discovered. Until now science wasn't advanced enough to reveal the ancient text.

Archaeologist Sefi Porat who is co-ordinator of the dig said the scroll dates to around the years 600 and turned up inside the remains of an ancient synagogue.

At the time it was found, forensics technology then used to analyse the ancient find could not discern any writing on the badly charred scroll. Experts believe they have discovered the first eight verses of the Bible's Old Testament book of Leviticus.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



## NASA announces new discovery

**NASA says its Kepler mission has discovered an earth-size planet similar to our own**

The new discovery, called Kepler-452b, orbits around a sun-like star. While it is the smallest planet to be discovered in habitable zone — the area around a star where liquid water could pool on the surface of an orbiting planet — scientists believe they are on the right track to discovering a planet with similar properties to earth.

"On the 20th anniversary year of the discovery that proved other suns host planets, the Kepler exoplanet explorer has discovered a planet and star which most closely resemble

the Earth and our Sun," said John Grunsfeld, associate administrator of NASA's Science Mission Directorate at the agency's headquarters in Washington. "This exciting result brings us one step closer to finding an Earth 2.0." The planet has a 385-day orbit and is only 5 percent farther from its star than earth is to its sun.

"We can think of Kepler-452b as an older, bigger cousin to Earth, providing an opportunity to understand and reflect upon Earth's evolving environment," said Jon Jenkins, Kepler data analysis lead at NASA's Ames Research Centre in Moffett Field, California.

## Djedi robot tries to unlock Giza pyramid's secrets

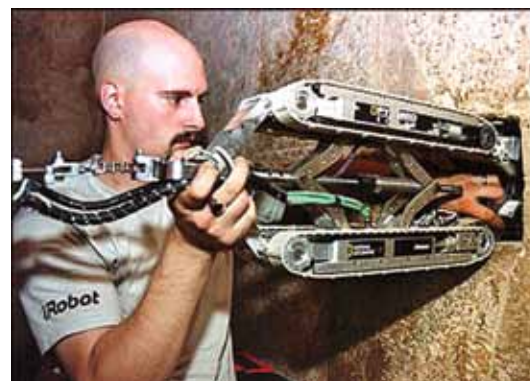
**It's a puzzle that has had Egyptologists scratching their heads for decades**

What look like air shafts in the Great Pyramid of Giza are blocked from the outside and no definite explanation has been found so far as to their meaning or where they lead to.

But a team at Leeds University is hoping to uncover one of the world's oldest secrets with its so-called Djedi robot.

It's not the first time a robot has explored the inside of the tiny shafts within the great pyramid of Giza. But so far, none have been small or nimble enough to reach the end of the shafts. Djedi's creators hope this one will succeed and help uncover some of the secrets of the pyramids.

"What our robot here does is, using these four soft pads that brace



Djedi — a new stage in archaeology development

against the shaft walls, once it moves these never move and braze away. So it's a very low impact method of travelling inside the air shafts," explains research student Jason Liu.

Djedi was built using a 3D printer, which allowed the team to print parts of the robot that are both complex and resistant. It is also equipped with cameras and a miniature ultrasonic device that can tap on walls and get a response to help determine the thickness and condition of the stone.



# Counting on feedback and arousing exciting discussion

**PROEKT** sculptural exhibition successfully presented at the Belarusian Union of Artists' Gallery

By Veniamin Mikheev

Sculpture has various forms, both large and small, it isn't just decoration of the urban environment. Sculpture is able to create an important connection between architectural, social and historic spaces.

The current show at Minsk's Arts Palace isn't simply an exhibition. The *PROEKT* brings the audience into the sculptors' creative studio, enabling us to interact with the ideas which are currently in the form of sculptural 'sketches' but which will soon be embodied in real sculptural images, and will probably find their way onto the streets and squares of the city.

