

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

ISSN 1991-2978



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 14 (732) ● THURSDAY, APRIL 12, 2018 ● WWW.SB.BY



PAVEL CHUIJKO

Light and kindness to your native homes!

Orthodox believers recently celebrated Easter — a central event in the spiritual life of Christians, marked with reverence, solemnity and joy

Belarus and China have become iron brothers

This fact was underlined by Chinese Defence Minister Wei Fenghe, a member of the State Council and member of the Central Military Committee, during his visit to Minsk



Wei Fenghe

By Vladimir Khromov

The Chinese official visited Minsk to meet the Belarusian President. Between 2013 and 2017, Belarus' Defence Ministry leaders have made seven trips to China, while delegations from China's military leadership have visited eleven times. Joint training units of special operations forces of the Armed Forces of Belarus have joined units of airborne troops of China for two training sessions held in Belarus and one in China. Since 2000, 277 Chinese soldiers have graduated from the Military Academy of Belarus. In turn, seventy-seven members of the Armed Forces of Belarus have received free training within the Chinese People's Liberation Army.

Successful avenues of military co-operation include training of Chinese soldiers at the Military Academy and military departments of higher educational institutions of Belarus' Defence Min-

istry, in addition to Belarusian military training at Chinese educational establishments. There are also plans for further joint exercises and training. China has repeatedly provided free military aid to Belarus: in October 2017, an agreement to provide \$4.5 million of such assistance was signed and, at the moment, the list of supplied equipment is being agreed. So far, five international treaties have been signed in the military-technical sphere between Belarus and China. Meanwhile, co-ordination of bilateral military-technical co-operation is being carried out via the Belarusian-Chinese Committee for Co-operation in the Field of Arms and Military Equipment.

As Mr. Lukashenko believes, China has played a crucial role in strengthening the defence capacity of Belarus. On meeting Wei Fenghe, he said, "You've helped us create the most modern space units, enabling us to send the most modern satellite into orbit. We've jointly es-

tablished the most advanced Centre of Mission Control in Belarus and you've helped us create the most advanced missile weapons for the Belarusian army. We've also created more modern designs of missile weapons, that are sure to be of interest to your army. I'm grateful to you for the help you've rendered."

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that Belarus won't remain in debt. "You — and all leaders of China — should know this," he added. "You've supported us through the most difficult times; through the West's sanctions imposed on Belarus. We'll remember this for ever more. You have reliable friends here." The President stressed his pleasure in the meeting, noting, "I must congratulate you on the successful completion of all political campaigns and battles in China, establishing stability in your political and social relations." He asked that his warmest congratulations and best wishes be sent to President Xi Jinping.

Addressing China's Defence Minister, Mr. Lukashenko congratulated him on his appointment to the highest post in the Chinese Government and his becoming the head of one of the world's most powerful armies. "I wish to thank the Chinese leadership for its invaluable economic and financial support, being rendered to Belarus. We're especially grateful for the military-technical co-operation established between our two countries."

The Chinese Minister, in turn, praised Belarus' great success in state establishment. "You've significantly contributed to the development of bilateral friendship. Our countries are good friends and partners. Under your leadership, jointly with Chairman Xi Jinping, our countries have become iron brothers," Mr. Fenghe said. He thanked the Belarusian President for the meeting and conveyed his good wishes on behalf of Chairman Xi Jinping.



Alarming escalation of tension

Belarus notes alarming growth of enmity between largest military powers, speaking at UN

Belarus notes with regret and deep concern the level of mistrust and growing enmity between nations possessing the overwhelming majority of the planet's military potential. The Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus to the UN and other international organisations in Geneva, Yuri Ambrazevich, addressed the United Nations Conference on Disarmament on the occasion of the 75th Anniversary of the Khatyn tragedy. In his speech, Mr. Ambrazevich underlined Belarus' alarm at the high levels of mistrust, as seen in the last few years, and growing enmity between the key militarised nations. Belarus is also saddened by increasing confrontational rhetoric, growing military spending, and the escalation of conflict.

The Belarusian diplomat reminded everyone that the tragedy of Khatyn symbolises the terror and suffering of the civilian population, for generations of Belarusians and people living in post-Soviet countries. He expressed his hope that we will never forget what occurred.

Noting the important role of the UN Conference on Disarmament in ensuring and maintaining peace in the Cold War period, the representative of Belarus called upon the international community to use the conference as a platform to reduce tension and build trust.

Expanding useful co-operation in the sphere of cybersecurity

By Vladimir Velikhov

Belarus' Communications and Informatisation Minister, Sergey Popkov, travels to Egypt to discuss cybersecurity

Sergey Popkov has held talks with Yasser Elkady, the Egyptian Minister for Communications and Information Technology. Also present were representatives of the National Telecommunications Regulatory Authority of Egypt, the Information Technology Industry Development Agency, the Egyptian Computer Emergency Readiness Team, the National Telecommunications Institute,

and the Smart Village Administration.

Expertise-sharing covered how Belarus is forming a modern digital economy, and discussion of how to expand co-operation in cybersecurity, innovations and entrepreneurship. Experience sharing covered the establishment of techno-parks, research and development in IT, and training of ICT specialists through Master's programmes and short-term courses, at the Belarusian State Academy of Communications.

Mr. Popkov met the Prime Minister of Egypt, Sherif Ismail, to discuss promising avenues of Belarus-Egypt co-operation in

the sphere of communications and information technologies. They agreed that a delegation of Egyptian ICT specialists will take part in the international forum on information and telecommunications technologies, *TIBO-2018*, in Minsk.

In the presence of the Egyptian Prime Minister, the Belarusian Communications and Informatisation Ministry signed a memorandum of understanding on co-operation in communications and IT with the Egyptian Ministry of Communications and Information Technology.

The Belarusian delegation also participated in a roundtable discussion on *Belarus-*

Egypt: Prospects and Opportunities for Co-operation in the IT-sphere, organised by the Egyptian Council for International Co-operation. The event brought together representatives of more than forty major Egyptian companies and organisations keen to liaise with Belarus.

A presentation was also organised by the Belarusian State Academy of Communications, showcasing 'Smart Home' technology. During the visit, the State Academy of Communications (Belarus) and the National Telecommunications Institute (Egypt) signed an agreement on co-operation in education and science.

