



Beautiful uniform to favourably shade bright performance of Olympians

Eight days are left before the Olympics in PyeongChang, and the National Olympic Committee of Belarus has recently announced the team's line-up for the Games, also presenting their team kit



PyeongChang 2018



→ 11

Alexander Lukashenko has sent his greetings to members of the Belarusian delegation to the 23rd PyeongChang Olympic Winter Games. The message reads:

'Dear friends! Through hard fight you have won the honorary right to represent Belarus during the 23rd Olympic Winter Games in the city of PyeongChang in 2018. The entire country will closely follow your performance, cheering for you and feeling your emotions with you. I believe that you will do everything to achieve victory in South Korea. It will be difficult to accomplish in the face of extreme competition. However, your Olympic accomplishments will be more precious that way. They will be the best contribution to raising a strong and healthy nation, to bolstering Belarus' standing in the international arena, and an example for the younger generation. I wish you luck, good health and victories in honour of our Motherland!'



Intellectual border to reinforce security

Alexander Lukashenko approves decision on the protection of the state border of Belarus in 2018

By Vladimir Velikhov

The decision on the protection of the state border was adopted considering new elements of the situation, including reinforcement of the protection of the EU external border with neighbouring states in connection with the migration crisis, as well as the increased level of terrorist threat in Western Europe and continuing high risk of smuggling of weapons, ammunition, explosives and other means of terror to Belarus.

Priority tasks for border state services include the prevention of illegal access by terrorists, extremists and their means of terror, extremist or other criminal activity

into Belarus; prevention of illegal movement of smuggled cargo and other goods across the border; the fight against illegal migration and drug trafficking; and the improvement of infrastructure at the border and in the frontier territories.

Alexander Lukashenko characterised the situation in the border area, saying that, "You know what is going on in the European Union. You're aware of the situation at our eastern border which we recently discussed, as we reviewed our visa issues with the Russian Federation. The southern border with Ukraine is under the influence of all the processes that are of concern, first, in Ukraine," he said. "As far as

the Baltic direction is concerned, we've also heard the rhetoric in those countries who describe us (along with Russia) almost as aggressors. There are many issues requiring our response, but we must keep our powder dry and do our best to protect our borders just as we have been doing."

The Head of State is convinced that Belarus is an island of security on the Eurasian continent, though it's difficult to achieve. "We spend a lot on protecting the state border. We spend large amounts of money preventing all kinds of migrants, bandits, charlatans and criminal groups from reaching Europe and going back to the East. We perform an

important international function," underlined the President. "But speaking frankly, the international community, particularly Europeans, and Russians at that, could make a more serious financial contribution to our efforts to fight all kinds of trespassers."

Belarus is creating an intellectual state border, reported the Chairman of the State Border Committee, Anatoly Lappo, to the President. The Head of the State Border Committee underlined that in the improvement of protection of state borders the focus is on the intellectual approach and modern technologies, enabling officials to remotely control the situation and fulfil tasks easier than before.

Travelling to Goa and beyond

The Indian Embassy gives up to 70 visas to Belarusians daily, notes the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Pankaj Saxena, at a press conference, dedicated to the national holiday of India — the Day of the Republic

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The diplomat noted that most Belarusian tourists go to India to rest, including to the famous resort of Goa. At the same time, the number of tourists from India to Belarus is small so far, but citizens of this country do take an interest in Belarusian sights.

"Indian citizens receive good incomes and would like to visit other states, including Belarus," noted Mr. Saxena.

According to the Amba-



Pankaj Saxena

sador, Belarusian sights are interesting for tourists from other countries. Moreover, the diplomat commented on the attractiveness of Belarusian nature.

The Belarusian Lake Naroch has become the favourite place of rest for the Ambassador. "I like Naroch and I've been there several times, including with my wife, son and

daughter," said the Ambassador. "I enjoy walking along the lake and sailing."

The diplomat regards the tourist potential of Belarus highly, naming the unusual beauty of our nature among its advantages.

Mr. Saxena believes that Belarus, like India, should advertise more about its beauty to foreign guests. As an example, he named the Indian project — *Incredible India* — which facilitates popularisation of the country.

More intense movement registered

By Oleg Bogomazov

The number of foreign citizens crossing the Belarusian border rose by about 15 percent in 2017

Last year, Belarusian border guards enabled around 26m people to cross the state border; in 2016, 22.5m were registered. The State Border Committee acknowledges the increasing number of persons crossing the state border in all directions. For example, the increase was 15.4 percent at the Belarusian-Ukrainian border, 15.1 percent at the Polish, 12.2 percent at the Lithuanian and 7.7 percent at the Latvian border. 18.4 percent more people crossed the Belarusian border by air.

In 2017, around 9m vehicles were registered at checkpoints. "The increase was common for all directions: 22.3 percent (Poland), 20.3 percent (Ukraine), 17.6 percent (Lithuania), 9.7 percent (Latvia)," Committee staff informed us.

On February 12th, 2017, a five-day visa-free regime for foreign citizens was launched in Belarus for those coming into the country via Minsk National Airport. Since then, and until late 2017, over 79,000 foreigners came to Belarus — most from Germany, Poland and Italy. Overall, citizens of 65 countries arrived in Belarus last year — including from the exotic Panama, Nicaragua, Antigua and Barbuda.

Situation appears favourable

By Vladimir Khromov

The Belarusian Rouble exchange rate is close to equilibrium, the Chairman of the National Bank's Board, Pavel Kallaur, reported to the President

During the meeting, Alexander Lukashenko inquired about the general situation in the field of financial organisations and the banking system.



Pavel Kallaur

The Chairman of the National Bank's Board, Pavel Kallaur, noted tendencies towards dedollarisation of the country's economy. According to the Head of the National Bank, dedollarisation does occur within a broad money supply. "We're observing the reduction of the foreign currency share by 3.5 percent and now foreign currency accounts for 65 percent in the broad money supply."

Mr. Kallaur explained that last year saw an outrunning growth of loans in the national currency. "As far as the deposit market is concerned, we don't see the processes that used to take place in previous years dealing with the active reduction of foreign deposits. They have stabilised within the limits of \$7.4bn. We also have a good growth of deposits in the national currency, though it could be higher," believes the Chairman of the National Bank's Board. Mr. Kallaur noted that the situation on the currency market is close to equilibrium as far as the exchange rate is concerned. It means that the exchange rate of the national currency, on the one hand, ensures macroeconomic balance, while, on the other hand, it is convenient for exporters, enabling them to continue expanding their supplies.



By Vasily Kharitonov

Kent Harstedt's visit to Belarus is the first visit in line with the mandate of the Special Representative focussing on the discussion of recommendations of the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights regarding the improvement of the electoral process in Belarus.

The programme of the visit also included meetings with the leadership of the Central Election Commission, the House of Representatives of the National Assembly, the Foreign Ministry, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the High-Tech Park and the Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park. Kent Harstedt was a special co-ordinator of the short-term OSCE observer mission at the presidential and parliamentary elections in Belarus, in October 2015 and September 2016.

The Belarusian side is ready to discuss any problems and issues, noted Mr. Lukashenko as he met the Special Representative of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly for Eastern Europe, Kent Harstedt. "I want to reassure you once again that we have very good relations with the organisation. We're ready to discuss any problems and issues. You can ask any questions at all to me, to our authorities, or ministers. We will discuss and respond to them," noted the Head of State.