The event displays the widest range of new ideas by domestic sculptors for the urban environment. The participants of the project are sculptors Anna Ambrosova, Yuri Anushko,

Ivan and Anatoly Artimovichs, Yelena Atrashkevich-Zlatkovich, Alexander Botvinenok, Valentin



There were many interesting outcomes from the *PROEKT* sculptural exhibition

Borzdy, Andrey Vorobiev, Valery Dudko, Igor Zosimovich, Denis Kondratiev, Victor Kopach, Kon-

stantin Kostyuchenko, Pavel Leonov, Vladimir Lomeiko, Valery Malakhov, Vadim Matskevich,

Irina Moigis, Konstantin Muzhev, Olga Nechai, Sergey and Dmitry Oganovs, Andrey Osta-

shev, Maxim Petrul, Polina Pirogova, Olga Sazykina, Konstantin Selikhanov, Alexander Sokolov, Alexey Sorokin, Vasily Timashov and Alexander Shappo amongst others.

The exhibition is organised in two distinct parts. The first is the *Garden of Ideas* art project of Polotsk's Art Gallery (curators Larisa Lysenko and Pavel Voinitsky), bringing together the most unexpected unpublished works by Belarusian authors. The second is the sculptural development of Uzda's central boulevard (shortly to be implemented), prepared by the Minskgrazhdanproekt Institute (a team of Design-Centre architects under the guidance of Valentina Tsionskaya) but, unfortunately, not yet fulfilled.

The organisers of the exhibition invited architects, developers, administrators and residents to actively participate in the *PROEKT*. Discussions have been held on the issue of how sculptures can improve the capital city. There is a long-established goal to make Minsk a tourist centre. The organisers and participants of the *PROEKT* exhibition are convinced that sculptural works, marking the history and the sights of the city, are key to this. They believe that the open-air sculpture park could become a significant tourist destination.

The *PROEKT* has cleverly turned the exhibition hall into an interactive space to share ideas. The artists gave talks and demonstrated how contemporary sculptures are created. They welcomed the feedback and discussion that arose from the exhibition.

## Musicians conquer Slovenian public

By Galina Grishkovets

**Concert by the State Chamber Orchestra of Belarus in Ljubljana a success**

Belarusian musicians have taken part in this prestigious musical forum for the second time. The Slovenian audience appreciates performances by the famous Belarusian band. At the concert in Ljubljana, the Chamber Orchestra played pieces by renowned Belarusian and foreign composers for the pleasure of the Slovenian audience.

Belarus is taking part in the Ljubljana Festival of Classical Music and Art for the fourth time and the organisers of the event will invite Belarusian bands in the future. The recent participation of Belarusian musicians is possible owing to the support of the Belarusian Embassy in Slovenia and Slovenia's Riko, which has been operating on the Belarusian market for a long time.

The Ljubljana International Festival of Classical Music and Art is



Stellar performance

one of the biggest and most prestigious festivals in Central and Eastern Europe. It was organised for the first time in 1953 and, at present, is one of the most important regional art events. Among its participants were the Vienna Philharmonic, the Munich Philharmonic, the New York Philharmonic, Teatro alla Scala, the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of Russia. In recent years, the festival programme includes up to 80 various musical events attended by about 80,000 people.

## Unusual present donated as a sign of sincere friendship

Spanish artist Josefa Mesa Garcia donates 40 non-canonical Orthodox icons to the Museum of History of Brest

By Anastasia Chernova

The Brest Regional Public and Cultural Centre has recently hosted the opening of an exhibition by the Spanish artist — Josefa Mesa Garcia. Her 40 paintings were brought to Brest by the painter's son, Alfonso Jurado Mesa, who donated them to the Museum of the History of Brest at a solemn ceremony. Josefa decided to present her paintings to Brest as a sign of friendship with the Belarusian Embassy in France and Spain.

Although Catholic, Josefa Mesa Garcia paints Orthodox saints. Her paintings are made in an ancient non-canonical style. The 90 year old artist paints in oil on canvas, leather and fabric. She became familiar with the Orthodox style of painting in Jerusalem several years ago. Being inspired by the art, she began creating her own works. "When my mother learnt about an opportunity to bring



At the exhibition by the painter Josefa Mesa Garcia

her exhibition to Brest, she was very happy. For her it is a chance to show her works to people who know and understand the Orthodox culture," Alfonso Jurado Mesa says.

Attending the official ceremony were the Major of Brest, Alexander Rogachuk, and the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to France, Spain and Portu-

gal, Pavel Latushko. While in Brest, Alfonso Jurado Mesa, who will be appointed the Honorary Consul of Belarus in Alicante in the near future, met Mr. Rogachuk to discuss the possibility of establishing twin-town relations between Brest and Alicante and partner relations between the universities of the two cities.