It's always more efficient to jointly counteract challenges

Alexander Lukashenko suggests forming global strategy under UN aegis to counteract new threats and challenges, speaking at session of Council of CIS Foreign Ministers, in Minsk

By Vasily Kharitonov

The Head of State noted that, in 2018, Tajikistan is presiding in the CIS and Belarus agrees on the tasks presented in the presidency programme and will ensure its full participation in its implementation. "I hope that this year will be marked by positive initiatives, brought to life in the near future. The struggle against international terrorism and extremism is becoming a priority of our collaboration," Mr. Lukashenko commented.

The President noted that, five years ago, during Belarus' presidency of the CIS, a regional meeting was organised jointly with the CIS Executive Committee, the UN and the OSCE, to assess progress in implementing the UN Security Council resolution on preventing the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. "This year, Belarus plans to hold a similar event aimed at deepening co-ordination between the CIS and other international structures, to prevent such



Alexander Lukashenko and participants of CIS Foreign Ministers Council

weapons from falling into the hands of terrorists," asserted the Belarusian leader.

The President believes that the CIS needs true and open co-operation between law enforcement agencies. Defence ministries need to develop a joint air and space defence system in the CIS by 2025, and interior ministries are tasked with launching the Interstate Action Plan to Combat Crime for 2019-2023. "Special focus should be given to cross-border crime," stressed the Belarusian Head of State.

He believes that the CIS Anti-Terrorism Centre needs to implement an integrated approach to counter terrorism and extremism, using all available measures. "CIS financial watchdogs should join the fight against the funding of terrorism. To complete this work, we need to see interaction

between the diplomats of our countries and to develop a global strategy, based on international law and under the auspices of the UN, to counteract new challenges and threats," added the

We need to apply universally acceptable principles of co-operation in Europe. The dialogue of experts could play a vital role, involving analytics centres, government agencies, and private structures, to determine goals and enhance trust between nations, regarding political and military affairs

President of Belarus.

Mr. Lukashenko is in favour of developing universally acceptable principles of co-operation in Europe. He reminded those gathered that, during the 26th session of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Belarus suggested the

launch of negotiations to overcome contradictions and form new, constructive relations in the OSCE region. "We need to apply universally acceptable principles of co-operation in Europe. The dialogue of experts could play a vital role, involving analytics centres, government agencies, and private structures, to determine goals and enhance trust between nations, regarding political and military affairs," said the Head of State. He views the international expert conference, *Eastern Europe: Searching for Security for All*, being hosted by Minsk in May 2018, as a good opportunity to get the ball rolling.

In 2018, Belarus will also host an OSCE counterterrorism conference on preventing and fighting terrorism in the digital age. A meeting of the Munich Security Conference Core Group will take place in Belarus in 2018, too. Mr. Lukashenko has

invited all partners to take part in these events, at the highest level.

"Today's international situation is far too tense. Destabilisation of the system which has, so far, kept competing countries and blocs at bay is the most dangerous trend in the Euro-Atlantic space. Located in its own geopolitical fissure, Belarus recognises the disadvantages of confrontation in the European region, which could spiral out of control. Experts believe that a cold war is already underway," he stresses.

Mr. Lukashenko believes that attempts to work out a new paradigm of world order are also being seen in war zones, such as in the Donbass area of Ukraine. "Thanks to Minsk agreements, large-scale combat operations have stopped over there but, unfortunately, people continue to die. Let me reaffirm that we're ready to do everything we can to restore peace in the Donbass area, while observing every letter of international law and with the approval of the conflicting sides," added the President.

Partners who value reputation

By Alexey Fedosov

The President of Belarus meets Syrian Minister of Presidential Affairs, Mansour Azzam

The Head of State warmly welcomed his Syrian guest, saying, "It's good that you've come to Belarus. It's very useful for us to learn about the situation in the country and how the Syrian people and the President of Syria are living, hearing directly from you."

Mansour Azzam stressed that it was an honour for him to meet Alexander Lukashenko.

"This is a testimony to the warm relations between the presidents of our two countries," said the Minister.

Speaking about the current situation in Syria, he mentioned the huge loss of life and went into detail about the situation around Damascus, noting the steps being taken by the state to support peaceful development.

Syria hopes for Belarus' participation in economic restoration of the country, Mr. Azzam told journalists after his meeting with the President of Belarus. He positively assessed his visit to Minsk and the agreements

reached. During his meeting with Mr. Lukashenko, he presented a letter from Bashar al-Assad which expresses sincere gratitude for the country's position towards Syria and the Syrian people.

"The President of Belarus again confirmed that he supports the Syrian nation in its just struggle against the threat of terrorism," continued Mr. Azzam. "Alexander Lukashenko said that Belarus will make efforts to restore destroyed infrastructure across Syrian territory."

According to the Minister, the meeting with the Head of

State is a green light for further co-operation and our governments taking concrete steps.

Trade-economic co-operation between our two countries is currently dominated by Belarusian exports. Last year, mutual trade stood at \$44.3 million, including \$37 million of exports. Belarus mainly exports trucks, milk powder, butter and medications to Syria, while importing Syrian cotton fibre and fruit. The joint Belarus-Syria Commission on Trade-Economic and Technical



Mansour Azzam

Co-operation met for the sixth time, in Minsk, in 2015. A seventh meeting is now being planned.

New technology in harmony with nature will bring new living standards for people

The Government was tasked with developing an efficient mechanism of implementing the ‘village of the future’ concept, at a national seminar focused on rural development and enhancement of efficiency of the country’s agrarian sector



A rural district in the Mogilev Region

By Vasily Kharitonov

It’s impossible to provide this sphere with qualified personnel and stop the outflow of working-age population to cities without improving the quality of life in the rural area, enhancing the attractiveness of agricultural labour and rural life in general. The Head of State believes we need to create ‘villages of the future’, offering conditions comparable with cities.

Alexander Lukashenko has demanded that we take every possible measure to integrate development, including making use of vacant housing in villages and isolated farmsteads and developing rural settlements and agro-towns in a sympathetic eco-style.

Moreover, the President wondered what is being done now to enhance living standards in villages. “How can we develop unproductive villages? We need to see progress in the nearest time,” instructed the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko has demanded that new social standards be implemented in all rural settlements and agro-towns across Belarus. Every district centre, agro-town and village should have good roads, and access to high-quality water, social services, and high-speed

Internet. Only when existing problems are solved will the agrarian sector be able to reach a new level. The President stressed the importance of making rural living comfortable and prestigious, with residents enjoying gardens and country life, as well as the latest technologies.