Mutual dialogue leads to better understanding

President of Belarus meets OSCE Parliamentary Assembly's Special Representative for Eastern Europe, Kent Harstedt

"There is one condition: Belarus is a sovereign and independent country, just like Sweden, your home country, and we will not tolerate being dictated to or moralised." He stressed that Belarus is ready to learn from other countries. "But just like any other country, we have a negative attitude to moralising." He also thanked Kent Harstedt for the understanding he shows in relation to Belarus.

Belarus has an excellent opportunity to promote many initiatives, Mr. Harstedt told journalists after his meeting with the President. "As for 'Helsinki-2',

there are certain difficulties because there are many considerations regarding the beginning of such a process. I think people

We have suggested discussing a variant of the 'Helsinki-2' process so that leading countries, which are members of the OSCE, will sit at the negotiating table and discuss further how to reduce tensions on the European continent

in many capitals in other states are thinking about the initiative at this stage." He remarked that the 'Helsinki-2' initiative has not yet been officially discussed in the format of the OSCE PA,

particularly in the Bureau or the Permanent Committee. "But I will inform the Assembly about the issue."

Speaking of the meeting with Mr. Lukashenko, Mr. Harstedt said that the conversation with the Belarusian President to some extent continued previous meetings. They discussed a wide range of issues concerning the elections and election processes and the importance of improving election legislation.

The participants of the meeting also touched upon interaction with the OSCE, including the involvement of Belarus within the framework of the Minsk negotiations and the Minsk agreements.

It was mentioned that Minsk hosted the OSCE PA session last summer. "We also discussed the future and I mentioned the death penalty issue. We considered a wide range of issues today," added Mr. Harstedt.

"Of course, we are greatly concerned about the problem of European regional security in general." The President said, "You're aware of our attitude to the current tendencies in Europe and you are also aware of our security issues, issues of war and peace. Thank God, we have managed to demonstrate this to the world. We'll continue be committed to such a position and we'll be a stronghold for the OSCE in the centre of Europe, as well as doing everything to bring about peace and order in our common European house."

According to the President, modern political tendencies in Europe and the rest of the world necessitate decisive joint action. "We urgently need to do something to reduce the negative tendencies which characterise tensions in Europe. We have suggested discussing a variant of the 'Helsinki-2' process so that leading countries, which are members of the OSCE, will sit at the negotiating table and discuss further how to reduce tensions on the European continent. 'Helsinki-2' is clear and understandable and will be a continuation of the process which has begun."

The task isn't easy, but the potential is great

By Alexey Fedosov

The President of Belarus discusses the development of Belarusian-Pakistani links as he met the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Masood Khan Raja, on the occasion of his completing his diplomatic mission in the country

The diplomat said that it was an honour for him to work in Belarus. "During my tenure as ambassador I received every

assistance from the Belarusian leadership," he said. The Ambassador stressed the important role of the two leaders in the promotion of Belarusian-Pakistani co-operation.

The high level of Belarusian-Pakistani political ties is a foundation for the development of trade and economic collaboration, noted Alexander Lukashenko during his meeting with the Ambassador.

The President warmly thanked the diplomat for his contribution to the development of friendly Belarusian-Pakistani

ties. Mr. Lukashenko also remarked that he also maintains very good contacts with the leadership of Pakistan and expressed the hope that they will have a chance to meet once again and discuss the prospects for developing bilateral contacts. "We have ambitious tasks in mind. We have created the foundation of our relations and now we need to bolster our trade and economic links," stressed the President. "We have concrete goals. We need to do our best to exceed the \$1 billion level of bilateral trade. There is huge potential. We just

need to work on it. We appreciate the efforts of our friends in Pakistan. I want to assure you that we will also do our best to achieve this goal."

Moreover, the Head of State emphasised that Belarus will always be a reliable friend for Pakistan despite any global cataclysms. "Pass on to the Pakistani leadership that we are committed to our agreements despite any world contradictions. Our relations will be as they have been before — dynamically developing."

The meeting focused on the



Masood Khan Raja

entire spectrum of developing Belarus-Pakistani relations, including in the framework of the forthcoming large-scale business forum in Tajikistan in 2018.

Sphere which obviously requires closest attention

Alexander Lukashenko, demanded the imposition of strict controls on medicines during his visit to the Minskintercaps pharmaceutical enterprise in the capital. The President compared the issue to the circulation of alcohol or tobacco where a strong policy and control from the state are also important. “This matter is very serious,” he emphasised.

By Vasily Kharitonov

Alexander Lukashenko set out clear aims to create a transparent state dealing with the production, circulation and sales of medicines abroad and on the domestic market. “Within the first six months of this year, a monopolised system of production and sale of domestic and imported medicines must be created.” He underlined the fact that he is referring to state control rather than direct interference in processes. At the same time, the challenge is set to finally settle the problem of intermediation both in the pharmaceutical industry and in other areas. This has a direct influence on prices while also unfortunately creating conditions for fraudulent goods.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that in each case, the decision on whether to use intermediaries should be adopted at a high level — a signature of a minister or a governor is necessary. They will then assume the responsibility for this if the controlling structures have any questions. In this respect, the President drew special attention to the pricing of medicines, stressing that the prices for products should be adequate and not overinflated. “I would like you to keep track of them on your own, not only on the instructions of the President. It is never good when the special services are asked to deal with prices,” he noted.

During the visit to the com-



Medicine production at Minskintercaps pharmaceutical enterprise

pany, Mr. Lukashenko said that Belarusian pharmaceutical manufacturers need to achieve parity in terms of supplies to foreign markets and domestic sales. “We need to achieve a 50/50 ratio and make sure that the domestic market is growing.” As the Head of State reported, Belarus exported medicines worth about \$150m last year. According to preliminary estimates, last year’s pharmaceutical output amounted to Br1bn, which is equivalent to more than \$500m.

The President also inquired about the production of domestic medicines, the operation of

this sector in general, the existing procedure for the procurement of foreign medicines and the current competitive environment. He received detailed reports on the operation of the Belpharmprom Holding Company and its subsidiaries and was also briefed on progress made to develop the pharmaceutical industry and supply the domestic market with Belarusian-made medicines. During the visit, he discussed the implementation of investment projects to modernise Belarus’ pharmaceutical industry, including at Minskintercaps enterprise, as well as the finan-

cial and economic state and development prospects for this sector.

The President learned more about new medicines made at domestic companies, visited the manufacturing areas of Minskintercaps and medicine quality control laboratories. It was noted that methodical work to modernise and upgrade the technical capabilities of pharmaceutical companies is being conducted, alongside the establishment of new ventures to produce import-substituting medicines. As many as 776 new pharmaceuticals were registered and entered production in

Belarus over the last five years. The Belarusian companies completed 30 projects worth a total of \$250 million (including \$56 million in FDI on a net basis). The domestic pharmaceutical companies are also active players on the foreign markets.

The implementation of investment and innovation projects has helped the country develop a new highly profitable pharmaceutical industry that meets international standards of good industrial practice. Belarus has secured drug safety and import substitution of more than 50 percent of the market in value terms. Domestic medicines used in healthcare organisations account for more than 70 percent and more than 80 percent in packaging.

Over 1,500 trade names of Belarusian medications have been registered so far. They are used to treat almost all major diseases, including cancers, diabetes, cardiovascular disorders and tuberculosis. Among the primary tasks of the national pharmaceutical sector is to increase the manufacturing of innovative products, raise exports, improve its competitive ability and increase investment attractiveness.

As far as Minskintercaps enterprise is concerned, over the past 22 years, it has developed into a big player on the pharmaceutical market of Belarus. The company has created a brand and developed an image as a reliable and high-quality manufacturer.