# From the Varangians to the city of Stolin

If the city of Stolin, in the Brest Region, could be sent in a time machine to the year of Herodotus, it would be a superb seaside resort as, where the Olmanskie bogs now exist, there was once the sea

By Alexander Mityukov

The staff at the local history museum say that the coast began directly at the edge of the modern city park, which is at sea level. The ethnographic museum in the village of Tereblichy in the Stolin District has a unique exhibit, an anchor from the time of Herodotus, lifted from the bottom of the Olmanskie bog. Historians explain its origins on the trade route from the Varangians to Greece.

The origins of the city's name lie in its geographical location. Wikipedia has the official version, which describes the first mention of the city in chronicles of 1555. They tell the story of a fisherman who caught 100 tench (linki in Russian) which became the basis of the name of Stolin. The director of the museum, Svetlana Verenich, tells us of a more ancient legend, "The Stolin District was the place of settlement of ancient princes. It is where the Horyn River joins the Pripyat, and from there to the Dnieper and on to the Black Sea. Stolin could come from word 'stol' (table) denoting a place of meeting for the



Director of the museum Svetlana Verenich conducts an excursion

Horyn princes."

Nature, archaeology, ethnography and, of course, the history of Stolin is displayed in six halls in the museum. There is a unique collection of stone axes, weapons, household items, family trees and a model of the castle of the Radziwill family. A large part of the exhibition is given over to the family, whose ancestors were amongst the most powerful princes in the region. Svetlana Verenich tells



Mankovichy Park: the show dedicated to the 60th anniversary of the museum and 130th anniversary of the park

1885 and after this became the family estate. Svetlana explains how it was created in the European style, "When Maria searched for a place for the new estate, she was attracted by this district. There was a good view of the Horyn, sufficient forest, which was later augmented with exotic trees. Weymouth pine, the Caucasian and white firs, European larch, Engelmann spruce and red maple grow here today. There were arbours and glades arranged for relaxation and to avoid the mosquitoes."

Well-developed agriculture, hunting and fishing provided the Radziwill family with provisions, while behind Mankovichy Park there was a beautiful garden. Its fruits were used for processing in the distillery, on the site of which is now a modern distillery. The fruit wines of the family were served to European and Russian nobility coming here for hunting breaks. There was also a brick-works, which has not remained, and ancient stables with thoroughbred horses, particularly enjoyed by the keen rid-

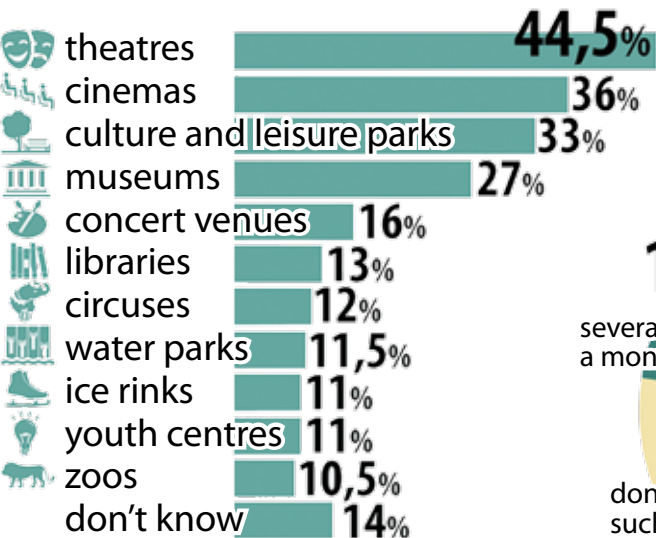
er, Princess Isabella.

The park faced its first blow at the beginning of the 20th century with the start of the First World War. Centuries-old oaks were cut down and few of them remain today. The destruction of ancient trees continued during the Second World War. From 50 hectares less than 23 remain. Later all the possessions of the noble family passed into public ownership. The stables however had not existed for a long time but several buildings were made habitable as dwellings. The castle, which during the war years had been occupied by fascist command, was burnt by partisans.

