

The Minsk Times

ISSN 1991-2978



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 44 (714) ● THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 23, 2017 ● WWW.SB.BY



**First
Belarusian
passenger car
produced by
newly established
BelGee JSC**

**Geely
Atlas NL3
becomes
face of new
modern
facility → 4**



BELTA

Calm month of February matters

Alexander Lukashenko supports proposal to hold local elections on February 18th, 2018

By Alexey Fedosov

During his working meeting with the Chair of the Central Election Commission, Lidia Yermoshina, the President supported a proposal to hold elections to local Councils of Deputies on February 18th, 2018. The meeting focused on elections to local councils of the 28th convocation. "It's vital to determine the date, financing and a draft decree for signing. I think that mid-February, maybe even 18th of February (as we've discussed) will be fine. February is a rather quiet month," Mr. Lukashenko said.

Speaking about financing elections, the President pointed out the need to use funds in a rational way. In his opinion, money can be saved by taking a rational approach to the organisation of polling stations. "If a polling station is located in a school, this should be an exemplary polling station. This is very important. We'll equip polling stations with ballot boxes and voting booths from previous elections," he stressed. Mentioning the payment of election commission members, he added, "The salary of people involved in the elec-

tion process is an important aspect."

"We'll meet you and the governors another time. I've ordered the Presidential Administration to remain continually in touch, to ensure that all organisational problems are settled. This is a political campaign and the Administration must do its best. In turn, the Central Election Commission should organise the elections in accordance with legislation — including preparation of voting papers, organisation of seminars and training of heads of the election commission," Mr. Lukashenko said.

He stresses that authorities will create all conditions for holding the elections properly. "We won't conceal anything. Those who are ready to vote will be able to do so, and all governmental branches will fulfil the requirements of the Central Election Commission, as usual."

Regarding elections to local councils of the 28th convocation, Ms. Yermoshina announced after meeting the President, "We'll primarily focus on national observation. I think political parties and public associations won't



SERGEY LOZUYUK

Election results depend on voter activity

fail us, demonstrating great activity in organising this observation."

Ms. Yermoshina explained that Belarus has no obligation to invite international observers to local council elections. Nevertheless, the Head of State strongly stressed the role of observations. With this in mind, the country will give preference to short-term observation by

all foreign diplomats accredited in Belarus.

"It's quite possible that some organisations which maintain relations with international structures — especially those working in the field of local self-government — will be able to invite colleagues and partners as experts and observers for voting days," Ms. Yermoshina comments.

Worthwhile visit in focus

By Alexander Pimenov

Alexander Lukashenko announces visit to Georgia, on meeting Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Georgia to Belarus, H.E. Mr. David Kotaria, as he finishes his diplomatic mission



David Kotaria

and Tbilisi have found opportunities to develop economic co-operation, with Belarus delivering a wide range of goods to Georgia. "We supply machine building goods to you and are ready to help your country master our technologies, both in agriculture and industry," the President emphasised.

Mr. Lukashenko noted that various Belarusian potato varieties are grown by the President of Georgia, Giorgi Margvelashvili, who at first didn't believe he'd gain a good crop. "We've taught him and everything's good, so we can supply more potato seeds. Potatoes are the second bread in our country and won't be the last in Georgia," asserted the Head of State.

"I'm thankful to your president and government for their invitation to visit Georgia. We've agreed that the visit will be both memorable and worthwhile, filled with issues of practical importance, to maintain momentum in our mutual co-operation. The people of Georgia and Belarus won't be able to say that we only meet for ceremonies," noted Mr. Lukashenko.

The President admitted that he's looking forward to visiting Tbilisi, saying, "I believe that we'll complete preparations in H1 2018, and I'll be able to visit this wonderful country once again."

Mr. Lukashenko expressed hope that David Kotaria will provide assistance to both sides in this regard.

Belarus and Georgia established diplomatic relations in January 1994 and Georgia opened an embassy in Belarus in 2007; the Belarusian embassy opened recently in Tbilisi, in August 2017.

Alexander Lukashenko paid his first official visit to Georgia in 2015 while the Georgian leader, Giorgi Margvelashvili, paid an official visit to Belarus in March 2017.

During the meeting, the Head of State commented that, in recent years, Minsk

From January to September 2017, trade turnover between Belarus and Georgia reached \$72.6 million, with railway and tram carriages, trucks, milk and condensed cream, filament yarns, medications and butter being major export items. MAZ JSC and Belkommunmash JSC, Stadler Minsk are negotiating to supply passenger vehicles to Georgian cities, while Mogotex JSC and Lenta JSC hold talks to supply fabrics and materials to sew uniforms for Georgian law enforcement bodies.

Intersecting points of business interest

Russia's Kaliningrad Region is not the largest but it is a very significant partner for Belarus, with trade turnover sometimes exceeding \$300 million annually. However, last year, barely \$200 million was registered, inspiring us to look at where we must improve. Alexander Lukashenko recently met the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region, Anton Alikhanov, at the Palace of Independence.

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The conversation between the President of Belarus and the Governor of the Kaliningrad Region demonstrates that we have intersecting points of business interest. Minsk views this Russian region as very promising and as a close partner. Mr. Lukashenko told his guest, "We're prepared for collaboration across all areas of interest for the Kaliningrad

Region. You can be sure of this." Negotiations tackled prospects for uniting efforts in industrial co-operation, construction and transport. Next year, Kaliningrad is preparing to host the FIFA World Cup.

Chatting with journalists after the meeting with Mr. Alikhanov, the President noted that Belarusian experience of preparing and organising large international events is of interest to Kaliningrad

residents. The region is also renewing its bus fleet and Minsk machinery is perfectly suitable. Kaliningrad plans to invite our drivers to share their expertise, working together as we did during the Olympiad in Sochi.

"Belarus is a special partner, neighbour and brotherly nation for the Kaliningrad Region. Many Belarusian people live there and we highly appreciate their contribution;



Anton Alikhanov

they are leaders in many branches and set an example of hard work, and business initiative and management," notes the Governor.

Mr. Alikhanov was making his first official visit to Belarus in his current role. "I'd like to note the friendly reception and hospitality I've received," he said.

Mr. Alikhanov named the agrarian branch as a promis-

ing sphere for developing collaboration. Interaction and expansion of co-operation is meeting the interests of the Kaliningrad Region. "Agriculture and Belarus are synonymous and you are primarily a leader here," asserted the Governor.

Co-operation in developing the digital economy, IT-industry and informatisation also looks promising. The President stressed, "We've significant experience and have created a powerful IT-park, where world companies are registered; we've learnt a great deal, so please make use of our opportunities."

Our scientists, alongside figures of culture and arts

are open for collaboration. However, conditions of regional co-operation reflect overall inter-state interaction. Mr. Lukashenko noted, "I hope we'll continue developing our relations because we aren't strangers; we share a common homeland. We don't divide Russia and Belarus by borders. We're united by our common Union State. Whatever occurs on the borders with Belarus reflects the situation on the border with the Kaliningrad Region. We're facing the enhancement of NATO. In economy and trade, everyone pursues their own interests. We should protect our interests and the interests of our people."

New goals and tasks for new age

The country is opening a new page in relations with Germany, notes the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, meeting Vice Chancellor and Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, Sigmar Gabriel, in Minsk

By Vladimir Khromov

“Much is spoken of our past relations, and about negative facts. However, there are positive aspects to our relationship,” underlined Mr. Lukashenko. “Many things are changing; our relations are changing in the modern world, over time. I strongly hope and am convinced that we’re opening a new page in our relations, paving the way towards improvement.”

