



### Green light for passenger vehicles

Alexander Lukashenko intends to keep a project on new passenger car manufacture under his personal control **Page 4**



### Environmental secrets

International Scientific Centre of Wild Nature Support — Krasny Bor — opens in Izubritsa village **Page 7**



### New address for old masterpieces

Minsk Gallery named after People's Artist of Belarus, Leonid Shchemelev, moves to city's centre **Page 10**



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

First Young Eurasian Scientist Forum in Minsk includes exhibition of scientific developments

# Young ready to drive science

Participants of the Young Eurasian Scientist Forum — *YES-Forum* — held at NAS of Belarus — welcomed with exhibition of developments, demonstrating occupations of our youth

# Young are definitely ready to drive science

Participants of the Young Eurasian Scientist Forum — *YES-Forum* — held at NAS of Belarus — welcomed with exhibition of developments, demonstrating occupations of our youth

By Yulia Vasilieva

Delegates from the CIS, Turkey, Germany and Slovakia have arrived in Minsk to present their ideas and projects and to find ways for co-operation. Minsk was chosen the venue for the first such large-scale meeting not accidentally: last year, the council of young scientists of the National Academy of Sciences suggested organising a large event for researchers from the Eurasian Economic Union, involved in joint and inter-disciplinary projects — an obligatory condition for participation. Close collaboration between scientists from Russia, Belarus, Kazakhstan and Armenia have made the initiative a reality. This year, the focus is made on material engineering, sciences about life and socio-humanitarian sciences.

“The development of technologies is primarily connected with new materials, e.g., nano-scale materials. However, the topics of human health and environmental protection are no less important; the whole world is concerned about them, since growing production increases human impact on the environment and is a reason for a range of diseases. Meanwhile, social sciences can help see points of coincidence and union for our nations, states, cultures and religions,” Andrei Ivanets, the Chairman of Belarus’ NAS Council of Young Sci-



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

entists, explains the choice of priorities.

Minsk displays only significant projects, many of which have been already implemented, including Be-

larusian ideas. For example, a gear-wheel, demonstrated by Andrei Glushakov, a laboratory research officer at the NAS’ Physical and Technical Institute, sparkles



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



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**Young scientists at First Young Eurasian Scientist Forum**

as if it’s new, though it has already ‘worked’ 200 hours under double burden during stand tests at Minsk Tractor Works. 150 ‘Belarus’ tractors have been already assembled with these gear-wheels and they are currently operating on the CIS territory while passing field tests.

Meanwhile, the Scientific and Practical Centre of Food makes special emphasis on

functional foods, created with participation of young employees: dry breakfast cereals — multi-grain cereals, crisp breads with probiotics, micro-elements and natural sweeteners.

12th international *Youth in Science-2015* scientific conference and a speech-session of the Skolkovo Foundation were held as part of the *YES-Forum*, presenting 20 projects by young Belarusian scientists, making claims for financial sup-

Audio and video signal across the ocean

By Nadezhda Ovchinnikova

**Cuba would like to show Belarusian information, cultural, musical and children’s TV and radio programmes on Cuban TV and radio channels, underlines the Chairman of the Cuban Institute of Radio and TV, Danilo Sirio Lopez**

Mr. Lopez recently met the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Cuba, Alexander Alexandrov, discussing prospects for co-operation between Belarus and Cuba regarding exchange of audiovisual information. Special attention was given to the signing of a memorandum on mutual understanding between the National State TV and Radio Company of Belarus and the Cuban Institute of Radio and Television, which should facilitate new opportunities for bolstering bilateral ties.

Green beauties for New Year

**Belarusian forestries ready to provide almost 270,000 fir trees**

Regional executive committees are working with the Minsk City Executive Committee to organise around 700 trade outlets selling New Year trees. The Forestry Ministry underlines that New Year coniferous tree varieties are grown within allocated sections of forest reserves, especially with the intention of cutting, and clearing particular areas of forest, to avoid power lines and so on. Sizes and quality of trees should meet set requirements of technical-normative legal acts.

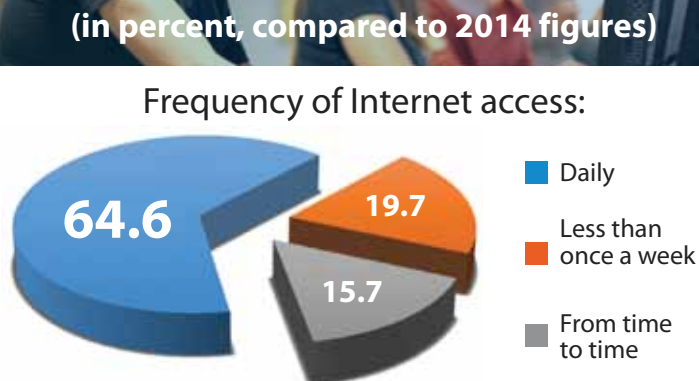
## Information space acts as indicator of modern times

**World Development Information Day celebrated widely on November 26th**

In our modern times, little remains unknown of our world, with the Internet allowing access to information as never before.

In Belarus, as of December 1st, 2015, exterior access Internet bandwidth reached 782.9 bit/sec (up 1.6 fold on 2014). In addition, the number of subscribers (individuals and companies) reached 9.7m in early 2015. According to a sample study, 59 percent of the population (over the age of 6 years) use the Internet. In line with the International Telecommunication Union, in 2014, Belarus was placed third among CIS in this parameter. Most daily users are aged 11-24.

**Frequency of Internet access by users aged 6 and older**  
(in percent, compared to 2014 figures)



## Reducing travel time

**Summer to see launch of rapid train on Moscow-Minsk-Warsaw-Berlin route**

Russian Railways is launching the new Talgo train on the Moscow-Minsk-Warsaw-Berlin route, from June 1st, 2016. Talgo trains use wheel pairs which automatically change size, to allow movement from the ‘Belarusian’ rail gauge to that of ‘Eu-

ropean’, avoiding long delay at Brest. This will reduce time at the Polish border from 2 hours, to just 28 minutes (calculated from entrance to Brest station until departure to the state border, including border procedures).

Total travel time between Moscow and Berlin will then be 19 hours.

## Techno-park jointly set up by two states

The State Science and Technology Committee of Belarus and the Russian Federation’s Education and Science Ministry are considering setting up a Belarusian-Russian techno-park, as discussed during a joint session of representatives of the Committee and

the Ministry, in Moscow. Around three or four serious projects are being scrutinised in the spheres of space research, biotechnologies, and other breakthrough research areas, and a forum for young Belarusian and Russian scientists is planned for 2016.

# All religions promoting calm and stability to be given support

By Vasily Kharitonov

**Belarus to continue establishing close ties with Vatican, notes Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting Apostolic Nuncio of Vatican to Belarus, Claudio Gugerotti, as he ends his diplomatic mission to our country**

The President has thanked the Apostolic Nuncio to Belarus, Claudio Gugerotti, for his sincere position regarding our country.

In particular, Mr. Lukashenko underlined, "I'd like to officially and publicly thank you for the mission you have conducted in Belarus. I'm telling you absolutely sincerely and without any diplomacy, that you have been, probably, the best ambassador from the Vatican." The Head of State noted that all Vatican ambassadors have worked well.

"Your mission has been honest, open, principled and, sometimes, extremely frank, yet always humanitarian. Some of Belarus' interrelations with the Vatican and some other states have been treated by you proceeding from the interests of Belarus and our people, for which I'm grateful," Mr. Lukashenko emphasised.

The President noted that much has been done to establish close ties with the Vatican and with the Pope, during Claudio Gugerotti's time in Belarus. "I'd like to assure you that we aren't going to abandon this policy. If someone thinks that I'll change



Alexander Lukashenko during his meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio, Claudio Gugerotti

my attitude towards Catholics, the Catholic Church, and the Vatican, they are absolutely incorrect. It's total nonsense," the Belarusian President asserted. "We aren't changing anything. We haven't courted those of Catholic or Orthodox faith, or any others. We've been pursuing an honest and sincere policy."

Mr. Lukashenko continued, "Some of our citizens are Catholics. They are believers. They are principled people and I respect their stance."

According to the President, every person must decide their religion for themselves. "I've been pursuing this policy for 20 years, and always will. Do you want to be a Catholic? Go right ahead. Would you like to be Orthodox? Be my guest. If you want to preach the Jewish religion, Muslim or Buddhist, we won't stop you. You're free to choose any religion; we'll never interfere. If you don't want to go to church, you don't have to. We aren't going to oppress any-

one or force them to accept any religion. People must make their own choices."

During his meeting with Claudio Gugerotti, Mr. Lukashenko stressed that Belarus will continue supporting all religions which promote calm and stability.