Get the ball rolling for football matches

By Vladimir Yakovlev

Minsk buses replenish transport in Russian cities

Rostov-on-Don’s Teatralnaya Square has recently hosted a premiere: the first 30 Belarusian high-capacity buses were demonstrated. A Departmental Head from the Belarusian Embassy to this Russian region — Advisor Vladimir Neronsky — solemnly handed symbolic keys to these brand-new vehicles to the Head of the city administration, Vitaly Kushnarev.

Minsk buses have been successfully servicing Rostov’s routes for several years and recently, 75 more vehicles were supplied. They all aim to transport participants and fans of the 2018 World Football Champi-

onship (some of its matches will be held in Rostov). The buses will start servicing their routes soon, which will help the city to seriously mitigate its transport problems: each of these buses can seat up to 100 and replaces 3-4 minibuses. As a result, fewer traffic jams are expected in the city.

The comfort and safety of passenger transportation will also increase. Staff of the Minsk Automobile Works (MAZ) commented on improvements to the vehicles. For example, four more seats are added to the standard 26 seats in each bus. Moreover, air conditioners can now ensure the optimum temperature in the driver’s cabs. The floor is covered with an anti-slip coating, while the doors have a special system protect-



Belarusian buses in Rostov

ing hands from being trapped. Buses will not be able to start moving with the doors open.

Few people would be surprised nowadays by a set of three LED information tables inside a bus or a voice information system. The driver’s cabin is equipped almost like an air-

plane: it has a GLONASS/GPS system and on-board navigation with a communication terminal ensuring automatic calculation of the time when the vehicle stops. All information about movement and the technical condition of the bus is displayed on a 7-inch display.

Five cameras make it possible to fully control the situation in the cabin and around the bus. Moreover, radio communication with the dispatcher is ensured. All buses are equipped with German economical and reliable Euro-5 engines and the most advanced automatic transmission.

Rostov bloggers are keenly discussing the news, with Lyudmila Chikova expressing the popular opinion: ‘These are really comfortable buses. Let’s take good care of them to make sure we use these fabulous and convenient vehicles as long as possible!’ In turn, Vitaly Kushnarev informed us that Rostov’s bus fleet will be expanding; 100 more buses are expected to be supplied in the future.



Soon almost everyone will be aware of the bitcoin rate, just like the Dollar exchange rate

Roadmap high on the agenda

By Alexey Fedosov

Belarus' Industry Minister, Vitaly Vovk, has stressed the need to expand economic ties with Iran and remove the obstacles standing in the way of financial transactions, while speaking at the 14th session of the Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Economic Co-operation in Tehran

“Although Belarus and Iran have enjoyed good relations in the last years, our countries have not yet fully realised their existing potential,” Mr. Vovk said, as he met Iran’s Minister of Industry, Mining and Trade — Mohammad Shariatmadari.

The Belarusian Minister pointed to a remarkable increase in Belarus-Iran trade in 2017 and called for expanding co-operation in mechanical engineering, agriculture, medicine and education. He also expressed the hope that the Eurasian Economic Union and Iran will sign a free trade agreement in the near future.

The 14th session of the Belarusian-Iranian Commission on Economic Co-operation took place in Tehran, with the two sides working out a framework for bilateral collaboration for 2018-2020.

Worthy stability preserved

By Oleg Bogomazov

Belarus ranked 30th in World Bank's international trade rating

For the third year in a row, Belarus has been ranked 30th in international trade, in the World Bank’s *Doing Business-2018* Report, notes the Annual Review of Foreign Policy of the Republic of Belarus and Activities of the Foreign Ministry in 2017.

“The adopted measures are aimed at creating favourable conditions for doing business and have enabled Belarus to occupy high 30th position in the international trade category for the third year in a row, in the World Bank’s *Doing Business-2018* Report,” explains the document.

The Foreign Ministry noted that Belarus’ focus in the foreign economic sphere was aimed at expanding ties with traditional partners and mastering new markets, diversifying exports with the aim of achieving a more balanced distribution of export across key areas in countries in the EAEU and EU amongst others. This will make the economy more resilient in periods of volatility.

Is there real life in crypto-currencies...

Why miners aren't afraid of a two-fold drop in the bitcoin rate

By Vladislav Kuletsky

Mining reaches out

Years ago, young men creating algorithms in their rooms were not popular, now they are the latest thing in crypto-currency technology. Initially just for fun, life has now made these programmers ‘with bees in their bonnets’ some of the most well-to-do people in the world, and Belarus is also taking the lead. Our country has become one of the few where it will soon be legal to ‘mine’ crypto-currencies and even sell them on the stock exchange. In March, the Presidential Decree on the development of the digital economy comes into force.

It’s almost as easy to buy an entire technology ‘farm’ for mining as an ordinary computer. However, one will have to wait for delivery, since the market is currently experiencing a serious deficit and it’s almost impossible to find ‘mining’ equipment. However, it’s quite realistic to ‘book’ a place in a so called ‘mining-hotel’ — a specialised space where a person can bring their equipment and quietly search for bitcoin. There are those who are trying to bring the expensive equipment into the country illegally, and cases of smuggling of the devices have been already detected at the Belarusian-Polish border. However, the aspiration of Belarusians for crypto-currencies is unlikely to stop anytime soon.

Our businesses are trying not to let the ‘hype’ take over. Six months ago, one heard of single cases where crypto-currencies



Yevgeny Tikhonov and Moris Polnikov believe that future belongs to crypto-currencies

were being accepted by some legal entities, likely to be more of a PR stunt than a real business model, now however, the game has moved to a new level, with BelAZ ready to sell its machinery to reliable partners in exchange for bitcoins.

Advanced farms

Miner Yevgeny Tikhonov and crypto-analyst Moris Polnikov saw 18 months ago that the future belongs to crypto-currencies. Now, they have no doubt at all. “This area is very promising. At present, no other businesses exist that would give such marginality as crypto-currencies: 100, 200 and even 1,000 percent. Normal businessmen can hardly take these figures in. For us, everything seemed wildly improbable at the initial stage.”

Yevgeny has technological mining farms. Alongside bitcoins, he also ‘extracts’ Ethereum and Litecoin. He also believes in Belarusian crypto-currency, Taler. “However, it’s difficult to say whether the Taler has a future. Currently around 5,000 people mine it. Nevertheless, everything, including crypto-currency, should have a purpose and function. Now, the market is empty and there’s almost no competition, but the

situation may change.”

Even bitcoin is nowadays losing its position, because many large players have appeared on the market. For example, recently, futures for bitcoins have been introduced on the Chicago Stock Exchange. It means that people who don’t have coins can buy them at a fixed price and then ‘work’ for the reduction. Yevgeny Tikhonov warns, “Those who have big wallets know where the market will go. The market can be affected by buying coins and then having 10-fold or 100-fold profit in futures, because a future is a fixed contract.”

Seasonal factor

Crypto-currency exchanges don’t differ from the usual Forex exchange market. However, crypto-currencies are subject to seasonality. By summer traders sell them and fix their profit and then buy them in the autumn again at a low price. The peak price growth falls in May and November. It’s also necessary to understand that China occupies a leading position in the crypto-currency market, accounting for 80 percent of mining.

In general, investing in crypto-currencies is very risky, but miners don’t react to these fluctuations. They try to calculate the

further growth of exchange rates and hope for their long-term injections. There are two types of investors on this market: those who previously bought at a low rate and those who have come to the currency recently. The first are more inclined to long-term investments and will keep crypto-currency as long as possible. The latter have spent more to appear on the market, so are waiting for a quick return.