The Head of State thanked Germany for its annual help in hosting the recuperation of Belarusian children from Chernobyl-hit territories. Moreover, the President expressed gratitude for Germany’s technological support to the Belarusian economy. “Cutting-edge equipment and technologies account for the lion’s share of our imports from Germany,” noted Mr. Lukashenko. “We’d like to take this positive process to a higher economic level.” The President encouraged Germany to look at opportunities at the Great Stone Industrial Park, which guarantees preferential

conditions for investors. The project has been implemented using the best global practices of setting up such technology parks.

Mr. Lukashenko also asked the Germans to study the situation in Belarus and to evaluate it objectively. “Then we’ll succeed. You’ll never see the integrity or security of the European continent violated by Belarus.” The Head of State hopes that this won’t be the last visit by the Head of the German Foreign Ministry, who was coming to Belarus for the first time.

The President acknowledged the contribution of Germany to the regulation of the conflict in Ukraine. “Germany could make a great contribution to the development of modern history if it continues its policy aimed at normalising the situation in Eastern Ukraine,” underlined the Head of State.

“Many problems remain after the Normandy Four meeting [in 2015 in Minsk], but there’s no war there, in Ukraine. People would still have been dying if Germany hadn’t taken a hard



Sigmar Gabriel

line,” asserted the President.

Sigmar Gabriel emphasised that Belarus and Germany have experienced difficult times in their relations. “We, Germans, think about the hideous crimes the Nazis committed against Belarus and the people of the country during the Second World War. It’s a miracle how friendly and open the people of your country are towards Germany today. We’d like to thank you for your friendliness and openness, which shouldn’t be taken

for granted.”

According to the Minister, there were disagreements in relations in the past and there are disagreements today. “But, if we look at the starting point of our relations, we can surely be optimistic about the future. Our relations went through horrifying times. Today, both states are deeply committed to peace,” noted Mr. Gabriel.

Vice Chancellor Sigmar Gabriel, the Federal Minister for Foreign Affairs of Germany, told journalists after the meeting with the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, that he’s impressed with Belarus’ adherence towards European cohesion. According to the Vice Chancellor, European topics were high on the agenda. “I was so impressed with Belarus’ cohesion,” noted the Vice Chancellor.

Mr. Gabriel said that this issue will be discussed at the *Eastern Partnership* Summit, in Brussels. He believes that European Union member states should think how best to improve their integration structure,

to promote efficient co-operation with eastern partners and to achieve peace and welfare within the EU. Mr. Gabriel hopes that the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, will take part in the *Eastern Partnership* Summit.

“We’re on the eve of the *Eastern Partnership* Summit in Brussels, which Belarus will attend. We have high hopes that the President will be able to come, because it would be a good signal,” said Mr. Gabriel. Speaking about settlement of conflict in the south-east of Ukraine, he thanked Belarus for its willingness to do everything possible for its early settlement and expressed the view that Germany and Belarus feel a close connection and set similar goals in this matter.

He added his hope that Belarus will become a member of the Council of Europe, contributing towards greater rapprochement with countries of the EU and strengthening our partnership, and our approach to various topics, including those which are difficult.

Revision of salaries for top bank managers

Banks should take into account the interests of the national economy, notes the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, in response to report on credit and financial organisations

By Vasily Kharitonov

The efficiency of credit and financial organisations was high on the agenda during the Head of State’s meeting, in which he gave instructions to government officials. He underlined, “You’re aware of my requirements. All organisations, especially banks, should work with maximum efficiency. Moreover, their activities should be in line with the interests of the national economy.” Mr. Lukashenko asked about governmental measures, wishing to know if approaches comply with our socio-economic development goals and if the current system meets modern standards and best global practices.

The President noted that Belarus is a developing state and ‘is yet to reach global levels of development, including in the operation of credit and financial organisations’. “If we’re yet to reach that level, why would we pay salaries in line with global practices? Because if we want to meet the standards, let’s do it in all respects, including in the ma-

terial support of organisations and workers,” he added.

The Head of State remarked that people’s well-being is very important to the Government. “However, we’re aware of the situation in Belarus. People don’t live in idleness and plenty. The Government, alongside the National Bank and subordinate banks, is doing its utmost to raise salaries to the desired level of Br1,000 or \$500 monthly equivalent. Let’s also have this level in the banking sector. Salaries must be earned, of course, as all bankers say, and I support them. Salaries cannot be paid for nothing. Banking sector employees should also work hard to earn their salaries,” the President believes.

Mr. Lukashenko mentioned that bankers distinguish their salaries from bonuses. However, he believes this approach is wrong since the system is open to abuse, whereby people declare small monthly wages but then receive bonuses. “I stress once again that I don’t want the banking sector to be a team



EXPERT OPINION

Mikhail Kovalev, Dean of the Faculty of Economics at the Belarusian State University:

Reducing costs in the banking sector will lead to reduced interest rates on loans

Salaries among ordinary banking employees aren’t high. When my graduates go to work in banks, they receive an average salary. However, top managers have very high salaries, following the established worldwide situation. We should say that, in our country, as in other states, senior leadership at banks receive higher salaries than top officials and ministers, which arouses some misunderstandings, as correctly indicated by the Head of State. He refers not just to salaries but to reducing banks’ general expenditure. The less money banks spend, the cheaper their loans, which should drive forward the economy.

of fat cats, as many perceive them to be. Bankers’ salaries should be commensurate with national levels,” asserts the Head of State. After the optimisation of government

bodies, a clear-cut mechanism concerning salaries has been developed. “Everything is clear with salaries, at all levels, from the prime minister to heads of local coun-

cils. They use money that has been saved and distribute it among workers. The banking sector, including the heads of our banks, should adopt the same system. I don’t divide private and state-owned banks. Calculate the salaries of workers depending on the salary of the Chairman of the National Bank,” instructed the President.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that salaries should reflect labour efficiency and productivity. “I don’t think that the head of a private or state-owned bank works more or better than the Chairman of the National Bank. If it is so, it’s something for me to analyse, but I don’t think that it’s so. Therefore, we should compare bankers’ salaries and bonuses with those of the Chairman of the National Bank,” Mr. Lukashenko is convinced.

The Head of State commented that banks use the money of private individuals and legal entities. “I once noted that if a bank takes a \$1 billion loan at an interest rate of 1 percent in the West and then issues loans at 2.5 percent in

Belarus, we must reward this bank and its leader,” noted the President.

The President listened to a detailed report on credit and financial institutions, being keen to understand certain issues of concern to the Government and senior officials at the National Bank. “It seems that the situation is stable, but are there challenges and risks? If so, we need to understand them,” said the Head of State.

The President agreed that where banks fulfil all criteria, their leadership should be encouraged. He instructed the National Bank to again revise its criteria and, if necessary, toughen these.

Mr. Lukashenko stated that profit is the main goal for credit and financial organisations. All banks, even foreign, earn money at the expense of citizens and enterprises, including by giving loans. The Head of State has demanded that the Government and the National Bank develop a clear system of salaries for banks’ top managers. The President stressed that this should be fair and workable.

Geely Atlas NL3 becomes face of new modern facility

First Belarusian passenger car produced by newly established BelGee JSC

By Vladimir Velikhov

The President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, has participated in the opening ceremony of the new BelGee Plant and the launch of serial production.

Belarusian-Chinese BelGee JSC — producing passenger cars under the Geely trademark — was established in 2011. In February 2013, the first car was assembled at the plant. Among the facility's shareholders are BelAZ JSC (51.49 percent), Zhejiang Jirun Automobile Company Limited (33.47 percent), Soyuzavtotekhnologii JSC (9.01 percent) and CITIC International Investment Limited (6.03 percent).