The President underlined his respect for Catholics, Orthodox and Muslim believers who reside in Belarus; he respects all faiths and religions, as long as they are not used

for terrorist aims, or to destabilise society.

"If a religion serves calm, order and stability in the country, we'll only support it, as you should know," asserted the Head of State.

During the meeting with the Apostolic Nuncio, Claudio Gugerotti, Mr. Lukashenko mentioned his hope of one day meeting Pope Francis. The President of Belarus asked the Archbishop to tell Pope Francis that he'd like to meet him. "I'd like to discuss so many things with this person, whom I respect a great deal," notes Mr. Lukashenko.

He praised the work of Claudio Gugerotti in Belarus, saying, "You've always supported us. We've done a lot to establish good ties and I believe, in the future, we'll do our best to organise a top level meeting with the Pope. I respect him a great deal. I follow media reports on his trips and statements and like his stance on the poorest people, and the fight against corruption, honesty and justice. I'm glad that such a person is leading the Catholic Church today."

Mr. Lukashenko added, "You see that we're doing our utmost to support our Catholics. We have a theology school, to train our priests (the Italians have been helping us). We've already discussed this issue with you. We'll welcome any priest wishing to arrive in our country with the intention of respecting our people and working in the best interests of our state, as you have always done."

## Minsk initiative for the future

By Maxim Osipov

**Minsk confirms its status as a comprehensive negotiation venue, gathering humanitarians for trilateral Minsk Initiative science and culture forum, for Belarus, Russia and Ukraine**

The *Minsk Initiative* aims to promote scientific and cultural activity in the three states and our common spiritual space, encouraging joint co-operation. Minsk has never been distanced from Moscow or Kiev in the humanitarian sphere: rather, to the contrary. Belarus continues to try and help settle the Ukrainian-Russian conflict, as Information Minister Lilia Ananich notes. She views the *Minsk Initiative* not simply as a new discussion club, emphasising, "This is a system of interaction for our three states. Scientific, cultural and information projects are helping to build a harmonious world. Belarus has demonstrated to the global community that it's possible to live without conflict. We're ready to help our neighbours, who need negotiation venues."

Truly, the fruitful work of our three states' humanitarians could hardly have taken place in Russia or Ukraine. Of course, either would have heartily welcomed representatives of Belarusian culture and science. However, talks between Russia



Science and Culture in Modern Discourse conference

and Ukraine could have strayed into sensitive ground. The Special Representative of the Russian President for International Cultural Co-operation, Mikhail Shvydkoy, has noted his appreciation.

He notes that the *Minsk Initiative* came from experts and academics rather than politicians. "Of course, politicians decide much but not everything. Relations between nations are complex, such that political decisions sometimes fail to penetrate the depths of people's lives. This is the first such major scientific and cultural meeting of the past three years."

Poet Boris Oleinik, an academician of Ukraine's National Academy of Sciences and the Chairman of the Ukrainian Cultural Fund, agrees. "We've been seriously tackling the issue of sovereignty of late. There are gaps in our relations, as we tend to concentrate on ourselves. This is

natural but we shouldn't forget our old friends. Other 'friends' salt these gaps regularly, to spoil them."

The *Minsk Initiative* is not just humanitarians' answer to modern challenges. It's the embodiment of our countries' huge contribution to the future. The *Science and Culture in Modern Discourse* forum — organised jointly by Belarus' Information Ministry, the National Academy of Sciences, MGIMO University and the Institute of Eurasian Studies Development Fund — approved the project. However, the Director of the Ukrainian Academy of Sciences' Archaeology Institute, Piotr Tolochko, comments, "The conference should have been entitled *From a Single Past to a Common Future*."

Ms. Ananich considers that Belarus, Russia and Ukraine cannot move forward without nurturing spiritual ties.

## Kind people are always appreciated

By Yevgeny Kononov

**Flow of migrants to the EU, resettling from Ukraine, changing the world migration dynamics**

Statistic show that, last year, the number of forced migrants reached 60 million, with Belarus welcoming people from Ukraine (these create the majority), as well as from Syria, Afghanistan, Iraq and Yemen. The Interior Ministry states that the migration crisis has not created a strong impact on the country but that it's necessary to be watchful, since not all arriving in Belarus may have the best intentions. Some have participated in armed conflict or have broken the law in their own states, so a screening filter would be desirable. Accordingly, Belarusian migration legislation is being amended, with a first reading at the House of Representatives approved.

One of the innovations of the new law is a shift towards a single system of accepting and studying applications for refugee status, with additional protection or shelter in Belarus. This will make it possible to cut the period of staying in Belarus for foreigners who lay claims to receive any form of protection without

any serious grounds for this.

The Deputy Interior Minister, Nikolay Melchenko, notes that the Ministry sees no problem in migrants' integration into Belarusian society. The number of crimes conducted by foreigners comprises less than 1.5 percent of the total, so Belarus has no plans to follow Russia's example of introducing an exam in Belarusian language, national history and law for foreigners. However, some checks will definitely take place.

According to Mr. Melchenko, most of the refugees arriving in Belarus come from Ukraine, and have little problem adapting, receiving employment, accommodation and the chance to continue education. So far, around 50,000 Ukrainians have received a residence permit for Belarus.

Andrey Naumovich, the Chairman of the Standing Committee on Human Rights, National Relations and Mass Media, describes the general attitude of Ukrainian migrants, saying, "All those Ukrainians with whom I've communicated in my district have asked me to thank our President and our nation for the support and help given. We're setting an example of how to treat a fraternal nation."

# Green light for passenger vehicles

Alexander Lukashenko intends to keep a project on new passenger car manufacture under his personal control

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The President of Belarus believes that domestic experience and achievements should be added to BelGee passenger car production. Speaking at a session discussing the implementation of an investment project to launch assembly of passenger cars in Belarus, Mr. Lukashenko noted his long-held dream to initiate car manufacturing in Belarus.

He commented, "I have a dream: I'd like Belarus to manufacture passenger cars in addition to heavy-duty vehicles, trucks, medium-capacity trucks, and tractors. The cars should meet expected modern standards, to satisfy demand by corporations and individuals for Belarus-made cars."

According to the President, contemporary conditions make such a launch near impossible alone, especially as there is so much global competition, for instance, from Mercedes, and from Japanese and Korean companies.

He is keen to find a partner ready to help Belarus on this path, combining domestic and foreign technologies. He underlines, "The car must offer advantages in quality and price."

The People's Republic of China seems a likely ally, being a world leader in this sphere. The project to assemble Geely cars in Belarus is a convincing argument, with some components being supplied domestically.

The President wishes to

see a Belarusian car assembly project, aided by Chinese technologies but asserts that no 'replicas' are planned. Rather, he wishes the nation to bring its experience of assembling and making trucks and vehicle components to bear, making use of best practices. He believes that the National Academy of Sciences of

Belarus will be able to assure domestic buyers of good quality as well as affordability, especially since the enterprise and after-sales service will be located in the country. "We cannot know whether Belarusians will buy our cars or will opt for more expensive, better known brands from abroad; this is the number one ques-

begin in January and February. The first phase of the plant should launch by the end of 2016, and, in 2017, it should produce 60,000 cars.

As far as market assessment is concerned, Mr. Semashko believes that, even under the most pessimistic scenario of market decline, the plant can sell 50,000 cars

begin to find customers. In 2013, sales of Geely cars on the Russian market rocketed by 41 percent, while those of such leading automobile producers as Mercedes, Audi, Volkswagen, Renault, Citroen, Mitsubishi, and Honda dropped by 15-35 percent.

Today's share of Chinese automobiles on the CIS

duction cycle, with the degree of localisation reaching at least 50 percent by July 2018," adds the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus. He points out that many Belarusian companies will be involved in producing components, to achieve this level of localisation.

According to the business plan, as much as \$318 million will be invested in constructing the plant and internal infrastructure, while around Br320 billion will be dedicated to developing external infrastructure: roads, railroads, gas, electricity and water supply, and a sewerage system.

Once the first production line is commissioned, the plant will employ 1,285 workers, rising to 1,850-1,900 when the plant achieves full capacity. "These will be highly-qualified specialists who will work with state-of-the-art equipment and gain decent pay," stresses Mr. Semashko.

The Head of State has asked that costs be minimised in setting up external infrastructure, underlining that the Belarusian Government should oversee the strategy and prospects of the enterprise's development, while assessing demand and planning the manufacture of new models.

He also notes that the project will be under his personal control and has instructed the Presidential Administration and the State Control Committee to monitor the process of construction and to constantly keep him informed.

"We will have a good car," the President is convinced.



Assembly production at BelGee closed joint stock company

Belarus could lead the way for the new BelGee cars.

The factory is currently being built, using a Chinese loan, and should have capacity to produce up to 60,000 cars annually, with output rising to 120,000 cars once a second stage facility opens.