The meeting also focused on education, with the President underlining that agrarian universities should admit students who know the countryside and are aware of agricultural production. Mr. Lukashenko believes that failure to implement agro-technologies is the result of ineptitude and unwillingness to organise work efficiently. “We often train specialists who have no desire to work in the countryside. Such graduates quit after working just two years, doing more damage than benefit. The Government should come up with an optimal system. Prospective students who know rural ways should be given priority in university entry,” believes Mr. Lukashenko.

The President rebuked agricultural enterprises for lack of attention to personnel training. As future employers, they

should be directly involved in training the workforce, organising proper internships and additional training, taking into account the needs of specific enterprises, as well as creating necessary conditions for the education process and for grad-

Belarus is already providing fully for its food needs, having invested in its agro-sector since the first days of its independence. Belarus is now ahead of other CIS states in terms of production and consumption of most foods

uates’ career launch. Mr. Lukashenko mentioned IT companies as an example, which are ready to finance training of relevant specialists at state-owned universities.

The Head of State also paid attention to frequent change of heads and specialists at agro-enterprise. According to him, such decisions are adopted instead of helping these people settle the reasons hampering

the development of agricultural companies.

The President stressed that personnel issues cannot be resolved without enhancing the prestige of rural professions and improving salaries, although all salaries should be earned. “I’ll continue demanding that salaries be paid to our workers on time, and that wages are raised. This sphere is a priority, as rural residents work harder than their city counterparts while having modest incomes.”

Belarus is already providing fully for its food needs, having invested in its agro-sector since the first days of its independence. Belarus is now ahead of other CIS states in terms of production and consumption of most foods and earned almost \$5 billion from food exports last year (with a current goal of \$7 billion). Mr. Lukashenko commented, “Food is linked to politics — both domestic and foreign. The state of affairs in the agricultural sector influences the well-being and socio-political stability of the country. This is the most important factor of our independence. Imagine if we didn’t have food and clothing: the bare necessities. What sort of independence

would we have? Where would we be today?”

The high quality of Belarusian food, tractors and harvesters is well known globally and we need to preserve our reputation, allowing our agricultural sector to take a technological leap. This primarily refers to strictest observation of all technological chains.

The seminar lasted for almost five hours, examining in detail almost all areas of the agro-industrial complex, including the role of science in improving the effectiveness of the agricultural industry. Heads of regions and enterprises reported about concrete areas of work on regional and local scales.

Farmers’ private and practical issues were discussed, as were more general topics, such as associations of enterprises, equipment leasing, training, payments for agricultural products, financing and credit, reorganisation and bankruptcy procedures, and the carrying out of reclamation and breeding work.

The President assured all those present that Belarus will continue to support its agricultural organisations. However, funds will be allocated only to promising projects. “Money is available but projects should pay for themselves; we need strong guarantees,” Mr. Lukashenko stressed.



Market is awaiting beneficial proposals

Exports of Belarusian goods to the United States of America are growing dynamically

By Vladimir Velikhov

The Charge d'Affaires, a.i. of Belarus to the USA, Pavel Shidlovsky, tells us that 2017 saw Belarusian exports to the US grow by 70 percent, reaching \$225 million. "However, if we assess the capacity of the US market, these figures remain insignificant. The USA accounts for less than 1 percent of total exports for Belarusian goods," says Mr. Shidlovsky. "Internal demand in the USA is so high that, despite the power of the US economy and attempts to pursue a protectionist policy of 'buy American' by the current Administration of the White House, internal production is unable to satisfy market needs. Marketing departments of Belarusian enterprises have the potential to achieve much more."

Belarusian exports to the USA currently focus on potash fertilisers, metal goods, roentgen devices, liquid-crystalline devices, furniture, nitrogen fertilisers, linens, fibre glass, wood processing goods, confectionery and canned fish. Consumer goods are in the minority, but this segment of Belarusian exports has been growing.

"Speaking of prospects for the supply of Belarusian goods, we should note that Belarus has no country certification to supply meat to the USA, while supplies of dairy goods are restricted by quota volumes. Other consumer goods manufactured in Belarus aren't under such restrictions but the first steps to promote them to major US chain stores are only being made now. Smaller chains are already selling Belarusian candies, chocolates, biscuits, canned fish and honey, across the USA, but volumes are relatively small. They're yielding several million US Dollars annually,



Metals headed for export

and the dynamics of growth are good, so we must build on that. Meanwhile, supplies of furniture produced by a resident of Mogilev free economic zone are being sold globally, including within the USA, via a famous internationally furniture chain."

The diplomat sees significant capacity for growth, thanks to Americans' purchasing power and sustainable demand for most types of imported goods, despite severe competition. According to Mr. Shidlovsky, Belarusian enterprises need to invest in building a presence, doing market research and advertising,

as well as gaining certification, and establishing contacts with partners across the USA.

He mentioned the 1st Belarusian-American forum for small and medium-sized businesses, which took place last year. 2017 saw the highest level of exports to the USA since Belarus began its independent bilateral relations. Worth \$570 million (up 30 percent on 2016), this brought a positive trade balance of \$488 million. Information technologies were responsible for around 95 percent of services exported from Belarus, reaching an unprecedented level last year, of over \$0.5 billion (up 26 percent on 2016). Primarily this was due to residents of the High-Tech Park. Outsourcing still accounts for a large share of exports but specialists note that the HTP should help move Belarus' IT industry from an outsourcing model to a product model. Plans are closely connected with the decree signed by the President of Belarus 'On the Development of Digital Economy', which includes many proposals for the IT community.

As far as exports of other types of services are concerned, in 2017, transport services doubled and the volume of tourist services rose by 60 percent. Experts believe that positive dynamics will continue, helped by the liberalisation of the visa regime in Belarus.

Speaking of tourism, Mr. Shidlovsky mentioned Belarus' pavilion at the New York Times Travel Show, in January of this year. It was the first time that Belarus has taken part, with its pavilion arousing great interest. A familiarisation tour is scheduled for representatives of the US tourist industry this summer, across Belarus, so that they can learn, first hand, of what's on offer. The first such trip took place last June.