At the end of March 2015, construction began on a facility to produce full cycle small-knot assembly kits, located between Borisov and Zhodino, occupying an area of about 120 hectares. Its production capacity should reach 60,000 cars a year at the initial stage.

The joint venture should ensure a complete production cycle for crossovers NL3, NL4 and the sedan FE3. Around 1,800 cars are expected to be produced this year, with volumes rising in 2018. For 2018 and 2019, these may reach 25,000 and 35,000 respectively.

A draft law is now being prepared



Quality control is vital element of production process



Impressive modern technological potential at BelGee JSC

in Belarus to encourage the purchase of domestically produced BelGee cars by Belarusians. "We're thinking of possibilities to help people buy this car. Every family needs its own car, so we want to find a way to support that, and have some good ideas for the future. The document will be released soon," Mr. Lukashenko said.

Various possibilities are being studied, including deferred payment, using credit and leasing.

As the President stresses, the state is interested in ensuring that as many Belarusians as possible buy domestically-produced cars. "However, there is another target: to manufacture as much as we can. We should double our capacity and, after selling 60,000 cars, we'll focus on producing 120,000," he added. "I want this facility to be profitable." To achieve profitability, at least 35,000 cars should be sold. "60,000 vehicles would be a good result, ensuring salaries, development, and so on," Mr. Lukashenko said.

The warranty for Belarus-made Geely cars can be increased up to five years. After the solemn launch of the facility, Mr. Lukashenko addressed its working staff, noting, "We need to ensure a warranty period of no less than five years. We're already offering a warranty for four years and 100,000km mileage." According to the President, he has invited Chinese partners and specialists to discuss the issue. "Every worker must realise that they must produce a quality car which should run for five years without problems."

Service maintenance is another important issue. A network of service stations has long been operating across the country. "Each district centre will have the necessary number of sites to service Belarusian vehicles, so that any car can easily be serviced and — if necessary — repaired," Mr. Lukashenko underlines.

Good investment climate

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus presents potential of Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park in Singapore

The event took place during the investment forum headlined as *Belarus Calling Asia*, dedicated to co-operation between Belarus and the Asian region in the finance and investment sectors. Major attention during the forum was paid to the investment climate in Belarus. The key speakers included Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Vasily Matyushevsky, as well as heads of the Ministry of Trade and Industry

and the Ministry of National Development of Singapore.

Agreements were signed on trade-investment collaboration between Belarusian and Asian partners, including one assigning Belarus a sovereign rating, according to the Chinese national scale for placing securities in Yuans on the Chinese financial market. Agreements were signed on a new resident company joining the Great Stone Industrial Park, as well as for the *Car-sharing — Vehicles for Common Use* project by a Chinese company in Belarus, on the supply of large consignments of dairy products and poultry to China, and

on the supply of natural rubber for tyre production from Singapore to Belarus.

The event was organised by the Embassy of Belarus to China, with the assistance of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus, the National Development Agency for Investment and Privatisation, the representational office of Belshina company in Singapore, and the Belarusian Embassy to Indonesia. The event was attended by leading Asian trade and investment companies, and by financial institutions that have established direct contacts with Belarusian partners.

Improving conditions for doing business

By Konstantin Bondarev

This year, significant steps have been made in Belarus to liberalise entrepreneurial activity

The state, in close co-operation with the business community, has prepared a range of legal acts to improve the country's business climate. Following the 7th International Entrepreneurship Forum, hosted by Minsk, business initiative has received new impetus.

The forum brought together more than 500 businessmen, top

managers and representatives of power, who discussed promising areas for business, and how best to make Belarus a true IT-oasis for world technological companies, venture funds and start-ups. At the opening of the forum, Belarus' Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov noted, "We're constantly working to improve conditions for doing business. Instruments of economic policy aim to support honest competition, and to stimulate the creation of new jobs in producing goods and services, primarily by attracting private investments."



Finding answers to global challenges

Experts at the International Labour Organisation have been concerned for several years that the world economy is unable to generate enough new jobs, or improve existing ones. By late 2017, global unemployment figures may reach 3.4 million, with the number of unemployed exceeding 201 million: 2.8 percent of the total world population.

By Maxim Osipov

The forecast for 2018 is bleak, with the growth in job-seekers outpacing the creation of new jobs. Even those in relatively stable employment cannot take their job for granted, notes Stephen Tobin, an ILO senior economist and one of the report's key authors. He asserts, "Almost half of all employees working in emerging markets are vulnerable. As regards developing states, four in five jobs are insecure. To ensure fair and inclusive economic growth, an integrated political approach is needed, aimed at eliminating stagnation and re-



GEORGE SHABLIUK

ducing income inequality, while taking into account the specific characteristics of certain countries."

Our domestic companies have employed more people than they've fired and Belarus has been following a complex political approach for several years, with clear success. The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection noted, in late September 2017, that registered unemployment in Belarus stood at 0.6 percent of the workforce (down from 0.9 percent in the previous year). According to the Trading Economics portal,

the unemployment rate stood at 3 percent in Switzerland, 3.6 percent in Germany, 6.2 percent in Sweden, and 8.9 percent in Latvia.

According to the National Statistical Committee, as of the end of September, there were 49 registered job-seekers per 100 vacancies. In Minsk, this ratio is even more striking: up to 13,000 vacancies per 3,100 unemployed. The Deputy Chair of the Com-

mittee on Labour, Employment and Social Protection at Minsk's City Executive Committee, Tatiana Kudevich, is keen to see jobs filled, with various methods of assistance put in place. She explains, "Since September 1st, a department working with employers has operated in the city, collating a database of vacancies, while monitoring their topicality and organising mini-job fairs. Some people don't want to register as job-seeking but are still keen to actively look for work, with assistance from specialists. All can rely on our help."

One billionth tonne of oil pumped

By Oleg Bogomazov

Gomeltransneft Druzhba JSC pumps one billionth tonne of oil towards Ukraine

The Mozyr head line operation dispatcher station has taken fifty-three years to achieve its goal, of a figure with nine zeroes. Construction of the Mozyr-Brody oil pipeline, used to transport oil to Ukrainian oil processing facilities, as well as to Hungary, the Czech Republic and Slovakia — was finished in 1962 and the first 'pure' oil was pumped a year later.

Such oil is calculated in net tonnage, excluding the mass of the ballast (water, chlorine salts and mechanical impurities). Several years ago, volumes of transported hydrocarbon raw material, sent west via Gomeltransneft Druzhba's pipelines (along the Mozyr-Adamovo section) reached 1.5 billion tonnes, arriving for processing in Poland and Germany.

Using full extent of mechanism

Belarus and Venezuela discuss co-operation in oil extracting sphere

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Venezuela, Oleg Paferov, has met Venezuela's Oil Minister, Eulogio Del Pino, to discuss future co-operation. "The parties have discussed the state and prospects for expanding interaction in oil production, and the issues to be considered by the Belarusian-Venezuelan inter-governmental high-level commission, as well as preparations for signing a bilateral co-operation roadmap," the Ministry has announced.

The meeting took place upon the initiative of the Belarusian Embassy as part of an agreement reached during the visit of Venezuela President, Nicolas Maduro, to Belarus.

Containers shouldn't come back empty

By Oleg Bogomazov

China views transportation of Belarusian goods via rail from Europe as promising

China has suggested transporting Belarusian-made goods via rail, as containers return from Europe to China's Chengdu, notes Liu Bin, the Deputy Director General of

the Department for European-Central Asian Affairs, of the Chinese Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Speaking to journalists, he commented, "Several dozen million tonnes of cargo have so far been transported in containers along the China-Europe railway route, via Belarus. Sometimes, however, these containers return

to China empty so it makes sense to use them to transport Belarusian goods back to China."