Of course, finding markets is essential, but Mr. Lukashenko is convinced that

tion," emphasises the President.

Mr. Lukashenko is eager to analyse the financial and manufacturing aspects of the project and listened eagerly to a status report on the construction of the plant. Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko, notes that equipment has been delivered, with installation to

annually. "This is the amount that can and should be sold in 2017-2018," he notes.

China's CITIC is the general designer and general contractor of the project, under terms previously guaranteed to BelGee founders.

The Government of Belarus is convinced that value for money, safety, and service terms will help Geely automob-

market is just 4 percent but should soon reach 10 percent. According to Government assessments, within two years, demand on the Russian market alone should reach 3 million Geely cars.

"We could sell some 250,000-300,000 cars to this market. Our target is 120,000 vehicles per year, manufactured in line with the full pro-

## 'Viking' gains speed

Belarusian Railways approves plan to develop 'Viking' project for 2016

By Alexander Fedotov

Belarusian Railways has joined other participants in discussing the 'Viking' combined transport train project, in Tbilisi, updating an agreement on cargo transportation. An action plan to develop the project in 2016 has been agreed, with special attention given to competitive tariff

terms. This year's level of tariffs is to be maintained for container transportation by Viking trains in H1 2016.

The conference in Tbilisi gathered representatives of Belarusian Railways, Lithuanian Railways (Lietuvos Geležinkeliai), the State Administration of Railway Transport of Ukraine, the Railway of Moldova,

partners from Romania, representatives of the Georgian Railway service, and operators in charge of the 'Viking' train service.

The 'Viking' combined transport train is a joint project by railway operators from Lithuania, Ukraine and Belarus, alongside stevedoring companies and the ports of Klaipeda, Ilyichevsk and Odessa.



Container carriages prove convenient

'Viking' is routed through Ukraine, Belarus and Lithuania, connecting a number of maritime container lines in the Baltic Region with those in the Black Sea, the Mediterranean, and the Caspian. Work is now in progress to extend the 'Viking'

train service into Turkey, with further extension to Azerbaijan and across the Caspian Sea to Kazakhstan.

From January to October 2015, the 'Viking' train transported over 33,000 20-foot containers via Belarusian Railways.

# Look before you leap

Belarus entered the external financial market not long ago but has already recommended itself as an honest and reliable partner, successfully servicing debts and repayment commitments. We have a modern economy and tangible stability but unskilled application of loans may disturb this stability. A careful approach is required, stresses the President.



By Maxim Osipov

From November 9th to 19th, International Monetary Fund representatives were in Minsk, discussing a prospective programme of economic measures with the Government and the National Bank, for IMF loan support.

While the money would be welcome, caution needs to be observed, as the IMF requires a range of reforms to be in place before allocating funding: reforms which can affect the most socially vulnerable citizens: children, pensioners and those working in the budgetary sphere.

The President clearly outlined his position, stating, "There would be no problem in harmonising the pro-

gramme proposed by the IMF, since it is reasonable. Sooner or later, we will need to act. However, the terms and consequences must be considered. I'm not guided by populism but nor do I wish to offend my people to please someone."

Mr. Lukashenko asserted that state social directness remains vital. He underlines that reform will only be undertaken where it improves the existing system and when we will be convinced that a rise in utility tariffs is affordable to ordinary people. He added, "As for privatisation, we must be sure that it will be honest, clean, open and, especially, competitive. Regarding raising the pension age, the IMF strongly recommends that we do so; as I said before the elections,

I'm convinced that we need to do so, and gave reasons. But I also said that we must consult with people. I've instructed the Belarusian Presidential Administration to find an algorithm. I'm sure that educated and sensible Belarusian people will support us when we have figures and facts to offer. If we don't act today, the burden will lie with our children."

As to whether an IMF loan would be beneficial, Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov explains, "We need to attract IMF resources and secure the best repayment terms possible: a \$3bn loan at an interest rate of 2.28 percent, repayable over ten years."

The Head of State agrees that the loan terms are good, being better even than those offered by the

Russians, and that the loan size is adequate.

However, dry macroeconomic figures pale into insignificance if they adversely affect social welfare. According to the Deputy Prime Minister, Vasily Matyushkevich, before taking a decision, we need to consider carefully. He stated, "We've under-

taken deep and serious analysis. The major conclusions are that we need to look further into the consequences of this programme. Various aspects are already evident but we need to return again to the issue of utility tariffs, which is a very sensitive topic. Then, we'll adopt a final decision."

## WORD-FOR-WORD

Alexander LUKASHENKO, President of Belarus:

We should act exclusively in the interests of our own nation. Even if the IMF doesn't support us and doesn't understand us, there's nothing tragic in this. We'll continue working with or without them. Our people and our state are most important, so this should guide our actions. Nothing should be done on the spur of the moment, or we'll risk damaging the country, offending the nation and destabilising the situation. We'll risk losing our Belarus.

# Fashionable flax in focus

Our ancestors used to say that gold is harvested after flax is seeded. Several years ago, the state decided to revive the former glory of our 'northern silk', for use by doctors, firefighters, builders, energy workers, fashionistas and housewives.

By Olga Kruchenkova

Modernisation began with processing: Orsha Linen Mill supplies 8 percent of the global market for technical linen fabrics but was in danger of lagging behind technologically. Now, over \$200m has been injected, notes Igor Yeshchenko, who heads the Range Development and Advertising Department at Orsha Linen Mill. He tells us that the first stage of modernisation has significantly improved the quality of fabrics.



Korelich-Len JSC finishes its reconstruction project



Flax harvesting in Dubrovno District

He explains, "After the revamp, our factory #3, which focuses on exports, doubled its production volumes. Our 170 new knitting looms produce fabric of European standard in width and quality. The finishing factory is simultaneously being reconstructed but is already partially operational, with new equipment being installed very soon. We'll be able to manufacture fabrics for premium clothes. However, the most interesting avenue is that of cottonised yarns,

## ON TOPIC

To ensure durability for your linen, observe these rules:

- Wash at no higher than 40 degrees, without bleach;
- Never spin, as fabric can lose its shape or wrinkle, making it impossible to iron;
- Dry flat — it will do so quickly;
- Don't overdry — especially on hot summer days. It's better to iron linen wet, using an iron with a steamer.

which are utterly groundbreaking."

Belarus is already producing fine quality, close woven linen, using a quality of flax previously used only for making bagging and hard thread. With properties similar to cotton, it's suitable for the sewing industry, meeting buyers' high requirements. Over 70 percent of Belarus' flax is of this type, but new technologies have made it possible not simply to process these huge volumes of 'less than

perfect' raw material but to use it for the most modern and fashionable trends.

Those who've never visited the Mill's shops may not have seen its soft linen bed covers and tablecloths, so popular at the recent Sochi Business Forum. Besides non-iron bedding and loop towels made from cottonised flax, there are sets for the banya, linen curtains and curtain lace. All are ecologically friendly and durable:

## MT REFERENCE:

Orsha Linen Mill is the only company in the country producing linen. Over 75 percent of its produce is exported, to over 30 countries. It supplies 3 percent of the world's linen.

an ordinary towel can survive 50-60 washes while those made at Orsha manage 300. Although modern producers aren't usually interested in durability, Orsha Mill views this as a sign of quality.

Tamara Volodko, the Mill's leading fashion designer, asserts that cottonisation has changed the face of flax. "We're convinced that flax beaten tow is no worse in quality than that made from long grain. Moreover, it has just 1.5 percent 'cockle' after additional processing, allowing less creasing. Jacquard fabrics are gaining in popularity and many private firms are using them to sew clothes. Moreover, diverse forms of processing make it possible to achieve the necessary effect with Belarusian linen," she comments.

Few could have imagined that the factory would come to master knitwear, but stylish scarves are now being sewn in the experimental laboratory, as are heavy fabrics for outdoor, and light companion-fabrics. In summer, Ms. Volodko's collection, featuring linen footwear and jacquard fabrics, received the highest award at the *Ples — Linen Palette* Festival (hosted by famous Russian fashion designer Vyacheslav Zaitsev).

The second stage of modernisation is currently in full swing, with around \$50m being spent. Mr. Yeshchenko is convinced that the firm is on the right path, saying, "Flax has received due attention, as is fitting, as our national symbol. Flax has great export potential."

## LETTER TO EDITORIAL OFFICE

# Today we reaffirm our commitment to protecting human rights

## Message on Human Rights Day



Ban ki-Moon,

Amid large-scale atrocities and widespread abuses across the world, Human Rights Day should rally more concerted global action to promote the timeless principles that we have collectively pledged to uphold.

In a year that marks the 70th anniversary of the United Nations, we can draw inspiration from the history of the modern human rights movement, which emerged from the Second World War.