What's in the bowels of the Earth

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarusian geologists study the prospects of uncovering hydrocarbons in Podlyasko-Brestskaya and Orshanskaya basins

Practically all industrial deposits in the northern area of the Pripyat flexure have been exploited. "We're moving to new areas of study. This year, work has begun to assess the prospects of revealing hydrocarbons within the boundaries of the Podlyasko-Brestskaya and Orshanskaya basins. These researches are being conducted with the aim of assessing the prospects of detecting accumulations of raw hydrocarbon deposits and to prepare recommendations for prospective drilling and seismic operations at promising sections," explains Olga Bezko, the Director of the Geology Institute. She noted that these works are expected to be conducted with the involvement of foreign investors. According to the data of the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, the approved balance deposits of oil in Belarus total around 46 million tonnes — enough to provide the country's needs for 35 years, under the current rates of extraction of 1.6-1.7 million tonnes per year.

Roadmap of export supplies

By Alexey Fedosov

Vietnam keen to import Belarusian machinery and dairy goods

Promising supply lines have been discussed during the working visit of the governmental delegation of Belarus, headed by the Deputy Prime Minister, Vladimir Semashko. The latter met with Vietnamese President Tran Dai Quang to discuss bilateral co-operation in all fields of mutual interest. Tran Dai Quang spoke highly of his visit to Belarus in June 2017 and stressed the importance of the agreements reached then. In his words, Belarus and Vietnam also need to maintain existing political and economic relations at a high level.

During his Vietnam visit, Mr. Semashko held talks with Nguyen Duc Chung, the Chairman of the Hanoi People's Committee. The two sides discussed the terms of further supplies of Belarusian buses to the capital of Vietnam. Hanoi also showed interest in importing a wide range of Belarus-made automobile machinery, dairy products and medications, and in setting up joint ventures to make these products in Vietnam.

Multifunctional Gazprom Centre to be constructed by late 2020

By Oleg Bogomazov

The Gazprom Centre multifunctional complex will be built in Minsk by late 2020, noted the Director General of Gazprom Transgaz Belarus, Vladimir Mayorov

"At present, we've instructed the contractor who was selected through tender. A decree has been signed to extend the

construction period to December 2020. By this time, the centre will have been built," noted Vladimir Mayorov.

Codest, an Italian company, will be the general contractor for the project. Gazprom Transgaz Belarus is the investor and customer.

Codest is a part of the Italian group of companies, Rizzani De Eccher. Set up in

1831, the construction holding company began operations in Eastern Europe and the CIS in 1984. The company's portfolio includes the reconstruction of Milan Central Train Station and historical sites in Venice (Italy), the construction of the VTB-Dinamo Central Stadium (Moscow), VTB Arena Park (Moscow), the headquarters for the banking group Intesa

Sanpaolo (Turin, Italy), Cloche d'Or Shopping Centre (Luxembourg), Portopiccolo (Trieste, Italy), the Ismaili Centre (Dushanbe, Tajikistan), the Abu Dhabi Grand Mosque (UAE), Four Seasons Hotel (Baku, Azerbaijan), and Radisson Blu Hotel (Kiev, Ukraine).

The construction of the multifunctional facility started in Minsk in 2015.

Minsk hosts 25th *Healthcare of Belarus* exhibition, featuring 230 participants from seventeen countries. Showcasing the latest medical achievements, including robotic surgery, medical simulators, advanced tomographs, portable and stationary ultrasound scanners and sensors, electrocardiographs and Holter systems, new drugs and cosmeceuticals, the forum was opened by the Health Minister, Valery Malashko. He noted that the future of Belarus' health system relies on digital transformation.

By Inna Kabysheva

Patients should soon see remote interaction with doctors, gadgets for remote monitoring of vital signs, and digital medical records and hospital sheets, with 2018 being the year of e-health.

First domestic computer tomograph

The Belarus-made Ventum device was demonstrated at the exhibition by Adani company. Product manager Yelizaveta Drozd explains that the 64-slice system will allow for qualitative angiography — the study of blood vessels — and the examination of a patient's heart. Thanks to fast and accurate scanners, doctors can examine even the smallest vessels and see whether there are patches on arterial walls. In addition, the novelty will show blood flow in brain tissue and the lungs. Tomograph software helps doctors view images in 2D, as well as making 3D- and multi-planar reconstructions. Devices should become available at medical institutions this year, costing 30-40 percent less than imported versions.

Artificial skin

Specialists at the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering have spent two years developing a biomedical cell product: artificial skin. Having

Doctors on threshold of new era



More than 240 stands from seventeen countries display produce and technologies at 25th *Healthcare of Belarus* international exhibition

passed state expertise and pre-clinical tests, it's now undergoing clinical examinations.

"The tissue equivalent of skin — as we call our development — helps true skin to grow. We place derma cells (fibroblasts from a particular patient) on the 'breathing' substrate, in addition to keratinocytes (which help form the epidermis)," explains a senior fellow of the Institute, Candidate of Biological Sciences Sergey Pinchuk. "Previously, skin from another body was needed for transplantation, for example, in burn cases. It's now possible to grow it, which will help us in treating burns."

Rooms for primary care physicians

Rooms are soon to be equipped with instruments to measure eye and blood pressure, and blood sugar levels, while assessing the respiratory system, and performing ECG tests, and examination of the eardrums. With just a single visit, patients will be able to undergo tests which previously required consultation with several specialists. Natalia Moroz-Volodazhskaya, an Assistant Professor of General Medical Practice at the Belarusian State Medical University, is confident that this approach will help ease the workload of specialists, while ensuring greater comfort for patients. As a result, treatment will be prompt.

Minskaya Square appears in Budapest

By Olga Zdanovich

Walking through the Hungarian capital, you'll now find a place called Minskaya Square, as named by Budapest City Council

The square was named unanimously by deputies, being located near the new Belarusian Embassy building, which opened in 2015 and is owned by Belarus. The opening ceremony was attended by the Hungarian Foreign Minister, Péter Szijjártó, who is a frequent guest in Minsk. In 2017, Mr. Szijjártó represented Hungary at Central European Initiative (CEI) sessions.

The idea of naming a corner of Budapest after our country was suggested by the Belarusian

Ambassador to Hungary, H.E. Mr. Alexander Khainovsky. He approached the City Council of Budapest, offering the idea as an extension of our co-operation, explains the Belarusian Embassy's Counsellor for Political Affairs, Andrey Avramenko.

Mr. Avramenko tells us, "In 2016, the Mayoral Offices of Minsk and Budapest signed an agreement on co-operation. Since then, our bilateral contacts have activated considerably, with our mayors exchanging visits. Several factors influence the development of Belarusian-Hungarian relations, including personal contacts between our Foreign Ministers and the work of our embassies. The Hungarian 'Openness to the East' policy is similar to Belar-



rus' multi-vector foreign policy in its goals, which facilitates our rapprochement.