According to the representative of the Chinese Foreign Ministry, this would benefit both sides.

Foreign journalists visited Chengdu International Railway Port prior to the press conference: an essential



hub in the *Belt and Road* initiative, ensuring continuous supplies of Chinese goods to Europe via the Belarusian city

of Brest. Freight trains take just ten days to complete the 10,000km route from Chengdu to Warsaw via Minsk. Last

year, 570,000 railway containers travelled this way and there are plans to increase this to 600,000 this year.



Silence is evidently prohibited in library

In imagining a library, we tend to think of high shelves filled with books, each with an amazing story under the cover. However, some tales are best told orally, as traveller may will tell you...

By Yelizaveta Artsueva

The *Human Library* project launched in Belarus three years ago, inspired by a similar venture abroad, thanks to a team of enterprising people. Believing that real life experiences are just as compelling as fictional tales, they began encouraging 'real' people to tell their stories.

The co-ordinators, Maria Lukashuk and Marina Shtrakhova, tell us, "The *Human Library* now operates not only in Minsk but in other cities — like Bobruisk, Molodechno and Grodno. It has its own organisers in each place, with their local 'books'. We do our best to tell the stories of city residents."

People with unusual professions and interesting experiences, such as those

who follow an alternative lifestyle, come to share their time, telling their stories. Each 'book' aims to address a certain social stereotype, showing that we shouldn't make assumptions about people's lives.

The ladies note that the books aim to breakdown prejudices over certain stereotypes, such as the lives of people with HIV. Some choose to tell their stories to promote better understanding; others gain catharsis from sharing

ing their stories, having perhaps never told them before.

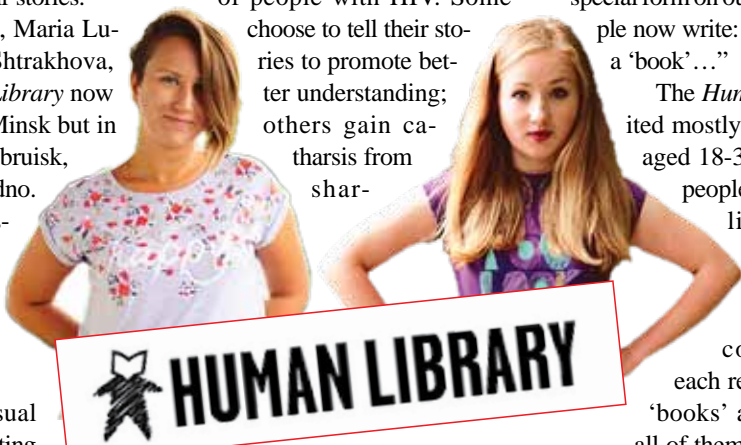
Over a period of three years, around a thousand people have acted as 'books', and new storytellers are always being sought. Marina and Maria asked friends and acquaintances initially. "Later, people began to address us and we introduced a special form on our Internet site. People now write: 'Hello, I think I'm a 'book'..."

The *Human Library* is visited mostly by young people, aged 18-35, but some older people do come. "Families are common.

I remember a grandmother, mother and son coming together, each requesting different 'books' and chatting with all of them. Schoolchildren's eyes sparkle with interest as

it's a great format for learning, offering a wonderful opportunity to not only listen but ask questions," the ladies add.

The goal is to break down social stereotypes and promote diversity. "We hate such words as 'normal' and 'not normal'," Marina admits. "In the three years since the project has been running, I've realised that the word normal has no meaning, as we're simply all different. I cannot say that I have no conception of stereotypes; it's impossible. However, I now believe that we have the capacity to change. Some stereotypes have been formed over the centuries, so we cannot change views in a single interaction with one of our 'books'. From a global point of view, much work lies ahead, in cities and countryside. We aim to change one person at a time. Three years into our project, we can say that we've destroyed some people's perceptions of stereotypes."



Marina Shtrakhova and Maria Lukashuk are curators of the project

Unique edition to go on show to public

Facsimile edition of *Book Heritage of Francysk Skaryna* donated to UN Library and University Library of Bern

By Oleg Bogomolov

National Library Director Roman Motulsky presented the multi-volume facsimile, *Book Heritage of Francysk Skaryna*, at the Palace of Nations, in Geneva, noting the importance of the edition for Belarus and the international community.

The international project to recreate the legacy of the Belarusian book

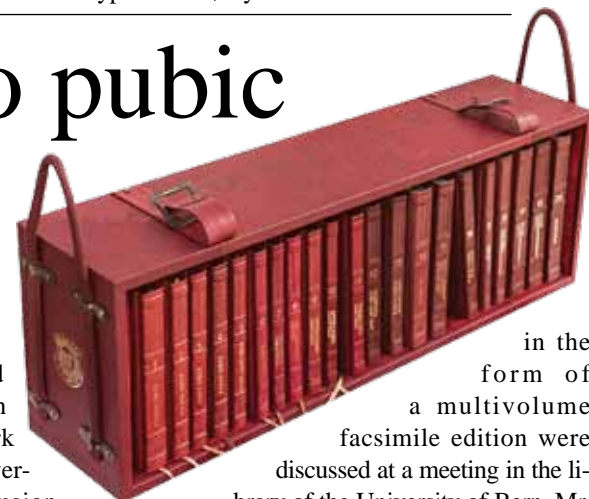
printing pioneer is the central fulcrum for many events dedicated to the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing. Implemented jointly by the National Library of Belarus and BelVEB Bank, the project presents a vivid example of successful co-operation between organisations united by the common idea of recovering and perpetuating our historical legacy.

After the presentation, Mr. Motulsky solemnly handed over the facsimile edition to the Director of the UN Library in Geneva, Francesco Pisano. In future, the 21-volume collection will be showcased in the UN Library, so that members of the public may view it.

Representatives of the diplomatic corps, members of UN Office staff in Geneva, and Belarusians living

in the French-speaking part of Switzerland have attended events held in Geneva to mark the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing.

Francysk Skaryna's legacy and the international project to recreate it



in the form of a multivolume facsimile edition were discussed at a meeting in the library of the University of Bern. Mr. Motulsky also donated a copy of the facsimile edition to the university library.

High technologies set the tone

By Alexey Fedosov

Additive technologies to be developed in healthcare in Belarus

Powder metallurgy is coming into its own, thanks to 3D printing, using polymers and metal-polymers, and metal and metal-ceramic alloys. Items created with additive technologies are used in medicine and industry, including in the aviation and space industries. However, healthcare is showing the greatest interest.

"We're manufacturing implants with the help of additive technologies and planning further development," explains the Director of the Institute for Powder Metallurgy at the National Academy of Sciences, Alexander Ilyushchenko. Additive technologies are promising for traumatology, orthopaedics and oral surgery.

Not only the Institute of Powder Metallurgy of the NAS is involved in additive technologies; other organisations, including the Institute of Chemistry of New Materials of the NAS, are implementing special production technologies for 3D printing, alongside a whole range of Belarusian universities.

The National Academy of Sciences recently hosted the 8th scientific-production seminar, *3D Printers: Prospects for Application and Development*, as part of the Year of Science in Belarus. NAS scientists and specialists joined representatives of ministries and departments to consider trends in 3D technologies in Belarus. The seminar tackled modern trends and equipment for additive technologies, as well as three-dimensional printing of fabric depictions of people.