At that time, President Franklin D. Roosevelt of the United States identified four basic freedoms as the birth-right of all people: freedom of expression, freedom of worship, freedom from want and freedom from fear. His wife, Eleanor Roosevelt, joined forces at the United Nations with human rights champions from around the world to enshrine these freedoms in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Today's extraordinary challenges can be seen — and addressed — through the lens of the four freedoms.

First: freedom of expression, which is denied to millions of people and increasingly under threat. We must defend, preserve and expand



### OUR RIGHTS OUR FREEDOMS ALWAYS

HUMAN RIGHTS DAY 2015

democratic practices and space for civil society. That is essential to lasting stability.

Second: freedom of worship. Around the world, terrorists have hijacked religion, betraying its spirit by killing in its name. Others are targeting religious minorities and exploiting fears for political gain. In response, we must promote respect for diversity based on the fundamental equality of all

people and the right to freedom of religion.

Third: freedom from want still plagues so much of humankind. World leaders in September adopted the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with the aim of ending poverty and enabling all people to live in dignity on a peaceful, healthy planet. Now we must do everything possible to realise this vision.

Fourth: freedom from fear. Millions of refugees and internally displaced persons are a tragic product of the failure to fulfil this freedom. Not since the Second World War have so many people been forced to flee their homes. They run from war, violence and injustice across continents and oceans, often risking their lives. In response, we must not close but open doors and guarantee the right of all to seek asylum, without any discrimination. Migrants seeking an escape from poverty and hopelessness should also enjoy their fundamental human rights.

Today we reaffirm our commitment to protecting human rights as the foundation of our work. This is the spirit of the UN's Human Rights up Front initiative, which aims to prevent and respond to large-scale violations.

On Human Rights Day, let us recommit to guaranteeing the fundamental freedoms and protecting the human rights of all.

**Ban ki-Moon,  
General-Secretary  
of the United Nations**



On December 4th, the National Library of Belarus building was lit with orange colour as a sign of struggle aiming to end violence against women and girls

# A city comfortable to live

By Yekaterina Medvedskaya

## National Academy of Sciences reveals which Belarusian cities are most comfortable for living and working

Of 134 cities, Minsk is not ranked first for comfort. In fact, the modest town of Zaslavl, located not far from the capital, occupies first place. Despite having only 14,000 residents, it boasts great entrepreneurial activity.

The seven criteria studied included population growth (particularly, connected with migration), monthly average salaries, and the proportion of people employed by private enterprises. The share of

the population denoted as economically active is also important, as are environmental and ecological matters. Distances to administrative, educational and cultural centres were also taken into account, alongside transport accessibility.

The Belarusian capital has been ranked second, missing out on first place perhaps due to high taxes and rental payments. Entrepreneurs prefer to register beyond the capital's borders. Interestingly, when similar research was conducted in Poland, Warsaw also came second, while the small town of Sopot, near Warsaw, took the lead.

The Belarusian 'top ten' features Fanipol, Logoisk, Smolevichi and Dzerzhinsk: all situated not far from Minsk.



Autumn in Zaslavl suburbs

These are followed by the regional centres of Brest and Grodno.

Small settlements offer geographical proximity to industrial and administrative centres, while being ecologically cleaner. Residents can work and study in the capital, taking advantage of its facilities, while enjoying a more relaxed lifestyle at home.

## Advice from Dr. Zhukova

## Fitness for lazy people or Nordic walking



*I often see people on a running track walking with poles, similar to ski poles. What is Nordic walking and why is it useful?*

A.Savich, Minsk

Nordic walking (walking with poles) is a kind of physical activity using a certain technique. In the late 1990s, it became popular globally, but it's been around for centuries. Pilgrims used poles to help them through long journeys. Wellness centres have been using poles in physiotherapy exercises for a long time but the modern version resembles the motion of professional Finnish skiers, who would train out of season by running with ski poles.

Nordic walking is also called northern or Norwegian and its secret lies in its simplicity, needing nothing but poles. The technique can be mastered independently, although you can employ an instructor to help you.

or ice, there's no need, as the graphite spikes create traction.

There are two types of pole: fixed length and telescopic, with the top part moving forward from the lower and then fixed in position. Both types can be found in shops, with thongs fixed to the handles in such a way to allow leverage without squeezing (requiring less effort).

The length of a pole is calculated by the formula: height  $\times$  0.68. For example, if you are 170cm tall, you'll need poles 115cm in length. No special footwear is needed; ordinary trainers are fine.

The technique for Nordic walking is simple and natural; just walk rhythmically,



Part of Nordic walking's popularity is due to its ability to help with gradual weight loss; it burns up 40 percent more calories than usual walking. Moreover, as you would usually, with hands and feet moving forward and back by turn, only more vigorously. Find your tempo through practice.

Nordic walking has so many positive health benefits, as it trains about 90 percent of the body's muscles, increasing tone and making your heart work. It reduces cholesterol and improves your respiratory and vascular systems, while keeping joints supple and reducing pressure on knees and the spine. It reduces the load on your waist, removes pain in the neck and shoulders, corrects posture, and improves balance and co-ordination, as well as promoting weight loss.

It appears easy, yet gives the heart, lungs and muscles a true workout. Nordic walking is almost unique, in being recommended to those both overweight and elderly.

You should see results in just 4-6 weeks of regular training, with more significant results evident after a year.

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

# Environmental secrets

International Scientific Centre of Wild Nature Support — Krasny Bor — opens in Izubritsa village (Verkhnedvinsk District, Vitebsk Region)

By Sergey Golesnik

The Centre is a Republican Landscape Reserve on the border of the Rossony and Verkhnedvinsk districts, and incorporates a hunting company run by Novopolotsk's private Interservice company. The northern auroch population lives here and, in February, the hunting company co-founded the International Scientific Centre of Wild Nature Support: Krasny Bor. This aims to unite efforts by state and public organisations, as well as commercial structures, to protect and encourage Belarus' natural wealth. Recently, an amazing event took place: the opening of the country's first private scientific centre.

## Interests coincide

The scientific centre is located in a comfortable two-storey guest house, incorporating a hotel, a hostel for staff and a laboratory. Andrey Faibich, who heads the laboratory, tells us, "We have everything necessary to detect DNA from animal hair. This is primarily important to conduct genetic passportisation of the aurochs: Belarus' national animal. As only 3,000 exist globally, all are close relatives, so we need to aim for maximum genetic diversity. Moreover, we plan to control the genetics of our red deer, to improve their characteristics by selection."

It's no secret that, at present, there is a misbalance between science and practice in the field of hunting, with obsolete approaches often used. The Centre aims to tackle this, as the Deputy Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, Igor Kachanovskiy, noted during his recent visit to the Verkhnedvinsk District. He promises that all possible support will be rendered, saying, "The Centre's key goals are in line with national strategy, aiming to preserve and ensure sustainable use of our biological diversity. I'm convinced that practical appliance of scientists' developments will help solve complex tasks at state level."

Alexander Dunkovich, the Deputy Head of State Inspection of Flora and Fauna Protection, agrees, saying, "Progress is impossible without science in our modern world. At present, the National Academy of Sciences and state institutions are working in the field of nature protection. The Krasny Bor hunting



Vladimir Ivanovsky builds a golden eagle nest

company is a good example of private capital working alongside the state. I hope other regions of the country will join us."

## Eagle habitats

The first event at the new Centre was a conference devoted to the Krasny Bor auroch population, and to the development of ecological tourism. Participants agreed that the Centre should not focus exclusively on applied hunting developments but should unite ichthyologists, botanists, photographers, film operators and ornithologists. The latter even offered a training seminar on building eagle nests.

In addition, specialists made reports and shared methods on making nests for birds of prey — including owls and falcons. According to ornithologists, this can compensate for the lack of natural nests and ease work dealing with birds' registration and ringing. In addition, observations indicate that they breed more productively in artificial nests.

The most interesting

## EXPERT OPINION

**Natalia MINCHENKO**, the Head of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection's Department of Biological and Landscape Diversity:

Jointly with Polish colleagues, we're discussing creating a trans-border auroch population. On our side, the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Genetics and Cytology is responsible. It would be great if the Krasny Bor private research centre joined us.



Andrey Faibich at his laboratory

## EXPERT OPINION

**Oleg Borodin**, the Director of the National Academy of Sciences' Scientific-Practical Centre on Bioresources:

We're keen to ensure that the newly opened private scientific centre works in compliance with a single state policy — meeting international standards. To achieve this, we're ready to support it in issues of expert assessment, including publication of scientific papers and development of ecological tourist routes.

part of the conference began the following day, when bird experts applied their knowledge in practice. Vladimir Ivanovsky — an associate professor at the Vitebsk Masherov State University's Department of Ecology and Nature Protection — took his team to the Yukhovichsky Mokh marsh, not far from Bolshoe Mokhovoe Lake. He believes that a golden eagle lived on the island at some time.