Enthusiasts aren’t frightened by the fact that there may come a time when it will become unprofitable to mine, but it’s difficult to calculate when at this point. We don’t know what the rate of the bitcoin or of other currencies will be, how much will be needed to get at least one bitcoin, so Yevgeny and Moris suggest taking profit from the current situation for both ordinary citizens and the country in general.

“This is a market worth trillions of Dollars. Whatever anyone says, people are now mining, and our country can earn from this. How do I see this? Belarus will be engaged in transit. Crypto-currency exchanges at international level already exist and they will start opening branches here. We’ll earn profit by taking a percentage for transactions.”

Delightful memories have been made during the trip

Talented children from Syria keen to study in Belarusian universities

By Oleg Bogomazov

“We’re very pleased with our visit to Belarus which will open new opportunities for our talented youngsters. Even though they are only schoolchildren now, they are planning their futures to continue their studies abroad,” notes the Director of the National Centre for Distinguished Students of Syria, Dr. Iskander Munif, during the children’s visit to the National Academy of Sciences. “We’ve visited the Belarusian State University. The children were given information about the departments and subjects taught at the university. Last year the centre launched Russian language courses (using the accelerated programme) for the students to provide them with an opportunity to study here. I think that in a few months there will be another visit, during which the necessary documents will be signed to enable Syrian students to receive an education in Belarus,” added Dr. Iskandar Munif.



Photo about interesting stay in Belarus

The children learnt about the latest developments by Belarusian scientists and met the leadership of the National Academy of Sciences and the Bureau of the Young Scientists Council. Visits to a whole range of NAS’ scientific organisations were also planned.

The National Centre for Distinguished Students of Syria has developed a special programme, enabling them to study in universities abroad. Disciplines include mechanics, biomedicine, IT and aviation.

Dr. Iskandar Munif welcomed Belar-

us’ openness to co-operation with foreign citizens, including Syrians. “We’re impressed with the importance that the state attaches to science and are grateful for the opportunity to visit the country,” he said.

A group of children from Syria are holidaying in the National Children’s Educational and Health Centre Zubrenok, in accordance with the agreement reached during a meeting between the President of Belarus and the Social Affairs and Labour Minister of the Syrian Arab Republic at the end of August 2017. The holiday pro-

gramme includes recreational, sporting, cultural and sports events. They enjoyed the sights of the Naroch Lake area and visited the National Art Museum of Belarus, the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre, the dolphinarium Nemo, Nesvizh’s National Historical and Cultural Museum-Reserve and Mir Castle.

During a visit to the Nanosy-Novoselie agro-tourism facility and a *Cultural Heritage of Belarus* tour the guests from Syria became familiar with the culture and traditions of the Belarusian people.

Some important rules are necessary to follow

Malignant growths have taken first place in the mortality statistics in many developed European countries

This is since the world population is aging. In Belarus, cancer is the second most frequent cause of death, after cardiovascular diseases. In our country, about 270,000 people are listed as suffering from cancer; around 50,000 new cases are diagnosed every year. As regards mortality, breast cancer leads among women in Belarus, while men suffer from cancer of the intestine, lung and stomach. Mortality due to cancerous diseases however, is falling — owing to improved early diagnostics and better treatment methods.

70+ year olds most commonly suffer from oncology disorders, but even young people should be examined once a year. To ensure early detection of cancer, it’s important to have general and biochemical blood tests each year, as well as having a urine analysis and ultrasound examination of the abdominal cavity and pelvis.

Every woman should visit a gynaecologist once a year and self-examine her mammary glands. To detect cervical cancer, a woman must do a smear and take an analysis for cytology once a year. A new method of liquid cytology is being introduced in Belarus, ensuring more effective early diagnostics. Women over 50 should undergo a mammogram every two years. In cases of first stage breast cancer, the effectiveness of treatment is now at 100% but if the cancer is diagnosed in its third stage, then the percentage cured within a five-year period drops to 33-35%.

Men older than 45 should take a blood test for PSA (prostate specific antigen). If everything is fine at this age, then after the

age of 50 they should be tested every 24 months, also consulting a urologist.

Screening for colorectal cancer is based on conducting a sample of latent blood or total colonoscopy under anaesthesia once every 10 years among 50-70-year olds, with the simultaneous removal of polyps.



only legally sold product which harms those who use it.

It’s also necessary to eat the right food. Some major epidemiological studies have demonstrated the relationship between the consumption of certain foods and certain malignant neoplasms. For example, eating fruit and vegetables reduces the risk

February 4th is World Cancer Day

According to the American Cancer Society, up to 80 percent of all malignant neoplasms are potentially preventable. Accordingly, it’s possible to significantly influence the epidemiology of this disease with relatively simple measures, since the main contribution to the development of malignant tumours is made by smoking, malnutrition and lack of physical activity.

Smoking is viewed as the main reason for preventable death from cancer. There is a strong evidence base indicating that smoking causes lung cancer, as well as that of the oropharynx, larynx, stomach, oesophagus and bladder. According to experts, a complete cessation of smoking can halve cancer mortality. Tobacco is the

of cancer of the mouth, oesophagus, stomach, colon and lung. It’s recommended for an adult to eat 400-800g of vegetables and at least 2 portions of fruit per day. In turn, an excess of red meat (beef, pork, lamb) increases the risk of colorectal cancer, kidney, breast, prostate gland and pancreatic cancer. The method of cooking meat is a contributory factor: frying, barbecue or grilling leads to the formation of heterocyclic amines and increases the risk of developing colorectal cancer. Excess fat in a diet increases the risk of lung, colorectal, endometrial and breast cancer. Consumption of omega-3 fatty acids (from oily fish) reduces the risk of breast, prostate, colorectal and skin cancer.

Lack of physical activity and obesity contributes to the development of colorectal cancer, breast and prostate cancer. According to experts, eating disorders, lack of activity and obesity cause up to 3 percent of all malignant tumours. There is clear evidence that physical activity increases life expectancy, quality of life and reduces the risk of developing cancer. In addition, several studies have demonstrated improved treatment outcomes for patients undergoing chemotherapy under the influence of physical exercise. Studies show that moderate physical activity at least 30 minutes a day can provide a greater protective effect than more intense exercise.

More evidence is now being provided that the survival rate for malignant tumours depends on the state of the body’s defences (immunity, psychological stability, lifestyle). Stressful situations reduce survival and increase mortality from cancer. Moreover, low resistance to stress, emotional distress, depression and poor quality of life can lead to the disease and its unfavourable development.

The widespread introduction of early diagnosis and screening of malignant neoplasms is a priority task for Belarusian medicine. Work is underway to introduce organised screening of breast and cervical cancer and prostate cancer in the general treatment network. Jointly with the Health Ministry, work is underway to create an infrastructure for screening colorectal cancer. An important direction of the work is the formation of a responsible attitude towards the health of the population.

By Tatiana Zhukova,
doctor of highest category, D.M. Ph.D.

Running helps combat ageing

Stepan Shalaev will soon celebrate his 76th birthday but age is no hindrance to his annual participation in marathons. He regularly covers many kilometres, at competitions in Belarus and abroad, running about 33,000 kilometres across various marathons. The Novopolotsk athlete shares his secrets of endurance, telling us how it's possible to cover 2,000km and why each long-distance runner must understand the essentials of good health.