The Hungarian Government is keen to enhance the region's role within Central and Eastern Europe, advocating for pan-European processes and against

sanctions and pressure. Belarus adheres to the same position, wishing to use dialogue to forge relations between states. Hungary also shares Belarus' vision for an 'integration of integrations'. Back in 2015, the Prime Minister of Hungary, Viktor Or-

bán, said that no contradictions existed between the EU and the EAEU. He believed that the two unions could form partnerships. Hungary and Belarus were the first European capitals to sign an agreement with China, on co-operation as part of the *Belt and Road* project. Such points of coincidence are reflected in our mutual trade and investments.

Relations between states are similar to human relations: we need to find what unites us rather than finding contradictions. Belarus and Hungary are now united by Minskaya Square, and Budapest is preparing for Days of Minsk, scheduled for April, taking place for the first time. The mayoral offices of both capitals are involved in its organisation.

Village of children's dreams



Nikolay Burnos

By Valentina Kozlovich

Ten years ago, it was a modest village — a vanishing scenery. Meanwhile, Mr. Burnos was even haunting his childish dream: as he personally admitted, he always dreamt of making his small homeland the most beautiful. The day came when he realised: time came to start. Initially, he laid phone lines for villagers, then put an asphalt road, also laying gas and water lines. The man then built a tourist complex, a sports arena, a church and a Sunday school. In the coming future, a new shop and a water bottling facility will start their work. However, there are many more plans.

Manager Vitaly Germas takes me to the complex for an excursion. In 2010, he came here to work as a restaurant waiter, as part of his obligatory post-education employment. The young man received high education in tourism and is now a

Tourists are now coming to the village of Kletnoe in the Brest Region's Pruzhany District from all over the globe. This is the homeland of Nikolay Burnos and his countrymen thank the man for his work. The successful businessman from St. Petersburg has invested almost \$30m, transforming beyond recognition.



Ethno-folk complex, run by Kletnoe-born Nikolay Burnos

trustee of the complex's owner.

Local sights are fascinating: the forest, a lake in mist, snow... Everything looks as if a glossy magazine cover. The complex unites eight wooden guests houses equipped with all amenities, a restaurant and a medical centre. A salt cave

is being built. Thujas and pines, benches and wrought-iron lanterns are along the alleys. A small bridge leads to an artificial island where a tower with a balcony is situated. There are two lakes on the territory: a large lake with an island and a small lake with a fountain and splashing trout.

We then go to the church built in honour of the holy martyrs: Vera, Nadezhda and Lyubov (Faith, Hope and Love). The building is a well known copy of the Tikhvinskaya chapel in Naval Cathedral

of Saint Nicholas in Kronstadt (Mr. Burnos graduated from the Kronstadt Naval School). The bell tower is not less impressive: eight bells were cast in Voronezh.

The Sunday school building is situated not far. It has tables and books and is fully ready for classes. Actually, there are only two schoolchildren in Kletnoe but children from neighbouring villages may come. "As soon as we find a priest, the school will open," Mr. Germas adds. Mr. Burnos has already built a house for him.

"On Epiphany, I plunged into the holy lake near the tourist complex. I've never done this before. We also have our own choir, our villagers sing there. Some have not even known that they can sing," 70 year old Maria Gorustovich speaks of the positive changes in the rural life.

Has the countryman awakened interest?

Of course, we are very grateful to him. He is a good man. Every New Year we receive presents from him.

Do you remember Nikolay Burnos in his childhood?

He was like all others. He worked much.

Kletnoe is located on the edge of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. When a bypass road was laid, the renewed village has become open for passers-by's eyes. Mr. Burnos believes many more complexes of the kind should be constructed along the highway. "Local places are amazing. I've always remembered my small homeland. I've been here in my soul. It's pleasant to acknowledge that I've personally contributed to the major changes which are taking place in Belarus," he says.



REFERENCE

Not only business projects but also books, memories and pictures act as a kind of gratitude to the native land. For example, there are two private museums in the Bereza District. Vera Zakharova, a granddaughter of Fiodor Zelenko from the village of Mikhalki — lives in Kiev. Her grandfather's house is now the Grandfather Fiodor House-Museum. Neighbouring Soboli also runs its own private museum: Sabalevski Maentak; it's an ethno-yard, an open air museum of folk architecture and lifestyle. Brest's artist Anatoly Zheludko — born here — has not only collected exhibits for the museum (utensils, tools, dishware and clothes) but also painted portraits of many local villagers, also writing a book about the village and its people. It would be printed as soon as a publisher is found.

Bowing to craftsmanship

Gallery of Crafts opens in Mogilev to mark Year of Native Land

By Alexander Pimenov

The gallery is located in a specially equipped building at Mogilev's State Economic Professional and Technical College, displaying a wide collection of hand-made items, gifts and souvenirs, created by teachers and students of the college. In total, it boasts more than 500 exhibits made from straw, as well as decorative and carved wooden and sewn items.

"This is one of our projects to mark the Year of Native Land, aiming to develop and popularise traditional folk crafts. We're offering a tour of our museum, enabling people to get acquainted

with the history of the college and the city of Mogilev, while learning about the regional centre's architectural monuments and the most important landmarks," notes Oleg Bakhanovich, the Director of Mogilev's State Economic Professional and Technical College.

In celebrating and promoting Belarusian crafts, college students and employees have created exclusive collections of coats of arms and historical monuments from the Mogilev Region and all Belarus, as well as decorative panels dedicated to the flora and fauna of the country, inspired by Yanka Kupala's verse. These items annually take prizes at Republican exhibitions of dec-



One of the gallery exhibits

orative-and-applied arts.

Regardless of their main spheres of education, youngsters are taught elements of some other professions and crafts that are traditional for Belarus. The sale of crafts items, as well as various services provided by the college, enabled it to earn more than Br800,000 in extra-budgetary funds (\$400,000 equivalent) in 2017.

The money is primarily spent on providing targeted assistance to vulnerable children, as well as developing material and technical resources within the educational institution.



Several dead in Germany as van drives into crowd

Three people are dead and 20 injured after a man drove a van into a crowd outside a popular restaurant in Muenster, western Germany, before committing suicide, said authorities. It happened in a pedestrian area of the historic city as many people were out enjoying the warm spring sunshine last Saturday afternoon.