The NAS' Scientific-Production Association of Powder Metallurgy is currently showcasing an exhibition of items produced with the help of additive technologies, as used in the aerospace industry, and in the production of medical implants and instruments, as well as to make jewellery and design objects, and cooling systems for microelectronics.

Draniki battle with world record

Representatives of nine countries come to Minsk for tournament to eat the most famous Belarusian dish: potato pancakes — draniki

By Yulia Konovalova

The unusual competition, which was announced in mid-October, aimed to set a gastronomic record. Each participant had to eat five pieces of draniki, weighing around 300 grams. Everyone enjoyed equal conditions. The draniki were served hot and fresh, with sour cream, and drinking water permitted. In line with the rules, the winner was whoever ate most quickly, with separate sections for men and women.

Belarusian potato pancakes

are a great success everywhere, with entrants from Belarus joined by those from Russia, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan, Israel, Kazakhstan, Poland, Ukraine and, even, South Africa. Among the women, a Belarusian won, while the men's contest saw a tie between a Belarusian, a Ukrainian and a guest from South Africa, who admitted having first tried draniki while living in a hostel. Since then, it's become one of his favourite dishes.

The gastro-sportsmen treated the competition seriously, training at

MT REFERENCE:

The last record related to draniki was set in 2016, during Maslenitsa Festival in Minsk. 76kg of potatoes and 10 litres of oil were used to cook the world's largest delicacy. The two-metre tall pancake was appreciated by guests and the official results were sent to the Guinness Book of Records' committee. Since the English language has no official 'draniki' word, the delicacy was recorded as 'a potato pancake'.

home on the eve of the battle. Some ate nothing for almost twenty-four hours beforehand. It took less than a minute for the person who set a record, which should now be en-



Tournament finalist Elvis, from the SAR, is keen on draniki

tered in the CIS and Baltic States' Guinness Book of Records — *Divo* (Miracle).

Interestingly, Russia has organised similar events, serving ordi-

nary pancakes instead of draniki, while Ukraine has done the same with galushki. In America, competitions to eat hot dogs and burgers are common.

Around the world on a plane powered by solar batteries

Famous traveller Fiodor Konyukhov arrives in Minsk to become a pilot

By Alena Prokina

Russian traveller Fiodor Konyukhov has been hopelessly in love with the sea for many decades, having made six round-the-world journeys by yacht. This adventurous man's motto is never to rest on his laurels, inspiring him to keep setting new challenges in terms of destination and mode of travel.

He's now turning to the sky, having aspired to fly for more than a decade. In 2016, he took the first steps, making a round-the-world trip by hot air balloon. Mr. Konyukhov has next decided to fly around the world by solar sailplane. His son, Oskar, who's heading the expedition headquarters, tells us that only one such flight has been made so far: by Swiss balloonist Bertrand Piccard, in 2016. In order to circumnavigate the Northern Hemisphere, Piccard's team



At the wheel of training plane

took 558 hours, or 23 days and 17 stops. Inspired by Piccard's example, Mr. Konyukhov is attempting to fly around the world using a plane powered by solar panels, without stopping. The trip is to take place in the Southern Hemisphere, from Austria to Australia, in November and December 2020, and should take 5-6 days.

Mr. Konyukhov spent several years preparing for his hot air balloon flight, taking courses in Russia. However, he needs a further three years of training to fly a light aeroplane, to receive certification and earn the necessary number of flight hours. Each course lasts six months, and he'll then go to Minsk to attend the aviation-training centre, located in the suburbs. Mr. Konyukhov considered others, in Spain and other EU

FEATURES
It costs around **11,000** Euros to attend a private school to train as a pilot (almost the same price as in Europe). In Russia, private schools sometimes have trouble in issuing licenses, so certification is not always forthcoming after graduation.

states, and the Baltic States, but Belarus won out.

"I've been in hospitable Minsk since September 12th. For me it's the start of realising a long dream — to make a non-stop trip around the

Earth using solar energy: the first in history. Everyone has recommended Belarus, saying that you have a good reputation. For me, it's a very close country because I spent my adolescence there: I studied at Bobruisk's art school. Now, I'm studying to become a pilot. There are good specialists and courses, so I'm convinced of a good result," he tells us.

The training programme is divided into several stages: theory, followed simulator exercises (modelling various flight conditions), and then ground and flight training.

"I may be 65 years old, but I'm sitting alongside young men who've decided to connect their life with the sky and aviation," he writes in his personal blog. "I'm pleased to be in the company of these romanticists. We're united by having a dream connected with the sky. After passing my courses and exams, I plan to receive an amateur pilot state certificate."

Within three years, the unique plane should be built, using Russian-made solar panels, and a special energy storage system, alongside other high-tech equipment. His future plans include sailing around the world in a rowing boat and taking a hot air balloon into the stratosphere.

Convenience is truly vital for military fashion design

New winter uniform reflects wishes of troops in its design

By Dmitry Umpirovich

The Head of the 1st Division of the Defence Ministry's Clothing Department, Colonel Sergey Shved, explains, "The new uniform is mainly focused on lightness of fabric, durability and colour stability. The uniform is now three times lighter and more durable."

Comfort and safety now reign in military fashion: nothing should hamper soldiers from accomplishing their tasks: earflap hats have been replaced with knitted caps (earflaps will

only be used in strong frosts of below 20°C). Jackets have also been upgraded, with collars no longer made of fur but of fleece, with is both cheaper and lighter while ensuring the same level of warmth. Moreover, linen can now be worn separately.

The new military uniform includes a sweater, which was previously only worn as a component of daily uniform. Meanwhile, black leather straps have been replaced by textile khaki-coloured belts made of modern materials.



Our military uniform was last updated eight years ago



The vessel is the newest of the three submarines in the Argentine navy's fleet

Satellite signals in search for missing Argentine submarine

The submarine with 44 crew members on board vanished

It is being seen as a glimmer of hope in the hunt for a lost Argentine submarine.

The Defence Ministry says the missing vessel likely tried to communicate on last Saturday although the seven satellite calls failed. The signals, in the late morning and early afternoon, lasted between four and 36 seconds, the Ministry said.

Unaccounted for since last Wednesday, the ARA San Juan submarine with 44 crew members was returning to the Mar del Plata naval base, south of Buenos Aires. The last confirmed location of the German-built vessel was 432km off Argentina's southern Atlantic coast. Protocol calls for submarines to surface if communication is lost.

But Martín González, an Argentine Navy Rear Admiral, told reporters that priority was also being given to searching below the water's surface, including on the seabed. Stormy weather has hindered efforts to find the missing submarine. But the search is taking on an international dimension with offers of help from Chile to South Africa.

The US Navy said it was deploying a deep-sea rescue mission to Argentina to support the effort, with a remotely operated vehicle and two vessels capable of rescuing people from bottomed submarines set to arrive in the coming days. Britain has sent the Royal Navy's ice patrol ship, HMS Protector, equipped with sonar equipment to search underwater.



Australia and New Zealand officials discuss screening for Manus refugees

New Zealand and Australian officials have begun talks about screening processes for asylum seekers who have shut themselves inside a Papua New Guinea detention centre, New Zealand Prime Minister Jacinda Ardern said

Australia has been refusing New Zealand's offer to take up to 150 of the detainees from the Australian-run camp on Manus Island, but Ardern's comments have raised speculation that Australian Prime Minister Mal-

colm Turnbull is ready to accept the offer. The centre was closed almost three weeks ago after PNG's High Court ruled it was illegal, but more than 400 detainees have refused to leave, citing concerns for their security if they were moved to transit centres, as planned. Turnbull has been refusing New Zealand's offer to take some of the men, because he is worried that asylum seekers would view it as a 'back door' to Australia, undermining the country's tough immigration policies.