By Yulia Matuzova

Hobby with sneakers

Stepan Shalaev has been fond of exercise since childhood, skiing and then taking part in biathlon events. He began running as a student, while studying at the Moscow Aviation Institute, where he defended his thesis.

"Everything started with my runs while revising for exams. It's difficult to read textbooks and learn notes without a break," Stepan explains. "So, I decided to study for only two-three hours at a time, before running several laps at the stadium. It gave me a break from my studies."

Stepan gradually began to increase his distance and discovered how much pleasure it gave him. He ran his first marathon in 1983 and has now participated in over 150 major running competitions, including 1,000km and 2,000km distances. Stepan has recorded all his achievements and is now digitising them.

Kilometres of roads

Stepan covered 2,000km in Chisinau, in 2004, when he was 62, during an open-air marathon, where each lap around the lake covered 2km. He spent 27 days covering the whole distance, of about a thousand laps. If you don't know much about running, you might think this impossible but Stepan just smiles. The organising committee advised him to run no more than 50km a day, but Mr. Shalaev found himself hitting around 100km daily.

"Of course, it wasn't easy. Nights in Moldova aren't very warm, and you need to sleep. After running my daily distance, I'd put on all my clothes to stay warm, and sleep in a tent for a few hours. I ate and drank while running. Actually, it was amazing. Once you get going, it becomes easier."

Stamina secrets

To ensure that his knees don't ache while running, Mr. Shalaev does warm-up exercises, lying on his back and cycling. He stresses that, in



Stepan Shalaev and his awards

order to avoid health problems during long-distance races, you need to understand how your body functions. He has a rich library of medical literature and is never worried by sudden pains while running. He knows how to avoid injury.

Unfortunately, many people of Mr. Shalaev's age have trouble staying mobile. Speaking of his secret of incredible endurance and activity, he notes his healthy lifestyle and vegetarian diet, with regular exercise.

He runs every day, for example, to his brother in the neighbouring city and, even, ran to Athens once. "I went on holiday to Greece with an organised group. We were invited to go to Athens but nobody wanted to, so I decided to run, having a few hours of free time and wishing to see the sights of the Greek capital!" he smiles.

Better to run with company

Stepan's wife, Lina, always supports him, accompanying him on his races. They long ago began training together, as his wife preferred to do that rather than to stay at home alone. During one run, Mr. Shalaev noticed that Lina was running nearby. "It's hard to believe: her first extreme competition was a 100km race! Nobody starts with such a long distance but my wife dared to," he says proudly. She often wins prizes in competitions, including finishing second at the Russian Championship.

"Owing to running, I'm full of energy," admits Stepan. "I don't suggest that all pensioners run marathons but I do highly recommend devoting an hour or two to physical exercise daily. Instead of spending on medicine, buy delicious fruits and vegetables!"

Each coin is a real treasure

By Natalia Ivanova

The numismatic collection of the National History Museum has recently been replenished with a set of commemorative coins from the *Skaryna's Path* series — one of the most significant acquisitions of the last year. These coins are devoted to the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing and were put into circulation by the National Bank over the last three years.

The coins feature six cities: Polotsk, Krakow, Padua, Venice, Prague and Vilnius; all of them played a major role in Skaryna's life and work, relating to his translation and printing of the Bible. The coins depict not only ancient drawings of these settlements, but also relevant signs and symbols. For example, the famous Town Hall clock is featured on the Prague coin; it is a true symbol of the city and represents the highest point of Skaryna's creative forces. To make the dial discs with the set astronomical time, the position of the Sun and Moon phases on August 6th, 1517 (the day when Skaryna's first book was published), the designers asked professional astronomers for help.



Coin from Skaryna's Path series

In addition, the coins show the *Book of Books* in Skaryna's creative and textual interpretation: the beauty of the fonts, a variety of prints and sophisticated décor are depicted. Incredibly, all these are put onto a tiny coin. This is real jewellers' work!

It's all about eye-catching photos

Around 15,000 photographs and four years of work have resulted in a Vitebsk photographer Yuri Velitchenko creating an incredibly beautiful and eye-catching video about our country. It's unusual in being created in time-lapse format (a technique of taking a sequence of frames at set intervals to record changes that take place slowly over time.) It's available on YouTube and has earned more than 60,000 views over several days.

By Olga Korneeva

"Initially I didn't plan to cover the whole country; I was



Yuri Velitchenko's photo

intending to show only the Vitebsk Region. However, I was invited to Minsk and took some good shots. Afterwards Brest, Grodno and Polotsk fol-

lowed, thus increasing my photographic material and I thought why not make a beautiful video about my native country and its nature? It even has photos of

the polar lights in the sky over Belarus."

As far as the music is concerned, at first Yuri was hoping to find a suitable track on

the Internet but couldn't find a melody in the folk style. The enthusiast asked his friend and soundman Alexander Yuriev, to write the lyrical and spectacular piece of music.

"The video was not done to broadcast abroad or take part in a competition," explains its author. "It is for us Belarusians, so that we can see our native place from another angle. Just like any other creative professional, I'm pleased that my work has been noticed," said Yuri.

Yuri Velitchenko is 26 years old. He was initially trained as a railway electrician and is now studying by correspondence course at the Belarusian Academy of Arts. He hopes to become a cameraman and is simultaneously involved in photography. Last year, for example, he created *Vitebsk. Seasons of the Year* video and shots from it are now used by local TV.



German police dispersed pro-Kurdish demonstration

Several thousand people take to the streets of Cologne to protest against Turkish military offensive in northern Syria

Several thousand pro-Kurdish demonstrators took to the streets of Cologne in Germany last Saturday to protest against the Turkish military offensive in northern Syria, and demand that the German government refrain from arms deals with Turkey.

The German government came under fire for selling mili-

tary equipment to NATO ally Turkey, after it became known Turkey was using German-built Leopard tanks in its drive against Kurdish fighters in northern Syria.

Turkey had been pushing for upgrades to those tanks to protect against mines, but German Foreign Minister Sigmar Gabriel said

any decisions on 'critical projects' would have to wait until his Social Democrats come to a coalition agreement with Chancellor Angela Merkel's Union bloc.

The demonstration was organised by the Kurdish umbrella organisation Nav-Dem, which Germany's domestic intelligence service considers close to the

banned Kurdistan Workers' Party, the PKK.

Cologne police, which initially said about 7,000 protesters took to the streets with over 20,000 expected throughout the day, mobilised 2,000 police officers to prevent potential clashes between Kurdish protesters and nationalist Turks.



Survivors from the missing ferry found in Pacific Ocean

A dinghy with eight people on board believed to be survivors from a missing ferry in the Pacific Ocean has been found a week after the larger vessel disappeared, New Zealand authorities said

"The crew has dropped them aid supplies containing water, food and a radio and are currently trying to establish communication with them," Royal New Zealand Defence Force Air Commodore Darryn

Webb said of the survivors in a statement.

The around 55-foot wooden catamaran ferry MV Butiraoui with an estimated 50 people on board was traveling between two islands in the nation of Kiribati when it went missing. It left Nonouti Island for the nearly 150-mile journey to Betio on Tarawa and was supposed to arrive two days later, New Zealand officials said. Local authorities had been searching for the ferry.

Paris on high alert as River Seine continues to rise

Nearly 1,500 people were evacuated from their homes in the Paris region as the swollen River Seine continues to rise with water engulfing riverside walkways



But the authorities say the worst could soon be over. According to Michel Delpuech, Head of the Paris police body, the river is now rising more slowly and should reach its maximum level to around 5.8 or 5.9 metres.