Of those injured, six people remain in a critical condition. Earlier, the Interior Ministry said four people had died, but officials have since revised the total number of dead down to three. In a joint statement, Muenster police and the state prosecutor's office identified the victims as a 51-year-old woman and a

65-year-old man.

They also confirmed the suspect shot himself dead at the scene. State prosecutor Martin Botzenhardt said the investigation led authorities to believe the perpetrator was a '48-year-old man from Muenster' adding that there were no leads yet as to the motive but that authorities were

looking at 'all possible angles'.

Earlier, the Interior Ministry in North-Rhine Westphalia Herbert Reul said there was 'no indication' of links to radical Islam. Police cordoned off large parts of the city centre and evacuated a number of buildings as they searched the van.

The attack happened near

the Kiepenkerl statue in a pedestrian area of the old town. Police asked residents to avoid the area so as not to impede emergency services.

Chancellor Angela Merkel and German President Frank-Walter Steinmeier expressed their condolences to the victims and their families.

Zuckerberg admits 'Cambridge Analytica data leak' is his mistake

Mark Zuckerberg has admitted his company failed to take a broad enough view of its responsibility which led to the information of up to 87 million members being improperly shared with a political consultancy firm

The figure is 37 million more than previously reported by Facebook which was buried at the end of a blogpost by the company's technology officer, Mike Schroepfer.

"It's clear now that we didn't do enough," Mark Zuckerberg said. "We didn't focus enough on preventing abuse and thinking through how people could use these tools to do harm as well."

Seals are new allies in climate change monitoring

Norwegian ecologists have recruited seals as a new ally for monitoring the effects of climate change

The team on Bouvet Island in the antarctic have equipped 15 elephant seals and 20 fur seals with satellite transmitters to send back data. "Well the tags that they wear for us will provide us with information on the salt content of the water column, how deep they dive, and the temperatures that they are experiencing as they are diving," says ecologist Andrew Lowther.

The seals dive to depths of two kilometres below sea level and swim under ice.

Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye given 24-year jail term

Former South Korean President Park Geun-hye has been given a 24-year jail sentence after a court ruled that she is guilty of corruption

Park was forced out of office last year following accusations she made conglomerates pay 59 million Euros into private slush funds run by a friend.

The daughter of the country's former military dictator — who has been in jail for more than a year — denied the charges bribery, abuse of power and coercion. The scandal exposed webs of corruption between political leaders and the countries conglomerates.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Space scientists have big plans to avert an asteroid apocalypse

A1,500-foot-wide asteroid named Bennu is not going to devastate our planet on September 25th, 2135. Brent Barbee, an expert on space hazards at NASA's Goddard Space Flight Centre, is clear on that point, "It'll only closely approach Earth, not impact Earth." It should miss us by at least 65,000 miles.

But Barbee is also clear that if Bennu were to hit us, the consequences would be ugly. The 40-million-tonne space rock would unleash a force equal to 80,000 atomic bombs like the one dropped on Hiroshima, enough to flatten build-

ings for dozens of miles in all directions. And while Bennu is the most dangerous asteroid on the planetary science watch list, 1,894 others are currently listed as 'potentially hazardous objects'.

To size up the risk, NASA is sending a spacecraft called OSIRIS-REx to explore Bennu. The probe, shaped like an eight-foot cube with solar-panel wings, launched in September 2016 and will arrive at the space rock this August. When it does, it will nestle up to Bennu, testing rendezvous and landing techniques and collecting a surface sample to investigate the composition of such asteroids.

Britain's sugar tax on soft drinks comes into effect

Britain's sugar tax on soft drinks came into effect, a move that will lead to some higher prices as the country seeks to battle childhood obesity

The tax, announced in March 2016, has already cut sugar content in drinks by 45 million kg per year, Britain's Treasury said, as over 50 percent of manufacturers have reformulated their products to be below the levy's sugar threshold.

"Our teenagers consume nearly a bathtub of sugary drinks each year on average, fuelling a worrying obesity trend in this country," Public Health Minister Steve Brine said. "The soft drinks industry levy is groundbreaking policy that will help to reduce sugar intake, whilst funding sports programmes and nutritious breakfast clubs for children."

Because of the reformula-



tions, the Treasury now expects the levy to raise only about 240 million pounds (\$336 million) in its first year, less than half of its prior forecast of 520 million.

Soft drink makers including Coca-Cola, Britvic and Lucozade Ribena Suntory have reformulated drinks, though Coca-Cola Classic, the nation's top-selling branded soft drink, is subject to the tax.

Retailers Tesco, Asda and Morrisons have also reformulated their own-label fizzy drinks to be below the levy's threshold.



During the presentation

Highest spirituality founded in unselfishness



Discussing icon's significance

By Alexander Pimenov

March celebrates 83 years since the birth of the Metropolitan of Minsk and Slutsk, the Honourable Patriarchal Exarch of all Belarus, Filaret. The National Art Museum's exhibition of the icon of the 'Selected Saints (Apostles Peter and Pavel, Elijah the Prophet, Venerable Macarius Zheltovodsky and Unzhensky) in Prayer'

is the work of a Russian icon painter from the first half of the 19th century.

The icon was donated to the museum this February, by professional artist Alexander Malyarevich, who specialises in monumental and decorative art. The depiction of Saint Macarius (1349-1444) among the holy protectors of the family is likely to have been requested by the patron of the artist. A mon-

National Art Museum presents icon of 'Selected Saints (Apostles Peter and Pavel, Elijah the Prophet, Venerable Macarius Zheltovodsky and Unzhensky) in Prayer'

astery is portrayed beneath the saints, illustrating the foundation of several monasteries near Nizhny Novgorod and Kostroma, by Macarius.

The Director General of the National Art Museum of Belarus, Vladimir Prokoptsov, delivered a speech at the presentation, citing the words of the Metropolitan Filaret on the need to preserve the high spirituality of the Belarusian nation. He also accentuated the role played by the Filaret in strengthening Orthodox belief in the country. The abbot of All Saints' Parish, in Minsk, Archpriest Fiodor Povny, also delivered a speech on the many decades of unselfish service by the

Metropolitan Filaret, helping Christian convents and monasteries. He stressed the Archpastor's fatherly love of his flock and noted the role of museum employees in preserving the cultural heritage of the country. He thanked Alexander Malyarevich for his valuable contribution to the museum collection.