"I've not seen this huge, beautiful bird for the past three years but, jointly with our colleagues, we'll try to attract it to the site by building an artificial nest," he explained.

Three poles are used to support such nests, tied to thick pine tree branches and covered with pine boughs. Mr. Ivanovsky climbed 20m to secure irons and a belt, impressing everyone with his skills: next year, the or-

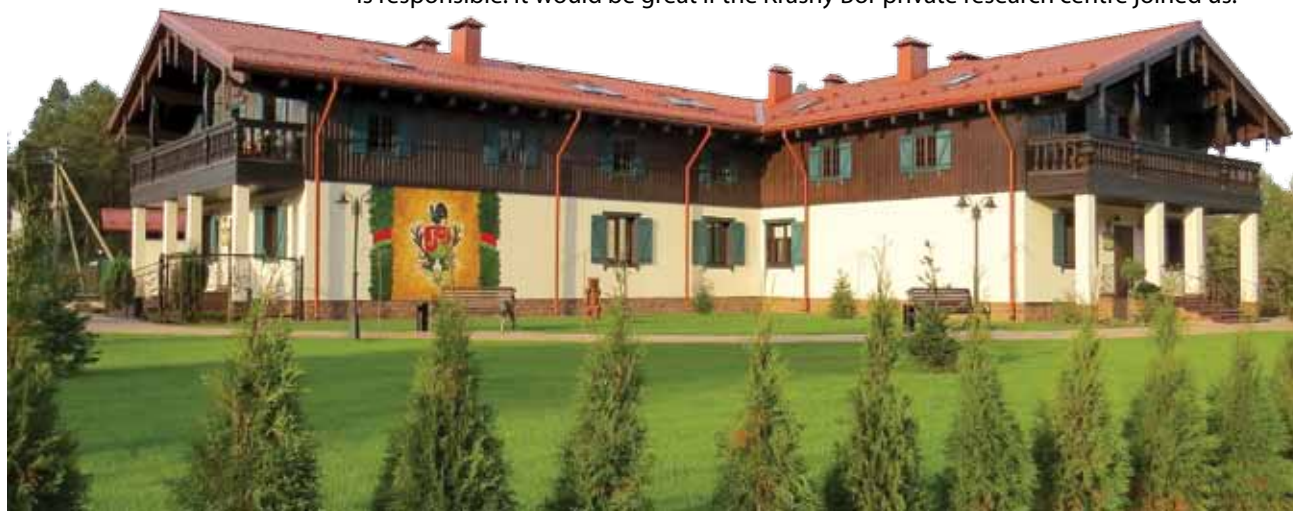
nithologist will celebrate his 70th birthday!

There's no need to climb so high to make a nest for a pigeon hawk: all that's needed is an old bucket filled with moss, attached to the top of a pine tree, at a height of around 3m, out of reach of foxes, wolves and raccoons.

## Live water

Famous photographer and founder of Minsk's RIFTOUR Editorial Office Sergey Plytkovich, who heads the Krasny Bor International Scientific Centre of Wild Nature Support, tells us, "We're thankful to the head of Interservice, Nikolay Vorobey, for giving us the opportunity to work in such a picturesque place. With his help, our fund has allocated five grants to support promising scientific papers. One, for the study of wood grouse via fixing special radio transmitters to the birds, was presented during a recent press conference."

He continues, "All information on this issue is placed on wildlife.by. The *Eagle Habitat* project is among the first launched by the fund to support wildlife. Another of our initiatives is called *Live Water*. We're now collecting information on the most interesting springs in Belarus, planning to develop them, for further inclusion within our tourist routes, and to encourage more people to enjoy them. We've initiated the *Our Region* project, which can be explored online at [www.nashregion.by](http://www.nashregion.by). In co-operation with the Molodechno District Executive Committee, it includes the most popular ecological routes in the area and lists places to eat, stay and buy souvenirs. Similar sites are planned for Naroch, Braslav, Nesvizh and Mir. Ideally, it would be great to 'embrace' the whole country. We'd like our project to help tourists to Belarus become acquainted with the country's sites and natural beauties."



# Terror probe underway after knife attack on London Underground

In what is being treated as a terrorist incident, a man allegedly shouting 'This is for Syria' attacked people with a knife at a London underground station, injuring three, one of them seriously

As terrified passengers ran for cover at Leytonstone tube station in the east of the city, officers moved in with Taser stun guns, managing to subdue and arrest the suspect after more than one attempt. Images of the horrifying scene were uploaded to social media which also picked up on the cry of one onlooker.

"You are no Muslim bruv," a man cried out, in rejection of the stabbing incident. The horrifying scene, early on Saturday evening, unfolded in front of many witnesses. One of them, Michael Garcia, described what he saw, "I look over. I see a guy huddled on the floor behind the barriers and a guy brandishing a knife. It was a small blade that was about three inches long and he's screaming: 'Go on then, run, run!'. And there is just people... wanting to go forward and help the guy, but the guy is standing right next to him just brandishing a knife."

The arrested man is believed to be aged about 29. The badly-hurt victim is thought to be 56. His injuries are serious but not life-threatening. Two other people had minor injuries, police said.

"We are treating this as a terrorist incident," Richard Walton, who leads the Counter Terrorism Command



Despite the incident, Londoners continue using metro defiantly

at London's Metropolitan Police, said in a statement. Britain is on its second-highest alert level, meaning a terror attack is considered highly likely mainly due to the threat posed by ISIL in Syria and Iraq encouraging supporters to strike the West. MPs have recently given the go ahead to

air strikes on ISIL targets in Syria. Since then, Britain's Royal Air Force has launched two bombing raids,

Prime Minister David Cameron has said air strikes would not increase the chances of an attack on Britain, since militants already viewed the UK as a top target with seven plots

foiled over the past year. Undaunted London-dwellers are still taking the Tube at Leytonstone station, despite the knife attack there earlier by a man reportedly shouting 'This is for Syria'. Travellers are determined not to be intimidated by the stabbing or the terror threat.

## 'Holy Grail' of shipwrecks found



Artifacts found in the wreckage of Spanish galleon San Jose

**Colombia claims to have discovered what's been described as the 'holy grail' of shipwrecks of the coast of Cartagena**

The San Jose is documented as having been carrying one of the richest cargoes of treasure ever to have been lost at sea. It was sunk by a British warship in 1708 on its way from South America to Spain, ruled by King Philip V at the time; 600 lives were lost. The treasure that went down with it is estimated to be worth between around three-and-a-half to

fifteen-and-a-half billion Euros.

"It constitutes one of the biggest — if not the biggest, as some say, discoveries of sunken treasure in the history of mankind," Colombia's President Juan Manuel Santos noted. It's not exactly clear who is entitled to claim the treasure because of a long-running legal row.

A US salvage company SSA claims it located the area where the ship sank back in 1981 but an American court ruled in 2011 that the San Jose is the property of the Colombian government.

## Oil output to stay high as OPEC fails to agree ceiling

**OPEC countries are to carry on producing current high levels of oil for the time being**

This comes despite complaints that the huge global surplus is damaging the industry.

Saudi Arabia had hinted at cuts in output — but only if OPEC and non-OPEC members followed suit.

An acrimonious meeting of member countries in Vienna broke up with no agreement on a new ceiling.

"We did not really mention the amount — it's because we are looking to negotiate with non-OPEC more and see how we can reach a collective effort that all of us should contribute to the market," OPEC's Secretary General Abdullah al-Badri noted.

Near-record volumes have sent oil prices tumbling and OPEC seems to have done nothing to tackle over-production. Earlier reports that OPEC was to raise output sent Brent crude prices tumbling by two percent to 43 Dollars a barrel.

Uncertainty over Iran's future out-



put played a part in no ceiling being agreed: Tehran says it will not consider any curbs until it restores production to pre-sanction levels — an extra one million barrels a day at least.

Poorer OPEC members had put pressure on Saudi Arabia and its allies to cut output. But the Saudis and their Gulf allies have been sticking to their strategy of defending market share — hoping that lower prices may ultimately drive higher cost producers such as US shale firms out of the market.

## Climate summit agrees draft document

**Delegates from almost 200 nations at the UN climate change summit in Paris have reached a draft agreement on how to move forward on the issue**

The text, which runs to 42 pages, was approved after four years' work that started in Durban in 2011. It presents options for dealing with everything from the long-term goals of combating climate change, to financial assistance for developing nations that will need help to move away from fossil fuel.