Da Vinci painting sells for world record \$450m

The price for Da Vinci's portrait of Christ was more than double the previous record

Leonardo da Vinci's portrait of Christ, *Salvator Mundi*, sold for a record-smashing \$450.3 million at Christie's, more than double the old price for any work of art at auction.

The painting, only recently rediscovered, was the last da Vinci left in private hands and fetched more than four times Christie's pre-sale estimate of about \$100 million. It beat a record set in May 2015 by Pablo Picasso's *Les Femmes D'Alger*, which sold for \$179.4 million, and constituted more than half the sale's total of \$785.9 million, which came in well above the roughly \$450 million



pre-sale estimate.

Salvator Mundi (Savior of the World) was purchased by an unidentified buyer bidding via telephone after a protracted contest of nearly 20 minutes at the New York auction house. With at least six bidders and increments coming in at more than 15 million, sustained whoops and cheers broke out in the packed salesroom as the hammer came down.

Germany under pressure over coal

Germany is playing host to the UN climate conference this time round

But the country still relies on coal for up to half of its electricity production.

German Chancellor Angela Merkel said in Bonn that more work needs to be done. "We know that Germany — as a country that is using coal to a great extent, especially coal lignite — has to make a substantial contribution to fulfill these goals, but how exactly this will be resolved — we will have to precisely discuss this together in the next days," said Merkel.

For all the buzz about Germany's much touted transition to low carbon energy,

The use of coal has been a long-standing complaint from climate campaigners.

'Keep the Freedom Party out of government' demand protesters in Austria

As the far-right FPÖ enters coalition talks with the mainstream right in Austria, people protest in Vienna

Police say at least 3,000 people have formed a chain of light in Vienna to protest against the formation of a government that includes the far-right Freedom Party. Demonstrators held flickering candles, torches and bicycle lamps, encircling the capital's government district.

It was the biggest protest in Austria since coalition talks between the conservative People's Party, (ÖVP), and the Freedom Party, (FPÖ), started two weeks ago. Organisers estimated the number of people taking part at eight to ten thousand.

Will Zimbabwe military end Mugabe era?

Political uncertainty in Zimbabwe as the country waits for the military's next step

Zimbabwe's military has denied that its takeover of power and the detention of President Robert Mugabe is a coup. Instead it claims to be targeting what it calls 'criminals' surrounding the president.

Spokesperson Moussa Faki Mahamat for the African Union — the key regional bloc — is keeping an open mind:

"We know there are problems within the ruling party, on probably finding an eventual successor to President Mugabe. There are conflicts, but we hope that this will not lead to bloodshed."

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Hobby was his true passion

Alexander Yaroshevich, the famous Belarusian art historian, local lore researcher, archivist and museum worker, died one year ago

By Veniamin Mikheev

Alexander Yaroshevich trained as a nuclear physicist, completing post-graduate courses and then working at the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Nuclear Power. However, his devotion to ancient Belarusian art was his passion, from the 1970s onwards.

As a researcher, Mr. Yaroshevich was erudite, with encyclopaedic knowledge, and displayed depth of analysis combined with clarity, simplicity and wit. He aspired to promote ancient Belarusian art, awakening our love for our national heritage. He wrote much of Belarus' past, including over 300 articles published in *The Encyclopaedia of the History of Belarus*, *Belarus' Religion and Church*, *The Grand Duchy of Lithuania*, and other encyclopaedic collections. He wrote about churches, monasteries, monuments of art and architecture, confessional associations and art centres. Mr. Yaroshevich worked with *Nasha Vera* (Our Faith) magazine on a permanent basis, while the Belarus Publishing House released his illustrated albums about famous Belarusian churches in Budslav and Grodno, to a wide circle of readers and travellers.

From 2004 until his death, Mr. Yaroshevich worked as a leading researcher at the National Art Museum's Department of Ancient Belarusian Art, managing to convey his profound knowledge and infinite admiration for the artistic heritage of Belarus. He personally helped organise such exhibitions as *Orthodox Icons of Russia, Ukraine and Belarus*, *Altar*



Alexander Yaroshevich (far left) has devoted years to the National Art Museum



At the exhibition



Works by A. Yaroshevich

Lithuania Rulers and Magnates catalogue, which is now being prepared for publication. In the last year of his life, he co-authored with Yelena Karpenko in preparing an album called *Historical Portraits from the Late 16th to the Early 19th Century, from the National Art Museum of Belarus*.

Mr. Yaroshevich viewed Belarusian Orthodox traditional art as the equal of that from the Uniate and Catholic churches. He well understood the development of Old Belorussian art, which combined post-Byzantine traditions of the Eastern Church, with those of the Western Church and the Catholic art of Rome, Germany and Poland.

Passionate in his study of miraculous icons of the Mother of God, as glorified in Belarusian Orthodox and Uniate churches and in Belarusian Roman Catholic churches, he created a book on the icons of Our Lady of the Snow. His last work was dedicated to the miraculous icon of Our Lady of Minsk, published by the Orthodox Encyclopaedia Publishing House in Moscow, after his death.

Mr. Yaroshevich will forever remain among those who have contributed to our knowledge of Belarusian artistic heritage, thorough profound research. His book on sacred and memorial sculpture in Belarus is being prepared for publication, while an exhibition devoted to his memory will soon open at the National Art Museum.

Film about Skaryna with open finale

By Alexander Pimenov

Skaryna film presented at Belarus cinema, in Minsk

The film gives a new interpretation of the life of Belarus' first printer, with the script written by Natalia Golubeva, a laureate of the National Literary Award of Belarus and owner of the Francysk Skaryna Medal. She notes that the film is one of various works about Francysk Skaryna, created in the year of the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing. "There have been dramatic works, as well

as printed, journalistic investigations. We've faced a rather complex task as we initially envisioned a documentary but decided to experiment," she explains. The a 26-minute-long fiction film focuses on a single day in the life of Francysk Skaryna, filled with drama, love, emotion, dreams and hopes. The ending is left open, to allow the audience to contemplate further. Too little is known about Skaryna and, in recent times, new facts have appeared about the life of the enlightener, which still need to be investigated. "We



Francysk Skaryna's heritage

haven't stated that he died and was buried in the Czech Republic, wanting to leave the film ending open," adds

Ms. Golubeva. According to director Alexey Rukovich, Skaryna should be perceived as more than an

engraving from history textbooks. The film attempts to bring him to life.

The screening was at-

tended by researchers, and members of the creative intelligentsia, as well as ambassadors and deputies. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Czech Republic to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Milan Ekert, in particular, stresses that we shouldn't forget the history of such great people as Skaryna, always returning to the printed word. The film features Belarusian actors Igor Denisov, Svetlana Zelenkovskaya, Ilya Yasinsky and others, while the role of Francysk Skaryna is played by Alexander Abramovich.

Magic secrets from conductor's baton

For the past ten years, he's been Chief Conductor of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus, staging a dozen performances, including *Cavalleria Rusticana* by Mascagni, *Nabucco*, *Macbeth* and *Il Trovatore* by Verdi, *Turandot* by Puccini, and *The Grey-Haired Legend* by Dmitry Smolsky. He has conducted the oratorio *Oedipus Rex*, by Stravinsky, and *Symphony No. 3*, by Gustav Mahler (of which he's more proud than his opera stagings). However, his personality remains a mystery to most listeners. A talented musician, mystic, philosopher, and wise man, the Honoured Artiste of Ukraine is a laureate of the National Theatrical Award. Victor Ploskina here reveals himself to us.