The overflowing waters have led the world-famous Louvre museum to close a basement display of Islamic art. And tourist boats on the Seine have been shut down.

France's second city of Lyon has not been spared with

the meeting of two rivers to worry about. The Rhone River has reached a level of 2.82 metres far higher than is usual at this time of year.

Both rivers in Lyon have flooded after several weeks of heavy rain and snow with walkways by the Rhone closed for the first time in their history.

The Saone River level remains extremely high and the Rhone Alpes region is still on high alert, but with drier weather forecast the end should soon be in sight.

Belgians split over draft migrant law

As Belgian citizens sign up to host migrants and refugees, some politicians are pushing for tougher deportation laws. A draft bill says police should be allowed to search for and arrest unauthorised migrants in privacy homes. Public opinion splits.

"Belgians have their own choice whether or not to accept migrants and the police can enforce that but certainly not by going inside people houses. It's hard because what I say sounds inhumane, but NGO aren't doing a good job so I don't see any reason why this shouldn't be allowed," counters a woman. The new law would give police the right to enter and search private homes in order to execute deportation warrants.

Puerto Rican families had FEMA housing funds suddenly cut

Dozens of displaced Puerto Rican families were suddenly informed that their temporary housing assistance in Connecticut was being cut — just days after being given an extension, according to local officials

Dozens of Puerto Rican families displaced by Hurricane Maria and currently living in Connecticut hotels have been told they will no longer get federal assistance to pay for their lodgings, just days after being promised an extension to their temporary housing assistance.

Ex-Brazilian president denies corruption after court upholds conviction

Former Brazilian leader Luiz Inacio Lula da Silva has vowed to go on fighting to regain the presidency despite losing an appeal against a corruption conviction

At last week's hearing, judges also increased his July sentence from nine-and-a-half years to 12 years in jail. Lula can still take his case to a higher court. He is currently the front runner in Brazil's October presidential election but the court's decision is likely to have stopped him being a candidate. Following the ruling Lula told supporters that he has a clear conscience and will go on fighting for the Brazilian people and democracy.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Masterfully depicted Biblical story and the wedding chest appearing as unique artefacts

National Art Museum of Belarus presents a 17th century tapestry from a private collection and also accepts a wedding chest

By Veniamin Mikheev

The tapestry depicting Samson at the Feast of the Philistines has been displayed at the National Art Museum for the first time. This work is a part of the *History of the Old Testament* series of fabrics made in Parisian workshops in the 17th century and based on designs by the artist Simon Vouet.

Simon Vouet was a monumental artist, a portraitist and decorator. In 1630, he became the first painter of King Louis XIII and successfully led the workshop of royal tapestries. One of the series of designs for the workshops was devoted to the history of the Old Testament; it included eight pieces. Legend says that 'Samson at the Feast of



the Philistines' was ordered by the King himself to decorate the palace interiors in the Louvre. There are several versions of the tapestry — produced by different French workshops in the 17th century. The work presented in Minsk, museum experts believe, was probably made in the Paris workshop of Alexander Comans, in the early part of that century.



Samson at the Feast of the Philistines tapestry

The story of the tapestry is based on the Biblical story of the Old Testament character Samson, when he fought against the Philistines, who enslaved his people. Thanks to his long hair,

Samson possessed great physical strength, but he kept his secret carefully. He fell passionately in love with the Philistine Delilah, who deceived him in order to learn his secret and revealed it to the Philistines. The sleeping Samson had his hair cut off and lost his strength as a result.

The Philistines seized and blinded him, chaining and throwing him into prison. In gratitude to the gods for their victory, the Philistines held a feast in the temple and ordered the man to be brought for them to mock. By that time, Samson's hair had grown a little and his power was gradually returning. At his request, a young boy guided Samson to the central pillars of the temple. Leaning against the two pillars supporting

the arch, he destroyed the building and all his enemies died.

As part of the exhibit, collector Yevgeny Khmelnitsky has also donated a wedding chest — cassone — to the museum. Pro-



The wedding chest

duced in 1671 by the masters of Northern Europe, it shows a new style of Western European art. The rectangular chest with opening top is one of the earliest pieces of furniture known since the time of Ancient Egypt. Early European chests are based on ones made by their 'forefathers': those chests were hollowed out in an array of woods and their form and methods of production

existed until the 13th century. After that, chests were made from strips of wood fastened with nails and bound with metal bands for greater strength. In the 15th century, master craftsmen from Europe created a fundamentally new structural scheme for connecting panels in a 'storage chamber', using mortises and tenons.

In most cases, the chests were portable and were used for storing valuable items and clothes. They were especially popular in Renaissance Italy when they were known as cassones (from the Italian 'cassa' — box, chest). A cassone was intended to store clothes, fabrics and linen, all the possessions a woman was given as her wedding dowry, as these were generally bridal chests. The cassone fashion quickly spread throughout Europe and craftsmen from France, the Netherlands and Germany successfully produced them.

The chest donated to the Belarusian museum is covered with carvings made in low and high relief from elements of vegetation, flowers, curls and figures of caryatids common in late 17th century furniture art. The cassone will soon decorate a new exhibition of Western European art at the National Art Museum. The museum's Director — Vladimir Prokoptsov — greatly appreciates the generous gesture of collector Yevgeny Khmelnitsky and his support in the matter of replenishing the museum with unique artefacts.

Documentary evidence of bright creative ambitions

By Alexander Pimenov

National Art Museum hosts press screening and press conference, dedicated to new *Contemporary Art of Belarus* project

Ten films of the *Contemporary Art of Belarus* project are ten creative portraits of our fellow countrymen. These include laureate of the State Award of the Republic of Belarus, Valery Shkarubo, laureates of the special prize of the President to figures of culture and arts, Konstantin Kostyuchenko and Igor Barkhatkov, as well as People's Artist of Belarus, Leonid Shchemelev, who is celebrating his 95th anniversary this February.

One of the first to see the film about Leonid Shchemelev was Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus, Boris Krepak. He greatly appreciated the selection of the painter's works and camerawork which, in his opinion, reflected both enchanting and unique aspects of the author's most remarkable paintings, whilst also showing the painter's studio and the hero himself in a sympathetic light. The musical accompaniment also made a successful background to the images: the film uses music by Johann Sebastian Bach and Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart.

As part of the *Contemporary Art of Belarus* project, a wide TV audience will have the opportunity to get to know the unique

style of Vitebsk painter Oleg Kroshkin, Grodno artist Valentina Shoba and the painter from Minsk, Sergey Rimashevsky.

Author and producer Oleg Lukashevich and second producer Alexander Alexeev (who has also made graphic designs for TV) have been working on the project since August 2016. They managed to capture unique shots of People's Artist of Belarus, Anatoly Baranovsky, and Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus, Vladimir Kozhukh, who died in 2017. Today these pictures are precious as historical documentary evidence.

A separate film of the *Contemporary Art of Belarus* project is dedicated to church restoration in the village of Vishnevo.



Oleg Lukashevich (R) and Alexander Alexeev

Showing fresco paintings, sculptural compositions and mosaics for icons, the film demonstrates a comprehensive approach towards the restoration of the traditions of sacred art by young painters Gleb Otchik, Polina Omelyanovich and Konstantin Kostyuchenko.

Priobank is a partner of the *Contemporary Art of Belarus* project; the bank has been collecting for many years one of

the country's largest corporate collections of works of contemporary Belarusian art.