Yelena Karpenko, the Head of the Ancient Belarusian Art Department of the National Art Museum of Belarus, also



Painter Alexander Malyarevich

spoke, detailing the importance of the donated icon, its artistic and historical value. Mr. Malyarevich gave his thanks for the organisation of the event, and the restoration of the icon, receiving a certificate of thanks from Mr. Prokoptsov.

About women-artists without feminism

By Veniamin Mikheev

Throughout history, all forms of art have praised female beauty, glorifying the ideal of motherhood and female virtue, and reflecting the harmony of women's spirituality. Women have acted as muse and model.

As to why there were so few great female artists, we must blame this on social taboos prior to the 20th century, rather than lack of talent. Last century, much changed, bringing us Anna Akhmatova, Marina Tsvetaeva, Zinaida Gippius, Natalia Goncharova, Olga Rozanova, and Lyubov Popova, among others. Women were no longer relegated to the role of an artist's muse but became equal participants in the artistic process.



Painter Zoya Litvinova

Significant Belarusian art figures include Nadezhda Khodasevich-Leger, Alena Kish, Yelena Kabishcherson, Vera Yermolaeva, Yevgenia Magaril, Raisa Kudrevich, Valeriana Zholtok, Zoya Litvinova, Svetlana



Museum exhibition explores female inspiration

Gorbunova, Ninel Schastnaya, Lyudmila Myagkova, Angelina Belyukova, Alena Los, Vera Gavrilyuk, and Olga Sazykina.

The success of Belarusian female artists over the past decade is proven by ex-

hibitions, with participation in prestigious international exhibitions and, of course, the presence of their works in museum collections: most notably, the National Art Museum of Belarus.

Belarus' major museum



Work by Valeriana Zholtok

hosts works by Yelena Shlegel, Natalia Zaloznaya, Zoya Litvinova, Svetlana Katkova, Olga Melnik-Malakhova, Ilona Kosobuko, Tatiana Radivilko, Larisa Zhuravovich, Valentina Shoba, Lyudmila Myagkova, Olga Sazykina, Tamara Sokolova, Galina Gorovaya and Ksenia Shappo. You can view examples of their work in this publication.

Averter-bird rescues, protects and helps increase happiness



The Bereza Centre of Crafts has revived the previously popular production of an averter bird made from wood chips. Young master-craftsman, Alexander Lavrinovich, was taught by the famous wood carver, Nikolay Goloburda, from the village of Sudilovichi. Many years ago, the bird rescued young Nikolay in Germany when the fascist regime sent him to a forced labour camp. In his spare time, the boy made amulets and exchanged them for bread: this helped him survive. Last year, the wooden bird was included in Belarus' List of Intangible Cultural Heritage.



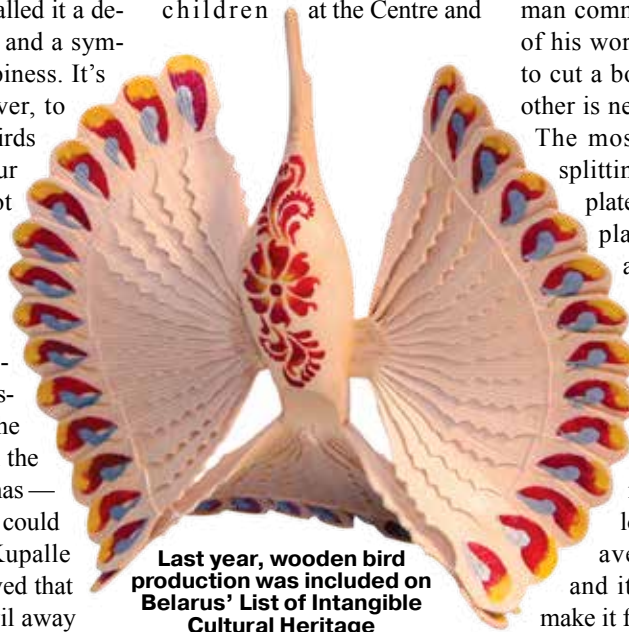
Master of folk arts Alexander Lavrinovich with his home-crafted averter-bird

By Pavel Losich

Our ancestors believed this wooden averter had a miraculous power; they called it a defender of children and a symbol of family happiness. It's a challenge however, to find one of these birds and see it with your own eyes: it cannot be kept for long. The Director of the Bereza Centre of Crafts — Natalia Kovalevich — explains, "Made of aspen or lime logs, the amulet was kept in the house until Christmas — to be then burnt. It could also be burnt on Kupalle night. It was believed that the bird took all evil away

by burning it in the fire and then making a new amulet."

Alexander Lavrinovich offers master classes for school-children at the Centre and



Last year, wooden bird production was included on Belarus' List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

even small children can help with the process of bird making: they observe the master's work with great interest. The man comments on each stage of his work, "One log is used to cut a body and a head; another is needed for the wings. The most delicate stage is splitting the logs into thin plates. The thinner these plates, the more open a bird appears. The logs are connected to each other and then the 'feathers' are made. These wooden birds are not varnished and no glue is used, following tradition. The avert must be 'alive' and it's even possible to make it from fresh wood."

Another craftsman at the Bereza Centre, Alexander Prokopchuk, has mastered the virtually forgotten craft. He has even made a sketch of the sculpture devoted to the averter-bird: it is there for anyone to see at the Bereza central park. Most of Mr. Prokopchuk's works however, are devoted to another symbol of the Bereza land: the Carthusian Monastery. The master is worried about its fate. "This historical object must be preserved for our heirs. Sadly, it is now being destroyed. In five years, nothing will be left: the unique monastery will simply disappear," he says.

Many of the local traditions have been preserved and even renewed owing to the efforts of Ms. Kovalevich. The craft of making wooden birds has

been learnt from the old masters; even in the past, there were few of them and almost all have died by now. "Many locals remember that these birds were sold in the Bereza market in the past. However, nobody knew who produced them. We've discovered craftsmen on the outskirts of the Zditovskaya Pushcha and in the Drogichin District — learning from them. Later, we found out that averters of the kind were produced in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha: similar technologies were used but not everything was similar. Thanks to the bird, we've revealed a whole layer of Belarusian traditional culture: the production of wooden toys. We've revived some of them, but much work lies ahead," she commented.