"There's a broad political will to come to a global agreement here in Paris and that is good news," said Martin Kaiser, Head of International Climate Politics at Greenpeace. "What is still missing in the text is a clear vision to go 100 percent renewable energy by mid-century, which gives us a chance to help those who suffer from catastrophic climate change."

## Strong US job gains further fuel rate rise

**US job growth increased solidly in November — another sign that the economy is holding up — and for many another reason for the Federal Reserve to raise interest rates soon**

Figures released by the US Labour Department showed that unemployment held steady at a more-than-seven-year low of five percent. It's dropped seven-tenths of a percentage point this year. Not including the farm sector, the number of new jobs created rose by 211,000 in November. The increase comes on top of previous rises of 298,000 in October and 145,000 in September.

The data for September and for October has been revised upwards, showing 35,000 more jobs than previously reported.

## UK organises emergency response

**Some of the worst flooding in decades to hit northern England has triggered a meeting of the Cobra special contingencies committee to co-ordinate an emergency response**

Over the last weekend storm 'Desmond' battered the region leaving hundreds of homes inundated and around 55,000 others without power. Emergency services aided by British soldiers have been forced to evacuate residents in worst hit Cumbria.

It's often the elderly who are most at risk. Carlisle resident John Donaldson had to be rescued from his home as the flood water came in. "Sitting in the house, I saw the water come up through the tiles. It was quite frightening," he said. A spokesperson for one of the local fire brigades said a main worry is that the flood water is contaminated, "It's got petrol in it, sewage and all sorts of rubbish!"

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# New address for old masterpieces

## Minsk Gallery named after People's Artist of Belarus, Leonid Shchemelev, moves to city's centre

By Victor Mishin

When two young women came to his studio to suggest that he relocate the Leonid Shchemelev City Art Gallery to a more bustling district within the capital, Mr. Shchemelev was delighted. He tells us, "Why should I have any objection? If the gallery receives more visits, it will benefit everyone. I'm only glad about this."

The move from one of the city's micro-districts, Serebryanka, to the central part of the capital is likely to please the famous artist's fans. The new gallery is more accessible on public transport and has received a new look, playing with colour.

Located inside the Minsk City History Museum, which recently hosted the opening of a permanent exhibition of works by this People's Artist of Belarus, the new gallery features 60 of his canvases from the old site (opened in 2003, following the donation of works by Mr. Shchemelev), plus canvases from the National Art Museum of Belarus.

The *Opening of Painting* exhibition is a retrospective of Mr. Shchemelev's creativity, revealing his major periods and trends, as well as his genre and thematic preferences, from the 1970s to the early 2000s.

The laureate of the State Prize, cavalier of the Frantsisk Skorina Order and Great Patriotic War veteran painted large-scale historical canvases and panoramic landscapes, some of which are on show, in addition to portraits of loved ones, and philosophical and lyrical still-life works.

His individuality is always evident. As he says, "Everything I depict on my canvases is inspired by life: the history of my Homeland; memories; those I love eternally; and our landscapes, without which I couldn't imagine living."

Leonid Shchemelev loves to welcome guests to his studio, where he gives them a tour of his life's work. The walls are hung densely with his pictures, from floor to ceiling and in every corner: large and smaller canvases. It's his own gallery, which reveals the whole span of his life's creativity. He finds his way easily in this seeming disorder, where pictures move each time I visit. He enjoys changing their position regularly.

Leonid's mind is filled with plans and ideas. He comes to his studio every day, without fail. It's hard to believe that he's almost 93! He's enjoyed dozens of personal exhibitions at home and abroad, and has participated in various international art forums. His works have been purchased by many art museums and art galleries around the globe, as well as by private collectors in Belarus, Rus-



In the exhibition hall of Leonid Shchemelev City Gallery



The artist at his studio



sia, Ukraine, USA, Canada, Italy, France, Germany, Spain, Australia, Iran and Israel.

Mr. Shchemelev also holds the Union State of Belarus and Russia award. Perhaps, the jury liked the reassuringly creative manner of Mr. Shchemelev, besides his professional skills. At that time, the duo of Russian painters — the Tkachev brothers — was also awarded this prize. The Tkachev brothers were contemporaries of their Belarusian colleague, famous for reflecting past themes of labour and war time courage. Actually, they saw few topics in modern times that could inspire them for creativity.

Meanwhile, Mr. Shchemelev has been always close and clear to contemporaries, as is proven by the exposition in his gallery, where he shows us his view of the world through colours and emotions.

However, the first paintings which brought Leonid Shchemelev success were dedicated to the war. He experienced this first hand aged 20, having been on the front line for four years. It left an indelible mark on his soul, inspiring his series of paintings on his 'war generation'. Nevertheless, today he explores other topics but explains, "War is death and human suffering. I like life, so paint on topics

inspiring optimism and faith in the future — without war or turmoil."

**From the autobiography of People's Artist of Belarus Leonid Shchemelev:**

*I was lucky, being born in Vitebsk — a city of artists. I spent my childhood surrounded by art lovers, albeit amateur. I learnt about colour, canvases and the smell of fresh painted pictures early on. The Dvina River was nearby, which is still sacred to me. My most treasured childhood memories are of delightful winter skiing and playing on the banks of the Dvina in summer. There were trips to my grandmother's village and, of course, films.*

*The war ended all that of course. In 1941, I left, like others, to fight. In 1943, during the liberation of Belarus under Mozyr, I was seriously wounded and sent to hospital. However, I recovered sufficiently to fight again. In short, I survived those terrible war years of the last century. Destiny saved me and I went to Minsk's Art College. Later, I worked as a teacher and, finally, I entered the Art Institute in Minsk. I was lucky again, studying under Vitaly Tsvirko — a wonderful artist and teacher, who opened my eyes to a new understanding of the world. I gradually overcame my early artistic failures*

*and soon began to exhibit throughout Minsk, Moscow and abroad.*

*My artist's life is the best gift I've received from God: my admiration of the world and ability to depict its surprising paradoxes. Creating art brings me great happiness.*

**Your teacher, Vitaly Tsvirko, disliked public speaking but his paintings were more eloquent than words. How do you categorise yourself?**

*I'm among those who love their profession. I can describe my thoughts in words and can critique the works of others, although I'm not a professional in this sphere. When it comes to my teacher, Vitaly Tsvirko, I have a great deal to say, as I gratefully admire him as an artist and as a person. When you've studied for a long time, you find that many teachers influence you. However, those who teach art can be the most influential, as they teach you so much about yourself. This allows you to grow as an artist, understanding your role and responsibilities. Mr. Tsvirko was such a teacher to me. Being a great artist, he passed on more than professional skills. He showed me humanity and love for the countryside — both of which he felt strongly himself.*

**Is this why pictures of nature dominate your canvases, in various states and moods?**

*I have few 'pure' landscapes as most use some pictorial construction or portray action. My characters not only complement and enliven the landscape, but are intrinsically connected to their environment. I don't create plots but I do work on a theme, striving to reveal it to my viewer. I paint life rather than fantasy.*

**You travelled a lot deal across the USSR, visiting Europe and Asia. How did they influence you as an artist and for what were you searching? What did you want to understand?**

*I travelled a great deal, especially in Soviet times, seeing all fifteen republics. I've been abroad many times and always returned with vast amounts of artistic material. More importantly, I was able to compare art in each place, striving to understand what feeds the creativity of each famous artist (in the USSR and abroad). I realised the obvious: art is nurtured by folk art, culture and traditions. You can only reach the ultimate peak of success, at home or internationally, if you are true to this idea, processing that which is unique and special. In the end, you can present it to the world in a way which is universally recognisable.*

**So, you had the opportunity to compare sights with those of your homeland. How does Belarus differ and what do you think visitors notice most on arriving here for the first time?**

*Primarily, our countryside, as Belarus is covered in a whole system of pure spring lakes and a network of large and small rivers. These nourish nature, keeping colours fresh and juicy; it can't be ignored. Colours don't fade, they simply change with the seasons, remaining vivid. The rich green of spring and summer flowers is replaced by the amazing shades and tones of autumn. The transition is seamless and filled with majesty. Winter then takes over, with its purity and white snow. Our lace-frosted trees are like nothing else. Our countryside never looks weary. It is always alive and fresh. This may be why Belarus has always had so many wonderful landscape-painters.*

Mr. Shchemelev is interesting to listen to, being sincere in his views and unafraid of speaking his mind. He always has something to say: about art, the role of the artist or the national component of art...

# Soul flies on stage and in reality

## Major cultural festival — IFMC — closes in Vitebsk

By Victoria Popova

There have been full houses and the festival has received praise from professional circles, who are calling it a 'top level event', attracting guests from as far away as Mexico (the *Moving Borders* group, staging *To Us*). Vitebsk and Mexico are separated by thousands of kilometres but the language of modern dance knows no borders. Yasil Neri's choreography entertained the audience and, after the show, half of the audience stayed on to chat with the troupe's four dancers (the best in their country); they gave autographs and posed for photos with their new fans, promising to return to Vitebsk some other time.