On January 24th, the socio-cultural channel of Beltelecompany premiered the TV series of Oleg Lukashevich — *Contemporary Art of Belarus* — familiarising TV viewers with the outstanding domestic painters of the 21st century. The first series was dedicated to Valery Shkarubo.



January Musical Evenings in Brest

City over the River Bug hosts 30th international festival of classical music



By Valentina Kozlovich

Cultural capitals around the world are in envy of the scale of this festival, which includes five musical evenings and two concerts, alongside 500 musicians from 13 countries.

We asked the director, artistic leader and chief producer of the festival, Honoured Figure of Arts of Belarus, Lilia Batoryeva, to recall the best moments in the history of the musical forum which was once 'blessed' by maestro Svyatoslav Richter.

"Svyatoslav Richter performed in Brest many times and was greatly admired; he believed that the Brest audience was at one with him during his performance of the most complex works. We calculated that, in its more than 30-year-long history, around 7,000 musicians and singers from 36 countries took part in these 'evenings'. I'm happy that the people of Brest have been able to hear so many great personalities, such as People's Artist of the USSR, Zurab Sotkilava. One of the concerts was also conducted by People's Artist of Russia, Svyatoslav Belza; unfortunately, some of these personalities are no longer with us. People's Artist of Russia, Lyudmila Lyadova, and People's Artist of the USSR Irina Bogacheva have also been to Brest; unfortunately, the latter has had to cancel her

concert at the current festival because of the state of her health. The Bolshoi Opera Theatre soloist Anna Aglatova was also warmly welcomed at the forum; she has taken part in the event three times to date."

At the current festival, one of the concerts starred young talented Russian, Anna Savkina. The violinist has already conquered Brest in the summer and, despite her tough schedule, arrived as promised. Anna performed Tchaikovsky's *Concerto for Violin and Orchestra* with the Brest Symphony Orchestra under the guidance of Alexander Sosnovsky.

The current event in Brest featured diverse orchestras, presented by musical bands of Belarus. The first day of the forum was the Presidential Orchestra under the leadership of Victor

Babarikin—who first performed at the festival. The Belteleradio-company Symphony Orchestra (headed by Alexander Sosnovsky) also performed brilliantly, as did the National Academic Folk Orchestra of Mikhail Kozinets, the Symphony Orchestra of the Brest Academic Drama Theatre, the Symphony Orchestra of the Brest Musical College and two chamber orchestras — of the Brest and Lutsk philharmonic societies.

On the final day of the festival, the National Academic Concert Orchestra of Belarus, under the guidance of Mikhail Finberg, appeared on the stage of the Brest Academic Drama Theatre. The musicians prepared a one-hour-long jazz and pop programme from contemporary classical plays and compositions.

Symbolism of double date

By Olga Korneeva

Slovak Ambassador's daughter reads poems by Belarusian classical writer at Yanka Kupala Theatre

The 11-year-old daughter of the Slovak Ambassador — Michaela Migas — recently recited Yanka Kupala's poems in Belarusian, on stage at the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre. Her performance — along with acts by professional artistes — was greatly appreciated by all those who gathered at the concert on the 25th anniversary of the establishment of Belarusian-Slovak diplomatic relations and the 25th jubilee of the Slovak Republic.

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Slovakia to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Jozef Migas, noted the symbolism of the double anniversary date. "Slovakia and Belarus as a new sovereign state were established almost at the same historical moment. We are honoured now to strengthen the independence of our countries," he said. "We are Slavic states which have come a long way in history and want to build our relations to ensure peace and harmony."



Yanka Kupala Theatre

The diplomat also mentioned the complicated history of the separation of the Czech Republic and Slovakia. "Slovaks and Czechs have shown a good example of fair and equitable sharing — which is a valuable heritage not only for our two countries but also for the rest of the world," Mr. Migas added.

It's all in the notes

By Alexander Pimenov

Is it possible to conquer the same mountain twice? Contrary to popular belief, the Norwegian singer of Belarusian origin — Alexander Rybak — will attempt to do this. The Eurovision-2009 winner plans to repeat his success and has officially announced his intention to take part in the national selection for the Eurovision-2018 International Song Contest.

Alexander Rybak is to represent Norway at the competition and the singer has already pre-

sented a video for his own song, which he plans to perform in Lisbon in May. *That's How You Write* is a fun melody with elements of disco and funk inspired by the 1970s.

"With my song I want to inspire people to believe in their own talent and dare to write down their ideas and thoughts on paper," the popular singer explains.

The Director of Grand Music JSC — Andrey Guzel — represents the singer in Belarus. Commenting on Alexander's words, he says, "Sasha has composed a song and realised that there's nowhere else he'd rather perform it

than at the Eurovision Song Contest. Once again, he has found the passion to take part in the competition and he's full of ideas, looking forward to the musical journey. It's a great honour for Sasha that the Belarusians love him and believe in his success." Many of the singer's fans have supported his decision, describing his driving dance composition as one which, 'captures the heart from its very first chords'.

Nine years ago, Alexander Rybak won Eurovision with his *Fairy-tale* song which immediately became a hit. In the final vote, the singer scored 387 points, the greatest result in the



Alexander Rybak — Eurovision-2009 winner

history of the competition at that time. Over the past few years, he has worked hard — touring almost 50 countries, winning the Kjempesjansen Talent Show and a Grammy Award. Bookmakers

are already accepting bets on the winners of the Norwegian selection round, with finals scheduled for March 10th. Alexander has a good chance of conquering the musical Olympiad once again.

Beautiful uniform to shade Olympians' bright performance

Olympic team line-up

Biathlon: Darya Domracheva, Nadezhda Skardino, Irina Krivko, Nadezhda Pisareva, Dinara Alimbekova, Vladimir Chepelin, Sergey Bocharnikov, Maxim Vorobei, Roman Yeletnov, Anton Smolsky

Aerial skiing: Anton Kushnir, Stanislav Gladchenko, Maxim Gustik, Alla Tsuper, Anna Guskova, Alexandra Romanovskaya

Cross country: Sergey Dolidovich, Alexander Voronov, Yuri Astapenko, Mikhail Semenov, Yulia Tikhonova, Polina Seronova, Anastasia Kirillova

Alpine skiing: Maria Shkanova and Yuri Danilochkin

Speed skating: Marina Zueva and Ignat Golovatyuk

Short track: Maxim Sergeev.



Presentation of the Olympic uniform

Alexander Shamko answered questions about our medal plans evasively. "The athletes are ready and have been provided with everything necessary. However, as the Olympic Games in Rio showed, not everything depends on us. On the other hand, those who hope to win medals have shown quite good results during the season. It's now important to remain calm. It's not necessary to psychologically pressure them."

Belarus will represent six sports in PyeongChang and our main medal hopes predictably

rely on the biathlon and aerial skiing. These teams are taking the greatest number of sportsmen: 10 biathletes and six ski acrobats.

What shall we expect?

In comparison to Sochi, the number of doping tests expected to be taken in PyeongChang has increased by almost a half. The Head of the National Anti-Doping Agency, Denis Muzhzhuhin, states that the controls will be very tough. Any mistake can cost athletes dear. It is not the

WADA who will be responsible for testing: a new organisation established several months ago, will oversee the procedure. It has no experience of working at such major competitions.

"Of course, nothing can be guaranteed one hundred per cent, but all our team members passed testing before leaving for PyeongChang. Their tests were studied in a Dresden laboratory; everybody was declared clean. International organisations also tested our sportsmen, taking over 120 samples," the official added.