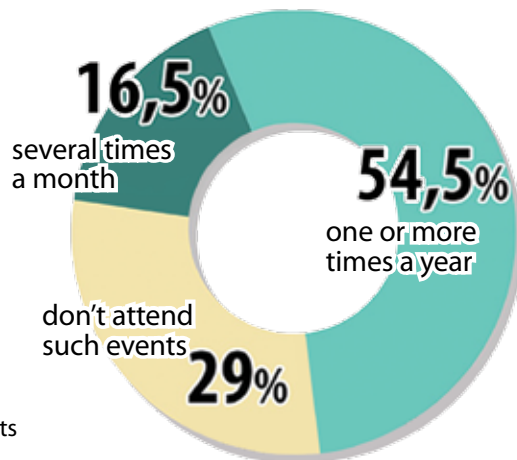
Today the historical heritage of the Stolin District is protected: the director of museum of local history, the main keeper of funds, research assistant and custodian are all guardians of its history. They realise that the park needs an expert in forests, who knows what should be preserved so that this unique and special landscape will be preserved for the future.

## BELARUSIAN CULTURAL INTERESTS SURVEY

In answer to the question "which cultural and leisure activities, in your opinion, are of most interest in today's Belarus?", opinion was divided as follows:



According to the results of the poll, most Belarusians pursue cultural and leisure interests:



The national survey of adults aged 18 and over was conducted from June 19th-29th, 2015. 1,000 respondents were polled with a statistical margin of error of ± 3.1%.

## Olympic medal and many other items



Max Mirnyi opens the exhibition at Mir Castle

By Oleg Mitrokhin

**Around 200 exhibits on display at Mir Castle, donated by Max Mirnyi**

The ten-time winner of Grand Slam doubles tournaments and Olympic champion Max Mirnyi is presenting *Mirnye Trophies*: a mutual initiative by the Mirnyi family and the museum.

The exhibition displays Max's

most significant sporting cups and medals, as well as souvenirs, watches, gifts and photos from his personal archive, taken during competitions. The Mirnyi family's badge collection, from Olympiads in which Max has taken part, is also on show. The athlete's first prize, a beautiful rug, won in Uzbekistan, is on show, as is his Olympic medal from the London 2012 Games.



# Tatiana Drozdovskaya reached the gold

## Denmark's Aarhus is hosting European Laser Standard and Laser Radial Championships

By Igor Leshin

The leader of the Belarusian team, Tatiana Drozdovskaya, successfully completed six qualification and six final races, which gained her a gold medal. She beat 47 other sportswomen including Spain's Alicia Cebrian Martinez

De Lagos and Finland's Tuula Tenkanen who occupied second and third places correspondingly.

Tatiana is Belarus' leading yachtswoman in this class and the national team leader. She boasts numerous medals. In 2007, Tatiana won the World Championship, also winning the Belarus'

championships several times. She won awards at the World Cup rounds, not least the European cup (2010, 2011). The successful sportswoman took part in the finals of the world championships and captured silver (2012) and gold (2015) at the European championships.



Tatiana Drozdovskaya has taken the lead during all 12 races

# The strongest make progress

## Return matches of the second qualification round of the Champions League and Europa League played

**Pragmatic BATE**

After Irish Dundalk was defeated at Borisov-Arena by a small 2:1 margin, BATE's fans anxiously awaited the return match. Despite a nail-biting game for the fans, BATE achieved a satisfying 0:0 result, bringing the team to the third qualification round of the Champions League. Changing weather and faults with the team kit did not hamper our footballers.

Attacking the opposition goal 18 times, BATE only managed to hit the goal mouth twice, while also earning several yellow cards in the process. The match ended in such a way that BATE footballers can join the Scot Bill Shankly in his famous saying: 'We smashed them — 0:0'.

BATE will continue its journey to the group round of the Champions League with the next match against the Hungarian team, Videoton.

**Dinamo's explosive performance**

There is the impression that the Bulgarian club, Chernomorec, was preparing for its return match against Dinamo Minsk in a crowd of journalists rather than on the football field. They reportedly boasted that the team outstripped Dinamo in the second qualification round of the Europa League, successfully winning the group. They commented that 'Dinamo failed to surprise' and that they 'would easily send the Minsk team home'. However, a winner is always defined on the field. The Dinamo players punished the Bulgarians for their overconfident remarks and, after the match, Chernomorec had no comment: Dinamo won 4:0 and made it through to the next round of the Europa League.