Meanwhile, Stravinsky fans were impressed with *Sacred Spring*, staged by the Moscow Ballet, in Vitebsk and Minsk.

Unlike their Mexican counterparts, our dancers were more reserved.

The National IFMC-2015 Festival's first place award went to Minsk's Sabina Munasyova, aged 22. The student danced the *Ballad of the Mother* (choreographed by Dementiev and Martynov). Its well-known lyrics on *Alexey*,



Famous dance groups from nine countries present performances at the festival

*Aleshenka — the Son* are known for being emotional and Sabina's dancing mesmerised those present. The co-chair of the jury,

Radu Poklitaru, admitted that even he was moved to tears.

Sabina accepted her award with dignity, commenting, "I

understand that this award is a generous pre-payment. I've not achieved much yet as a dancer; these are my first steps. I didn't

expect to be so well received. My staging is an interpretation of the song, which I don't usually do, as playing with associations is always more interesting to me. However, I could hardly neglect this composition."

Vitebsk's Folk Studio-Theatre of Modern Choreography, led by Diana Yurchenko, took second place for *Seasons*. Ballet dancers Sergey Tolkach and Marina Kushnereva were truly impressive, as Ms. Yurchenko underlines, saying, "The staging has many layers. I'd been thinking about this idea for a long time and I'm pleased to say we realised it for the IFMC."

Diana was the only veteran prize holder at the festival, as mostly young choreographers took part. Third place went to Minsk's Altana Dance Theatre — previously largely unknown. Its geometrically strong *Gravitation* was performed at the highest possible level, interpreting the cosmic theme, to the audience's delight.

Evidently, young people are inspired by modern dance, which is open to all ages, enabling freedom of expression, as famous Yevgeny Panfilov was known for. The master's 60th birthday was widely celebrated during the festival.

## Different fashion

By Yekaterina Medvedskaya

**Warm Weeks show, in Minsk, presenting felt dresses, knitted coats and jackets**

"It's possible to knit anything: a blanket, a dress, a coat or a handbag. Knitting embraces more than just mitten and socks. It's an art!" declares expert Marina Molchan. Her knitting classes, which are being held during the exhibition, are likely to inspire many people to take up the hobby. She tells us, "I'm happy to teach novices and experienced knitters." She hopes to eventually establish a knitting festival.

*Warm Weeks* is gathering Belarus' top knitting masters for the first time to present catwalk collections, and will last a full month, hosted by Minsk's A.S. Pushkin Regional Library.

The event recently opened with a catwalk show of clothes made from felt and yarn, including Anastasia Shirokaya's *Analogy* project, which aims to show that fashionable dresses, blouses and jackets can be made from traditional Belarusian materials. Copies of famous outfits by global designers Pierre Cardin, Dolce Gabbana, Coco Chanel and Christian Dior were placed on show, all made by Belarusian knitters and felting experts, with impressive results!

The show also features interior decorative items, such as pictures, lamps and rugs, with many looking as if they can hardly be made of wool or felt. Artist and designer



Catwalk collection

Anastasia Arais, who is well known in Belarus and abroad, presented her new interior collection: *Garden of Stones*.

Meanwhile, a charity auction of the 5000 Club on the opening day, of hand made souvenirs, has raised funds for children battling cancer.

Leading organiser Karina Volkova tells us that master classes are scheduled, to be run by professional felters and knitters, alongside seminars, interactive performances for children (based on Sergey Kozlov's stories and staged by the Busy Baby Theatre) and a session drinking tea with Valentin Zyulikov — a fifth-generation felt shoe maker.

## Vysotsky in Brest again

By Alexander Kurets

**Brest's Bug Hotel, where Vladimir Vysotsky often stayed, opens new rooms**

Vladimir Vysotsky's family is rooted in the Brest Region: his great-grandfather was born in the village of Selets (Bereza District), while his grandfather, known as a singer, actor and poet, lived in Vysokoe, not far from Kamenets. Later, the family moved to Brest, where Vladimir (whose famous grandson bears the same name) was well known and respected.

Vladimir Vysotsky-junior many times visited Brest, on his way abroad. Room 209 was his usual choice, at the Bug Hotel, near the local railway station: a room that the hotel has chosen to restore to its 1970s-style décor, with support from city authorities.

The hotel's director, Dmitry Minkevich, takes us on an excursion, saying, "The room has the same par-



Exhibition at Vladimir Vysotsky museum

quet and furniture as in the past. We even have tiles in the bathroom from Soviet times. We're opening an exhibition devoted to Vladimir Vysotsky in the neighbouring room, featuring materials relating to his artistry. Local experts have helped us and some materials have been provided by Moscow's Vladimir Vysotsky Museum, in 'Taganka.' A sculpture devoted to the

famous artiste will be installed near the hotel, with proposals being considered from city residents: Brest City Executive Committee and the Bug Hotel will look at each carefully.

Meanwhile, Brest is soon to host its first festival devoted to Vladimir Vysotsky, with famous amateur singers and musicians expected to attend.

## Unusual thematic broadcast

By Vladimir Mefodiev

**Yakub Kolas' *Symon the Musician* broadcast in six languages by Belarus international radio**

International Poetry Reading Day, on December 4th, saw Belarus Radio making an unusual broadcast with the Yakub Kolas State Literary-Memorial Museum, reading extracts from works in Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian, Kazakh, English and Spanish.

Journalists from Belarusian Radio joined representatives of the country's national and cultural communities in reading poetry, including the well-loved *Symon the Musician*: a golden classic of Belarusian literature for the past 90 years. The poem is studied by all schoolchildren and have been many times published, illustrated by famous artists.

TV, radio performances and art performances of the poem have been staged, and a full score, opera libretto

and literary composition for reading created in its honour.

Famous sculptor Zair Azgur included Symon and Ganna — major characters from the poem — in his sculpture, erected in Yakub Kolas Square in Minsk. Symbolically, the work's jubilee is being celebrated in the Year of Youth, since the great Belarusian writer devoted this poem to Belarusian youth and addressed it to people with sympathetic and kind souls.

# European awards and national records

## Belarusian national team wins four medals and sets 13 national records at European Short Course Swimming Championships (in 25m pool), in Israel

By Yegor Glebov

In his individual event, Yevgeny Tsurkin claimed silver, covering the 50m butterfly in 22.56 seconds, and setting a Belarusian record. Ukraine's Andrei Govorov captured gold, with a finishing time of 22.36 seconds, while Belarusian Pavel Sankovich was fifth (22.82 seconds).

Sadly, team leader Alexandra Gerasimenya failed to show her usual form and, although she reached the final rounds twice, was placed only 7th (100m freestyle) and 5th (50m backstroke) among the top eight sportswomen.

Alexandra's only medal, bronze, was in the mixed combined 4x50m relay, alongside team members Pavel Sankovich, Ilya Shimanovich and Svetlana Khokhlova. During the finals, the Italian, Russian and German teams led for most of the race but, in the final, fourth stage, Alexandra managed to steam ahead of the German swimmer, and Holland's *Ranomi Kromowidjojo*, well known for her speed.

The Belarusian men's team also took bronze, in



Pavel Sankovich, Ilya Shimanovich, Svetlana Khokhlova and Alexandra Gerasimenya claim European medals

the 4x50m freestyle relay. Yevgeny Tsurkin, Anton Latkin, Victor Staselovich and Artem Machekin's time of 1 minute and 25.01

seconds is a new national record.

On the final day of the continental forum in Netanya, the men's team

of Pavel Sankovich, Ilya Shimanovich, Yevgeny Tsurkin and Anton Latkin were again placed third: in the 4x50m combined relay,

taking bronze.

As a result, Belarus occupied 15th place in the medal rankings, with one silver and three bronze.

## Baku bronze

By Igor Grishin

**Belarusian Greco-Roman wrestler, Iosif Chugoshvili, wins bronze at Golden Grand Prix Final wrestling tournament, hosted by Baku**

In his first under 130kg category match, the Belarusian wrestler lost to his rival from Kazakhstan, Nurmakhan Tynaliyev (0:4). In the consolation match, Iosif defeated Russian Vitaly Ilnitsky, and then Chinese Qiang Meng in the battle for bronze. Azerbaijan's Sabah Shariati won in the heaviest category.

Two other representatives of the Belarusian national Greco-Roman wrestling team failed to reach the medals podium: Soslan Daurov was ranked ninth while Victor Sosunovsky finished eleventh.

In the freestyle wrestling tournament, Belarusian Ibragim Saidov came fifth, losing to the Chinese athlete in the fight for third place.