By Yulia Andreeva

Is it easy to be a conductor?

Conducting is a shady business. It's not clear what it is. A pianist plays the piano, a yard keeper sweeps, and a composer writes music. What am I doing? Simply, I beat time. However, for those who are serious about their profession, they're a guide, harnessing their own energy to encourage musicians to give all they have, transferring that emotion to the audience. It's a jump into eternity!

It's almost impossible to describe how this happens, to cross the line between life and death. We want to learn what's there, and the composer receives those messages from beyond, transferring them to the performer in the form of notes, creating music.

Music is some kind of religion?

Yes, if you understand and feel it. Music leads us out of consciousness, into the wild light. It raises us into the sky, illuminating our humanity, and raising our empathy. To help others, you must first improve and elevate yourself. A conductor raises others to the heavens, if they have enough talent.

Is there a hierarchy in music?

Yes, opera is at the summit. It's the Mount Everest of music, with symphony, oratorio and operetta beneath. We've been seeing a lot of gimmicks on the operatic stage of late, which distract from the music. It's thought that this is what audiences want but I believe they come to be elevated, to nourish their souls. We should give them this nourishment.

What skills must a conductor have?

Talent and conviction, enormous purposefulness, and self-confidence; these distinguish a true conductor from a simple man who beats time. Why is youth a wonderful time? Because when you're young you're unafraid. You go forward openly and gain great pleasure from how you live. As you age, you have regrets, and may feel you've missed out. You start to be afraid of what others may say. You may lack the courage to take risks. Artists need to make mistakes since we cannot take flight without a few bumps and bruises. We have no idea how much marble and clay Michelangelo wasted. Nobody has all the answers. A metronome is one thing. A conductor brings their personality.

Do you like to be in the public eye?

As a rule, I'm a deeply shy person. If you're an extravert, you want to constantly communicate with people, but that makes it very hard to hear the voice of eternity. I sometimes hate phones, because they keep you on a leash, keeping you firmly fastened down. A creative person is obliged to breathe the air of freedom. If a message comes from above, he should be ready to accept it! If he's occupied by trifles, he'll hear nothing. Therefore, I ask: do not disturb me from 3pm through until 7pm, in those last hours before a performance.

A conductor is in the public eye all the time! He should communicate, primarily with the orchestra. What occurs during rehearsals? How do you make them play well? To encourage musicians, do you praise or reprimand? What works?

There's no single recipe. Rehearsals with the orchestra are no different from a performance, and it's impossible to predict how the situation will develop. Any trifle can change its course. Just imagine: 80 people who graduated from the conservatory are sitting before you. Each represents music in their own way. Some may think the tempo too slow, while some lag behind, saying, 'Why does the conductor feel the music in this strange way? I'd conduct absolutely differently!'

You need to be able to cope with that and keep creative discipline within the orchestra. If a conductor doesn't have the strength to subordinate the orchestra to his will, it's chaos.

Sometimes, it's necessary to provoke, to anger a person, and take them out of their comfort zone, so they can show their true ability. If you're too relaxed, it doesn't help. You need to devote all your passion, at any cost, to create something of quality, with spiritual significance.

That is why true conductors are almost always oddballs and loners. Conducting is a talent which holds up the sky. You move against the stream. Those who manage to perfectly and politely communicate with their orchestra never achieve success!

Even where there is friction, people understand...

Certainly. You're on show all the time, as if being X-rayed! You can't lock yourself away in an office, where

nobody sees you. No. You're constantly on display. One hundred people are in the orchestra pit, and another hundred are on the stage, while many more are in the hall... You're very vulnerable. Any error places you under fire, so you instinctively try to defend yourself, sheltering from people. You aren't God; you're human! But it's not the right path. You need to remain open.

Staging a performance must be challenging.

Yes, but it's later that things become truly interesting. The director has done his work and escaped. Each time you appear before the public, and fill the performance with your own flesh and blood, you fly up! Preparation begins the week before the performance, and it's a very exciting process. You bring the score home and always find something new to fascinate you. You keep adjusting small details, in the libretto, with singers, or with the orchestra. It takes seven or eight productions to bring a performance to full maturity. It may take three years before you tire of a show. We try to rotate performances, to avoid this, as you do with farming land, allowing a period of rest. Each performance has a life of around five years.

Is this why the theatre stages a record number of performances?

Yes. We need to keep rotating the repertoire. It avoids audiences becoming bored as well. I'd prefer us to have fresh, interesting names. In this sense, it's good that, next season, we're staging 'Salome'.

Has the theatre changed for the better over the past ten years?

Yes, certainly. We've had an international contest of vocalists and a great many festivals, where whole theatres are invited. We've invited soloists too. Previously, there was nothing similar. Importantly, we've corrected a twenty-year-old mistake, when the theatre was divided into opera and ballet. We must thank our Director General Vladimir Gridyushko for this.

Asserting themselves as true masters

By Olga Korneeva

Gomel craftsmen bring home awards from international contest of textile puppets and toys, Craft-Bazaar, held in St. Petersburg

The contest and trade fair of handicrafts brought together dozens of masters from Russia, Estonia and Belarus. Besides unusual interior and household items, on show were soft toys, ornaments, clothes and accessories. Twenty craftsmen from Belarus took part in the creative forum and representatives from Gomel received four awards, with the Grand Prix going to Tatiana Gromyko's 'Around the World' composition.

Second places went to Natalia Reshetnik (in the 'Folk Puppet' nomination) and Anna Krivenkova-Galygina (in the 'Play Puppet' nomination). Anzhelika Khimikova was awarded a third-degree diploma in the 'Folk Puppet' nomination.

Participation in the contest and exhibition enables Belarusian craftsmen to show their skills and talent to an international audience, while meeting colleagues from other countries. The Belarusian Guild of Masters and Craftsmen notes that such events inspire the creation of new works and encourage experimentation and self-improvement.

Poster artists capture time

By Olga Korneeva

National History Museum of Belarus presents exhibition of posters to mark 100th anniversary of the October Revolution

The museum's collection of posters numbers around 17,000, uniting posters drawn from 1914 until the present. Most are political posters from the 1950s-1980s, published in Moscow, Leningrad and Minsk and devoted to foreign policy, the struggle for peace, the Constitution and other events from Soviet times.

Apart from political works, the collection includes posters aimed at protecting historical and cultural monuments, and promoting the achievements of Belarusian book printing and folk art. Poster artists covered such spheres as industry, agriculture, science and technology, and the population census. Weaknesses in the sphere of construction, health protection and trade are depicted in satirical posters.



Victor Ploskina

VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

Advantage is evident

Belarus' national basketball team wins 2019 European Championship selection tournament

By Igor Svitov

Natalia Trofimova's trainees have confidently beaten their rivals from Estonia, at Minsk's Sports Palace — 80:63. The Belarusian basketballers seized the initiative from the beginning and lead the score for the whole match. Victoria Gasper, who scored twenty points, was the most resultative on our squad. In its first B Group match, Belarus defeated the Polish team in Wałbrzych — 70:62.

Following the match in Minsk, the national squad of Poland suffered a frustrating defeat in Turkey — 73:53 (Turkey having previously beaten Estonia 81:56).

The remaining selection matches are scheduled for 2018, with Belarus playing Turkey at home, on February 10th, before facing Poland on February 14th. Two final matches are planned: in Estonia, on November 17th, and in Turkey, on November 21st.

The qualification winners of the eight groups will go through to the Eurobasket finals, as will the six best teams occupying second place.



Belarus' national team forward Yekaterina Snygina attacks

Latvia and Serbia (whose squads are released from selection battles) will host the 2019 European Championship.