There is no cause for complacency however, as the Swiss Zu-



Cherno More was stronger only in word

rich team, hardly a comparison to Chernomorec, will be Dinamo's next rival.

**Shakhtyor's knock-out**

Shakhtyor went to Austria as a weak team: losing the home match 0:1. No one had high hopes of a positive result in the return match against the Austrians, including

the footballers themselves. The result was a further disappointment: Wolfsberger won 0:2.

Austrian Michael Zollbauer scored the first goal in the 19th minute and, in the 90th minute, the Swede Philip Hellquist found the net. As a result, the Austrians will play against Dortmund's Borussia in the third round.

## Recognising group rivals

By Yegor Glebov

**Belarus' footballers to play against the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Bulgaria and Luxembourg in the qualifications for the 2018 World Championship**

St. Petersburg hosted the draw for the 2018 World Championship tournament, the finals of which will be held in Russia. Belarusian footballers join Group A, alongside teams from the Netherlands, France, Sweden, Bulgaria and Luxembourg. Belarus has previously played these teams in the pre-qualification rounds of the world and European championships.

Only nine group winners will make it through to the finals, following the two-round selection process (with matches both home and away). Another four places will be chosen from the best eight teams occupying second place. As a result, 14 European teams will perform at the 2018 World Championship — including the hosts of the finals: Russia.

Qualification matches will start in September 2016, finishing in October 2017. Play-off matches will take place in November 2017. The final tournament of the World Championship will feature the 32 best teams on the planet, hosted at 12 Russian stadiums from June 14th to July 15th, 2018.

# Biathlon legends to gather in Raubichi

## 'Race of Legends — Biathlon Stars for Peace' Festival is to be hosted by the Raubichi Republican Olympic Training Centre. Top athletes from the Winter Olympics of the last twenty years will be present.

By Kirill Karin

Biathlon fans are looking forward to a great sporting feast attracting many of the famous skiing marksmen. Champions from all Olympics will take part, including the winners of the 1984 Sarajevo event and 2010 Vancouver Olympics. The invitation by Darya Domracheva, winner of three gold medals at the Sochi Olympics in 2014,

to compete in Belarus has been already accepted by Olympic winners from Germany, Sven Fischer, Ricco Gross, Michael Greis and the world champion Simona Hausvald (Denkinger).

Representatives from Norway will add some serious competition, including three time Olympic champion and one of the most accurate biathletes at the start of the millennium, Halvard Hanevold,

as well as the speedy Frode Andresen and Lars Berger. The latter is not only a world champion in biathlon but also in ski racing. The Belarusian town will also welcome Sweden's Helena Ekholm (Jonsson) (2008/09), and the 2006 Torino Olympic champion Anna Carin Zidek (Olofsson).

Russia will be represented by double Olympic champion, Anna Bogaliy, alongside Yuri Kashkark-

ov, who raced a dramatic Olympic relay in Sarajevo in 1984 with Belarus' Sergey Bulygin. Thirty years on, both sportsmen will perform together again. As well as Sergey, Belarus will be represented by a Calgary Olympic champion from 1988, Alexander Popov, and the winner of 17 World Championship medals, Alena Zubrilova.

The legendary biathletes will take part in two races in Raubichi.



First, the super-sprint competition and, depending on the results, relay teams will be chosen for the final. As part of the event, Darya Domracheva will be awarded 'The Best Sportswoman of 2014' Prize by the European Union of Sports Press; many of them will cover Raubichi's 'Race of Legends'.



# Parade of the week



Minsk hosted parade of retro machinery and wind bands of the Emergency Ministry's subdivisions, to honour the Day of Firefighting Service

## Exhibitions

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 6th September. *Dedicated to 70th Anniversary of Great Victory*  
Until 27th September.