## Without club but with national team

**Leader of Belarus' national handball squad Sergey Rutenko leaves Qatar's Lekhwiya from Doha**

The captain of the Belarusian national team, aged 34, moved to Lekhwiya from Spanish Barcelona this autumn, playing four matches in Qatar's domestic championship, in which his new team won victories. He chose to end his contract following Doha failing to meet its promises.

Before the European Championship, launching in Poland from January 15th-31st, 2016, Sergey Rutenko decided not to look for a new club but to focus on training for the continental championship as part of the Belarusian national team, under coach Yuri Shevtsov. Training will commence on December 11th and will take the team to two international tournaments, in Latvia and Russia.

## Minsk SKA defeats Hard

By Igor Leshin

**Minsk SKA handballers to play in EHF Cup group stage after defeating Austrian Hard in second match of third qualifying round at Sports Palace — 35:23**

The Minskers claimed serious success during their previous match, in Austria, winning 33:23. In Minsk, the Austrians were clearly determined to take revenge but, from the first minutes, SKA showed their fighting spirit also. By half-time, it was clear that SKA help supremacy, being 22 goals ahead. The final score at the Sports Palace — 35:23 — guarantees SKA a place at the EHF Cup group stage.



During SKA-Hard match

According to SKA's head coach, Spartak Mironovich, the latest victory is a huge step in the right direction. He emphasises, "After the first match, the squad relaxed rather, but managed to reignite their fire, battling for each goal; it may have looked easy but it certainly wasn't."

The performance of the young team at such a level will be an evident advantage regardless of the draw's results, though SKA's group rivals will be Danish Bjerringbro, Swiss Winterthur and French Saint Raphael.

## Worthy status for winner

By Yegor Glebov

**Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation tries to receive permanent status in Champions League for Belarusian Extraleague winner**

A delegation of representatives from the Belarusian Federation has returned from Switzerland, having attended a Champions League Council session, hosted by the IIHF headquarters. One of the major issues discussed was the inclusion of the Belarusian team among the permanent participants of the tournament. However, the decision will depend on the Champions League's further development.

Yaroslav Zavgorodny, General Secretary of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, tells us that the organisers of the League have an obligation to the tournament's founding clubs for the 2016-2017 season. He notes, "In 2015, Belarus was represented in the Champions League by Grodno Neman: the winner of the Continental Cup (held under the IIHF aegis). We do try



Neman HC — a Continental Cup winner

to give Champions League permanent status to squads which win the prestigious European tournament but it's still too early to speak about other Belarusian squads joining the League," explains Mr. Zavgorodny.

During the Belarusian delegation's visit to Switzerland, the President of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF), René Fasel, also

met the Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation, Igor Rachkovsky, who confirmed Belarus' goal of again hosting the IIHF World Championship in Minsk. Mr. Fasel expressed complete support in this respect, noting the highly professional level in which the world forum was organised in the Belarusian capital in 2014.

# Presentation of the week



Father Frost Estate opens at Zorka recuperation camp in Grodno

## Exhibitions

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 21st December. *Modus Vivendi*

Until 30th December. *Celebrating Victory Day in Museum*

Until 11th January. *The Colour of Life*

Until 11th January. *Archivist*

Until 25th January. Roman

Zaslunov's painting

### NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 30th December. *Ancient Belarus*

Until 31st December. *Major*

*Presentation of Museum Relics:*

*79 Steps Inside History*

Until 17th January. *Museum of*

*New Year's Tree Decorations*

Until 1st June. *Belarus' Trade*

*on the Scales of History*

### MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square

Until 27th March. *Talking Machine*

### MUSEUM OF MATURE AND ECOLOGY OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 6th March. *Jungles*

*behind the Window*

### MUSEUM OF MATURE AND ECOLOGY'S EXHIBITION HALL

9A Bogdanovich Street

Until 17th January. *Mummies*

*of the World*

### ZABRODIE ETHNOGRAPHICAL COMPLEX

Zabrodie village

Until 26th December. *Museum of the*

*First World War and Retro Machinery*

### PICTURE HOUSE

89/3 Pobediteley Avenue, office 3

Until 31st December. *Great*

*Classics of the 20th Century*

## Theatres

### BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

11 and 13.12. *The Swan Lake* 12.12. *Iolanthe*

16.12. 6th Minsk International Christmas

Opera Forum: *The Tsar Bride*

17.12. 6th Minsk International Christmas

Opera Forum: *Eugene Onegin*

### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

11.12. *A Simple Wonder* 12.12. *Town*

*Musicians of Bremen; Sofia Golshanskaya*

13.12. *Burantino.by; My Fair Lady*

15.12. *Blue Cameo* 16.12. *Once in Chicago*

### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

11.12. *Esfir* 12.12. *Double Eternity*

13.12. *Private Lives* 15.12. *Ninotchka*

### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

11.12. *The Seagull* 12.12. *Evening*

13.12. *Paulinka* 15.12. *The Boor* 16.12. *Pinsk*

*Gentry* 17.12. *The Black Lady of Nesvizh*

### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

11.12. *Even a Wise Man Stumbles* 12.12. *An*

*Unnamed Star* 13.12. *The Makropoulos Case*

14.12. *Master and Margarita* 15.12. *My Dear;*

*Robbery at Midnight* 16 and 17.12. *The Battlefield*

### REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

11 and 12.12. *People's Love*

13.12. *Quiet Rustle of Leaving Steps*

14.12. *Hello Summer or Novels about Camp*

15.12. *Silent Love* 16.12. *The Eternal*

*Song* 17.12. *The Contract*

### MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Square

17.12. *Thank You, Margo!*

# Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

## December of decades and centuries past comes to life

**December 11th.** In 1942, Honoured Architect Alexander Sobolevsky was born in Zhodino.

**December 12th.** In 1919, Prof. Boris Gudimov was born — a war veteran who devoted 60 years of his life to surgery.

**December 13th.** In 1919, Honoured Figure of Arts Valeriana Zholtok was born in Zhlobin. She worked as a set designer for the Belarusian State Opera and Ballet Theatre.

**December 14th.** In 1971, Dmitry Dovgalyonok was born — a Belarusian sportsman (kayak and canoe) who was a medalist at the 25th Olympics, held in Spain in 1992.

**December 15th.** In 1936, Honoured Artiste Galina Os-molovskaya was born in Gorki — a domra player, a teacher and a professor.

**December 16th.** In 1876, Professor Yevgeny Klumov was born. He was a famous Minsk doctor and a USSR Hero. In October 1943, he was arrested by the Germans but failed to cooperate and, in February 1944, was killed alongside his wife.

**December 17th.** In 1905, People's Artiste Iosif Kheifits was born in Minsk. A director

and playwright, he helped create *Large Family, My Dear Person, and Lady with a Dog.*

**December 11th.** In 1879, the first free hospital for the poor opened in Minsk (funded by Minsk's Society of Doctors). It was headed by Sigismund Sventitsky — a Doctor of Medi-



cine and a founder of endo-cavitary medicine in Belarus.

**December 11th.** In 1920, the Emergency Commission to Eradicate Illiteracy was set up in Belarus.

**December 11th.** In 1991, the Belarusian Scientific-Research Centre of Document Work and Retro Information was established.

**December 12th.** In 1952, the USSR Council of Ministers

chose to establish an aircraft repair station in Minsk (since 1962, known as the Minsk Aircraft Repair Plant).

**December 12th.** In 1979, the Belarusian Folk Art Museum opened in Raubichi, near Minsk (becoming a branch of Belarus' National Art Museum).

**December 13th.** In 1982, Minsk's citadel received the status of 'a historical-cultural reserve territory' — in line with the BSSR Council of Ministers' decision. The city's history is closely connected with its citadel.

**December 13th.** In 1982, Mogilev's Production Association of Silk Fabrics came into operation.

**December 13th.** In 1998, a

techno-park opened in Mogilev.

**December 14th.** In 1963, the town of Polotsky obtained the status of a city of regional sub-ordinance — becoming Novopolotsk.

**December 14th.** In 2002, the last seam was welded on the Belarusian section of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline, near Nesvizh.

**December 15th.** In 1975, Zhodino's Svitank Sewing-Knitwear Factory began its work.

**December 15th.** In 1982, construction was completed on Baranovich's Poultry Factory — Druzhba.

**December 16th.** In 1388, the city of Molodechno was first mentioned in written sources. In the past, it belonged to the magnate families of Zaslavsky, Mstislavsky, Sangushko, and Oginski.

**December 17th.** In 1924, Belarusian cinematography was officially 'born'.

**December 17th.** In 1930, the Iosif Zhinovich State Academic Orchestra of Belarus was founded.

**December 17th.** In 1940, the Grigory Shirma State Academic Capella of Belarus was established.