Third time championship

Orsha Viten wins Belarus Mini-Football Cup

In the decisive match — held for the first time at Orsha's Olimpiets Sports Complex, the hosts beat the current national champions: Minsk Stolitsa — 5:3. Viten's Roman Kordoba scored twice, while Dmitry Klochko, Sergey Dyadichkin and Georgy Tikurishvili earned a point each. Two of the Minsk goals were scored by Ruslan Lazyuk and the third by veteran Alexander Chernik. This is the third success for Viten in cup draws; the team previously won the trophy two years in a row: in 2009 and 2010. In turn, Stolitsa played in the finals for the second time; in 2015, Andrey Tolmach's team beat Viten with a score of 5:3. Andrey Skvarchevsky from Minsk Dorozhnik, was named the best scorer of the 28th cup draw — with 9 goals.

Agreement reached

North and South Korea agree that North Korean athletes will compete in four sports at the Winter Olympics

The North Korean Olympic athletes will be able to take part in competitions in women's ice hockey, pairs figure skating, alpine skiing and cross-country skiing, noted the President of the PyeongChang Organising Committee for the 2018 Olympic and Paralympic Winter Games, Lee Hee Beom. The decision was taken during the negotiations which took place in the de-militarised zone between the two states.

By Dmitry Komarov

The right to take part in the Olympics has gone to 28 Belarusian athletes — one more than four years ago in Sochi. The number however, does not always translate into quality. Sports and Tourism Minister



Alina Talay in victorious race

First international start is a success

By Viktor Khvostov

Alina Talay wins the 60m hurdles event at VI Indoor ISTAF Berlin 2018 tournament, showing her best personal result in the winter season in the final race with 7.89 seconds

Alina Talay managed to outstrip famous sprinters Pamela Dutkiewicz and Cindy Roleder from Germany, who posted equal times in the finals of 7.93 seconds. USA hurdlers Sharika Nelvis and Christina Manning also took part in the decisive race.

Another Belarusian athlete also performed in Berlin; Elvira German was ranked fourth in the semi-finals with 8.11 seconds,

just failing to qualify for the finals.

"This is my first international start in the winter season," said Ms. Talay. "I'm pleased with my win with such a good time. I have never run so fast during my first start [Alina's personal record is 7.85 seconds]. It's especially nice to win in such strong company. In Berlin, champions and winners from all over the world took part, all my rivals with whom I've have been competing for the last five years. I'm looking forward for the next start to correct mistakes and try to run even quicker. My coach is pleased with the beginning and we are looking forward to the rest of the season with optimism."

Owing to Alexander Hleb

By Sergey Kruzhkov

Lausanne hosts the draw of the first ever League of Nations tournament

Lausanne has recently hosted the draw of the first League of Nations and the Belarus national team learned its opponents in pool D which gathered the weakest representatives of European football. If our players manage to win in this division, they will receive a ticket to the final stage of the 2020 European Championship. Interestingly, Alexander Hleb became a key character of the draw since he was choosing opponents for our team.

In line with the UEFA plans, the League of Nations aims to add fresh air into the European football and replace friendly matches (which have already lost interest among fans) with matches of the equal level. As UEFA experts believe, the effect would be strengthened with extreme motivation: from now on, each match would be of a fundamental character since an opportunity to join the elite and go to the European Championship would be placed as the stake.

The tournament will be attended by all 55 European teams



Belarus once again to play against Luxembourg

which are divided into four major leagues (A, B, C and D), in accordance with the UEFA rating. In League A, 12 top teams will play. Leagues B will also include 12 squads, while League C will have 15 teams and League D — 16. Based on results of the matches, winners of four groups of League A will go through to the finals — to be held on June 5th-9th, 2019. It will consist of semi-finals, a match for the third

place and the finals. Winners of four groups from leagues B, C and D will improve their ranking position, while the worst teams will be sent to the lowest league.

Importantly, winners of all 16 groups of the League of Nations will get an opportunity to compete for four tickets to the EURO-2020. Each league will have its own playoffs consisting of one-match semi-finals and finals.

League D

Group 1:	Georgia, Latvia, Kazakhstan, Andorra
Group 2:	Belarus , Luxembourg, Moldova, San Marino
Group 3:	Azerbaijan, Faroe Islands, Malta and Kosovo
Group 4:	Macedonia, Armenia, Liechtenstein, Gibraltar

Shot of the week



Silichi Ski Resort — one of the most popular winter tourist spots in Belarus

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 4th February. *Olga Ugrinovich: In Co-operation with Nature* Until 11th February. *Poetics of Landscapes by Semen Domarad* Until 20th February. *Saints of the Undivided Church*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 17th February. *Dungeons of Light*
Until 18th February. *Greta Britain*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 15th February. *Valery Slauk's Graphics*
Until 28th February. Exhibition of experiments: *Science Museum*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 4th February. *Reflection* Until 25th February. *Lev Borodulin: Legend of Sports Photography*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 11th February. *Belarusian Opera Legend*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 18th February. *Special Photography*

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 14th February. *Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route — Images of Aboriginal Australian Western Desert Art*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 17th February. Exhibition dedicated to 170th anniversary of French artist *Paul Gauguin* Until 24th February. *Our Travel*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 8th February. *Between Hands and Flame*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 4th March. *13th Wonder of the World* Permanent exposition of Experimental Science Museum: *EXPERImENTuS*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

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

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

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

TSENTRALNY

13 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 4th February. *Such Different Winter*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
01.02. Cavalleria Rusticana 02.02. Rogneda 03.02. Three Little Pigs; The Players 04.02. Corsair 06.02. Macbeth 07.02. The Fountain of Bakhchisaray 08.02. La Traviata

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
01.02. The Swan Lake 02.02. Jane Eyre 03.02. Adventures of Kai and Gerda (The Snow Queen); Shalom Aleichem! 04.02. Town Musicians of Bremen; Wedding in Malinovka 05.02. Casanova 06.02. Blue Cameo 07.02. Sofia Golshanskaya 08.02. Cleopatra

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
01.02. Truth is Good but Happiness is Better 02.02. Viva Commedia! 03.02. Miraculous Rings of Almanzor; Circle of Love 04.02. A Husband His Wife; Tricks of Khanuma 06.02. Red Hot Mamas 07.02. A Lady for a Day 08.02. Taming of the Shrew

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
01.02. People of the Marsh 02.02. Paulinka 03 and 04.02. Kolyady Night 04.02. Local Cabaret 06.02. School of Taxpayers 07.02. Inspector 08.02. The Pinsk Gentry

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
01.02. The Mechanical Man 02.02. Anton Chekhov's Miniature Night. Continuation. Jubilee 03.02. Abduction of Yelena 04.02. Forgetting Herostratos 06.02. A Very Simple Story 07.02. Pygmalion 08.02. Nobody Ever Said Life Would Be Easy

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
01.02. Doctor Raus' Career 02.02. Suffering from Common Sense 03.02. I'm Not Ashamed! Three Giselles 04.02. Maybe 05.02. Cinderella 06.02. Lift 07.02. Quiet Rustle of Leaving Steps 08.02. Blue-Blue

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Square
02.02. House Upside-Down

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
01.02. Love of Three 02.02. A Man from Podolsk; Sasha, Take Garbage Away 03.03. Dowerless 04.02. Chekhov. Comedy. Seagull 06.02. Family Weekend 07.02. Warsaw Melody 08.02. Vanyushin's Children

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
02.02. Silk 03.02. Wolf and Seven Goats 04.02. Mysterious Hippopotamus