*Belarusian Iconostas*

Until 27th September. *A*

*Husband, a Man, a Warrior*

Until 2nd November. *Great*

*Patriotic War in Art*

Until 30th December. *Celebrating*

*Victory Day in Museum*

### NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 31st August. *Belarusian*

*Musical Instruments*

Until 6th September. *From Hoop*

*Skirts and Tournures to Modern*

Until 6th September. *Three*

*Stories about War*

### NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 28th August. *Boletus:*

*Beauty is their Family*

*Peculiarity* photo exhibition

Until 30th August. *The World of*

*Big Parrots and Singing Birds*

### WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet*

*of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz.*

*Illustrations and Medals*

### NATIONAL LIBRARY

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue

Until 27th August. *Spirit of Religious*

*Tradition and Printed Icon*

Until 31st August. *Feeling*

*of the Colour*

### ALL SAINTS' CHURCH

121 Kalinovsky Street

Until 30th August. International

festival of sand sculptures

## Theatres

### MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Street

31.07. Comedy about Penny Pincher

02.08. Cinderella

03.08. A Midsummer Night's Dream or King Lear

04.08. I Pay for Pleasure

05.08. Look for a Man

06.08. American Comedy: Loves,

Doesn't Love or with You



## Concerts

### UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square

01.08. Summer Musical-Tourist Season

01.08. Classics at the Town Hall

### DRUZIA

40 Kulman Street

31.07. IOWA band 03.08. Open Space

### RE:PUBLIC

62 Pritytsky Street

06.08. Segodnyanochiyu band

### GRAFFITI

16 Kalinin Lane

01.08. Universal concert

### TUSE

57B Surganov Street

31.07. Inomarki and Skoraya Pomoshch cover-bands

### DOZARI

58 Nezavisimosti Avenue

31.07. Summer Jam 01.08. Dozari Never Sleeps

### STANKOVO

Dzerzhinsk

01.08. Friendship Festival 2015

# Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

## August of decades and centuries past comes to life

**August 1st.** In 1904, a Soviet Union Hero — Frants Minkevich — was born in Minsk. During the Great Patriotic War, he was a navigator for a long-distance bombing regiment, making 87 military flights. In 1942, he took part in attacks over Berlin.

**August 3rd.** In 1902, USSR Hero Ilya Kozhar was born — an organiser and head of the partisan movement on the territory of the Gomel Region during the Great Patriotic War.

**August 5th.** In 1924, a Belarusian linguist — Arkady Zhuravsky — was born in the Tolochin District. He was a holder of the Belarusian State Award for his series of works: Skorina and Belarusian Culture.

**August 6th.** In 1938, a composer, an Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus, a People's Artiste of Belarus and the USSR — Igor Luchenok — was born in Maryina Gorka.

**August 6th.** In 1904, a Belarusian historian and a party and state figure — Timofey Gorbunov — was born in the village of Sanniki, of the Vitebsk Province's Lepel District.

**August 7th.** In 1910, Gen-

nady Tsitovich was born — a conductor, a Belarusian folk music expert and a choir master. He established and artistically led Belarus' State Academic Folk Choir which bears his name now.

**August 2nd.** In 1993, the Marc Chagall Museum was set up in Vitebsk.



**August 1st.** In 1909, a pedagogical seminary (enrolling men only) was founded in Rogachev, to operate until 1919.

**August 7th.** In 1954, Belarusian ethnographer Tatiana Kukharenek was born in the village of Klinok, of the Cherven District.

**August 1st.** In 1914, WWI began; the territories of Be-

larus, Lithuania and western Ukraine fell under martial rule.

**August 1st.** In 1948, the Konstantin Zaslouov Museum opened in Orsha.

**August 2nd.** In 1927, the first issue of Rabochy (Worker) newspaper was released (now known as SB. Belarus Segodnya).

**August 3rd.** In 1943, a 'rail war' was launched in occupied Belarus which envisaged extended inactivation of railway communications in order to disorganise the enemy's military transportation.

**August 3rd.** In 1944, the Pervy, Belarus and Rodina cinema houses opened.

**August 4th.** In 1922, Belarus' Central Archive was founded.

**August 4th.** In 1945, the Yanka Kupala Literary Museum opened.

**August 5th.** In 1939, the first café of Belarus opened in Minsk's Sovetskaya Street (now Nezavisimosti Avenue).

**August 6th.** In 1517, a Belarusian enlightener and book printer — Frantsisk Skorina — published the first Bible in Old Belarusian in Prague: The Psalter. The date is considered the start of the Belarusian and Eastern Slavonic book printing.

**August 6th.** In 1914, a Red Cross community opened a hospital (at the governor's house) for WWI wounded soldiers — under the initiative and guidance of the governor's wife, Mrs. Girs.

**August 3rd.** In 1921, Minsk's special secondary school of police was established.