Belarusian basketballers debuted at the European Championship in Italy in 2007, coached by Anatoly

Buyalsky, and immediately claimed bronze. From the current team, Anastasia Veremeenko was playing at that time, as was current head coach Natalia Trofimova. Twice more, the national basketball squad of Belarus has finished fourth at European

championships (in 2009 and 2015), being fifth once (2013) and also ninth (2011). Meanwhile, at the Eurobasket, in the Czech Republic, it showed its worst result, occupying fifteenth place among sixteen participants.

Yunost in super-finals

By Semen Bondarev

Minsk Yunost hockey players through to Continental Cup's super-finals

After defeating British Sheffield at the start of the third round of the Continental Cup, with a score of 7:1, Belarus' hockey vice-champion has outplayed Latvian Kurbad — 4:2.

Semi-final matches in Group D are being hosted by Danish Hernsholm. Regardless of the outcome of the remaining matches the Minskers are already guaranteed a place in the super-finals, scheduled for January 12th-14th, 2018. The tournament will be hosted by a super-finals participant.

Among Belarusian clubs, Yunost has achieved the greatest success in the Continental Cup — participating in eight draws. Its performances in 2007 and 2011 saw most success, with the Minsk club winning the trophy. In 2015, the Continental Cup went to Grodno Neman.

Europe and USA meeting at Minsk stadium

By Vladimir Dmitriev

Europe-USA athletics event to take place in September 2019, at reconstructed Dinamo Stadium in Minsk, notes European Athletics President, Svein Arne Hansen

"I'm proud to announce that, after many years, the Europe-USA athletic match will take place in Minsk, on September 9th and 10th, 2019. The event hasn't been held since the 1960s. In 2019, there are few athletic competitions on the calendar, beside the IAAF World Athletics Championships in Qatar. That's why we decided on the date. We chose Dinamo Stadium because it will reopen after a major makeover in June 2018. I'm glad we'll be able to use the stadium for forthcoming athletics competitions," he notes.

Svein Arne Hansen has suggested holding an international track-and-field event, for European and American athletes, and the Belarusian Athletics Federation is eager to organise the meeting in Minsk. For a whole year, the European Athletics Association has been working with the Belarusian Athletics Federation. Four representatives of Europe and four representatives of the USA will take part in each discipline. Svein Arne Hansen hopes that at least ten leading Belarusian athletes will take part. The programme is to include all running disciplines, up to 3,000m, as well as all types of throwing, all types of jumps, and relay races.

European Games mascot: how will it look?

By Vladimir Stepan

Over three hundred people recently caught a glimpse of how the 2019 European Games mascot may look

The Republican House of Youth, located at 40 Karl Marx Street, has been full of fun, noise and festive costumes. Two huge baskets of sweet apples at the entrance welcomed guests, while cardboard versions were used to cast votes for the favourite mascot idea, as displayed along the walls of a long corridor, numbered rather than authored. Fauna and flora of our Belarusian forests, fields and wetlands were well represented, as were diverse fantastical creatures. Interestingly, each picture featured fern twigs and mysterious flowers unseen in reality.

Well-dressed young people were arguing, laughing and taking photos.

In fact, it's hardly possible to imagine a major event now without this modern ritual. Guests were voting, while ladies dressed in white embroidered blouses offered cardboard fruits with numbers on the reverse, encouraging visitors to vote.

The presentation — initiated by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union — was light-hearted, but with serious intentions.

Crowds of journalists with microphones gathered in corridors and hosts from the leading TV channels were present, all reporting on proceedings. After studying all the entries, the Director of the Foundation 'Directorate of the 2nd European Games of 2019', Georgy Katulin,



Designs to choose from

announced, "We believe the country has responded well to the call to participate in this competition. Over a thousand applications were submitted and I can imagine what a difficult job the jury will have. Only some examples are showcased here today, and most are true works of art. Importantly, each demonstrates our love for Belarus, especially as we prepare to host the Games. We're expecting



SERGEY LOZYUK

Festival of the week



Carmen TV, by Ukrainian Kyiv Modern-Ballet Theatre, staged in Vitebsk as part of 30th International Festival of Modern Choreography

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 3rd December. *Napoleon Orda. Illustrated Encyclopaedia of the Country*
Until 3rd December. *Ernst Barlach and Käthe Kollwitz: Beyond the Borders of Existence*
Until 10th December. *Treasures of Ancient Egypt*
Until 12th December. *Lenin '17*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 3rd December. *In World of People*
Until 10th January. *Fashionable Century*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF FIRST RSDRP SESSION

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 14th January. *Minsk 1917*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 31st December. *Meeting the Master*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 3rd December. *Hat Presentation-2017*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Street
Until 6th December. *Ripples of Invisible Fields*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st December. *Francysk Skaryna and His Epoch*
Until 15th January. *Passenger from Nastrom*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 14th January. *13th World Miracle*
Until 15th January. *Robots and Transformers*
Until 15th January. *Museum-Factory of Fir Tree Toys*

STATE MUSEUM OF HISTORY OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 29th December. *Kandrat Krapiva: from Childhood to Maturity*

CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 30th November. *Miraculous Autumn*

PREDMESTIE

6 Storozevskaya Street
Until 30th November. *Visa in Vyrai*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street
Until 25th March. *Water Residents*

BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS

32 Nezavisimosti Avenue
24-26, 29.11. *Lighting Stars*

THEATRES

PALACE OF THE REPUBLIC

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
30.11. *The Sleeping Beauty* 30.11 and 01.12. *Tours of Leonid Yakobson Ballet Theatre*

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
23.11. *The Tsar's Bride* 24.11. *Laurencia, from Polotsk to Prague* 25.11. *Macbeth* 26.11. *Diaghilev: Gala* 28.11. *Turandot* 29.11. *Orr and Ora; Masterpieces of Opera Classics* 30.11. *Eugene Onegin*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
23.11. *My Wife is a Liar* 24.11. *Once in Chicago* 25.11. *Le Diner de Cons (Dinner of Fools)* 26.11. *The Tale of Tsar Saltan; The Gronholm Method*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
24 and 28.11. *Paulinka* 25.11. *Evening* 26.11. *Jeweller's Jubilee* 29.11. *Art* 30.11. *Local Cabaret*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
23.11. *Circle of Love; Husband Leaves His Wife* 24.11. *Lady for a Day* 25.11. *Tricks of Khanuma*

26.11. *As if by Magic; The Twelfth Night* 28.11. *Hot Mothers* 29.11. *Innkeeper*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue
23.11. *Wolves and Sheep* 24.11. *Abduction of Yelena* 25.11. *Who Laughs Last* 26.11. *A Very Simple Story* 27.11. *Master and Margarita* 28.11. *Two Arrows* 29.11. *Chekhov's Miniature Night* 30.11. *Mechanical Man*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
23.11. *Feint-Kruaze* 24.11. *Three Giselles* 25.11. *Wolf-Sailor; Maybe* 26.11. *I'm Not Ashamed; Adam's Jokes* 28.11. *Doctor Raus' Career* 30.11. *This Is All She*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
23.11. *Tectonics of Feelings* 24.11. *Family Dinner* 25.11. *Sanya, Vanya and Rimas* 26.11. *Fool* 28.11. *Love of Three* 28.11. *Bardo* 29.11. *Playing Happy Family* 30.11. *Overtaken by Love*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
23.11. *Belvedere* 24.11. *Mann Ist Mann* 25.11. *Little Red Riding Hood* 26.11. *Kid and Karlsson-on-the-Roof* 30.11. *Tartuffe*