Place where everyone can find their own ABC-book

By Oleg Bogomazov

Belarusian ABC-Book: 400 Years of History exhibition — at the National Library of Belarus — enables us to penetrate deep into the world of childhood and to study national history

"One of the goals of the exhibition is to show Belarusians that we have something to be proud of. It was Belarusians who invented the alphabet book, and this is really a reason to be proud," noted the Deputy Director of the National Library of Belarus, Alexander Susha. Secondly, the exhibition enables us to return to a time when we had only just begun to study the world around us. Finally, via the ABC-book, we see the history of national culture: ancient times, the Soviet period, the new Belarusian revival of the early 20th century, the elimination of illiteracy and the military era,

even books of the Belarusian diaspora.

The exhibition boasts interesting and precious exhibits, for example, visitors can get see



Illustrated ABC-book

the most ancient alphabet book among all those in Belarus — the Vilensky ABC Book from 1767. "It's original in its content and is still not well researched, books from the 1920-1930s,

during the commission to eliminate illiteracy in Belarus, are also of great interest." Visitors to the exhibition can trace four centuries of Belarusian alphabet books.

The exhibition displays 16th-19th century ABC-books with very varied composition, illustrations, artistic decoration and pedagogical teaching methods of how to read and to write. The exhibits also include one of the most ancient domestic books for study, as well as famous books from Orthodox monasteries and little-known editions for Uniates and Old Believers. Belarusian textbooks on how to teach reading from the early 20th century represent a special interest: there are Belarusian ABC-books and chrestomathies by Karus Kaganets, Tetka (Aloiza Pashkevich), Yakub Kolas, Vatslav Lastovsky, Yanka Stankevich and Leonilla Goretskaya.

The famous alphabet Book



At the exhibition

by Anatoly Klyshka — considered to be one of the best Belarusian ABC-books of the 20th-early 21st century — was first released in 1969 and was republished 23 times in the Belarusian, Russian and Polish languages. He was awarded a gold medal at the International Leipzig Book Fair in 1977 and was recognised as the best textbook of the year at the exhibition in

Frankfurt-am-Main in 2004.

The most interesting task for guests at the Museum of Books will be an attempt to find the ABC-book with which they started their school life. The atmosphere of childhood is supplemented by old diaries and notebooks, as well as desk essentials and other artefacts of school life — unknown to contemporary pupils.

Arena finally takes its shape

Minsk's Dinamo Stadium to open by end of May, becoming major arena for 2nd European Games, to be held in 2019

By Dmitry Komarovskiy

The construction site in the heart of the capital has been attracting attention for almost six years, but is near completion, the stadium and its surroundings resembling an anthill, with paving now being laid, as well as roof. Trucks continue to gather at the entrance each day, with two concrete pumps working hard. It seems like an ordinary oval but the construction is complex, observing all technological regulations, to meet the requirements necessary to host top-level competitions.

There field may not yet resemble an emerald lawn, since turf won't be laid until early May, but drainage is being organised, to ensure it doesn't

become water-logged. Dinamo is set to enjoy one of the best fields in the country, notes the head of SU-94 of Stroytrest #1 JSC, Dmitry Sai. It's certainly an impressive site, as Mr. Sai explains. "We plan to cover the racing tracks in late April and, in May, we'll work on the pitch, depending on the weather. Nobody plants grass in winter but, as soon as the weather is appropriate, we'll begin laying turf on the reserve field. The irrigation system is now being laid in the main arena. Afterwards, we'll turn to the heating system. 90 percent of seats are already installed and we're now working on the roof. Finishing work is in full swing inside the building and light towers are already fixed, with spotlights being mounted.

The first section should be lit by early May."

The proximity of the deadline affects the pace of work, with an additional workforce employed: around 1,350 specialists, with some working in two shifts of 12 hours. Some continue through the night, working under spotlights.

After May 31st (when construction works will be complete), specialists will conduct testing of all systems and services for another twenty days. The official launch is scheduled for July 21st: exactly one year before the start of the 2nd European Games.



George Katulin (R) sums up the results of the visit

High assessment from international sports experts

By Yegor Vetrov

Delegates from National Olympic Committees praise level of Minsk's preparation for major sports forum in 2019

Minsk's sports infrastructure has inspired praise, with the Director of the 2nd European Games 2019 Directorate, George Katulin, noting 'great progress in preparations for the upcoming Games over the past year'. Summing up the results of a two-day visit by representatives of the European NOC to the capital of Belarus, he stated, "The opinion of these people is very important for our directorate, as they clearly understand the conditions that should be provided for athletes."

Makis Asimakopoulos, a Sports Consultant to the European Olympic Committee, stressed the need for efficient use of human resources ahead of the 2nd European Games. "The number of personnel in the directorate has been growing. They do their job

well, with expertise and skills used well, to organise major sports forums. The European NOC delegates were satisfied with their visit, praising the Athletes' Village for being well-located and compact. The guests had no significant remarks for the organising committee," he highlighted.

"I'll be returning to Bucharest with exhaustive information on preparations for the 2019 sports forum in the Belarusian capital. We've visited many facilities, and I can't praise one above any other. All are ready to host competitions in the near future. I believe that our athletes will find them comfortable in June 2019," said Florin Misca, the Deputy General Secretary of Romania's NOC. The guests were also impressed with the number of billboards on Minsk streets advertising the upcoming high-profile sports event.

The NOC representatives' visit is the first of three trips scheduled prior to the 2nd European Games. Representatives of participating countries will be able to learn more about preparations in July and December.



Minsk's Dinamo Stadium has already acquired modern contours

Young genius from the world of chess

By Oleg Samsonov

Mother's wise move

Yegor Grinko, aged 7 and born in Gomel, becomes USA chess champion in his age group

Not long ago, Yegor won the US National Chess Championship, beating twenty-two rivals in his age category. The young genius' family has moved abroad for his father's employment, but Yegor attended Gomel's sports school for a full year beforehand. His mother, Tatiana, was determined to help her son pursue his chess career, keeping in touch with his Gomel coach and paying \$55 per hour for American coaching. Yegor has much improved his skills over the past six months, taking part in twelve tournaments. His granny and first coach have followed his successes attentively.

Valentina Fedorina talks to her grandson daily, online. Of course, she misses him, and likes to know how he's doing with his chess. "To achieve anything, work, effort and diligence are required. My daughter is the same. Tatiana has begun training her son in the same way. She's a teacher of English and, at the age of two, Yegor, knew English words and was attending various clubs and classes," she explains.

While staying at a resort, he saw another boy playing chess and showed interest; returning home, his parents began teaching him and he made good progress. He was doing well at sports school, until his family were obliged to move. Tatiana didn't want to go overseas but Valentina reassured her that Yegor's chess lessons could continue in the USA.

"Thanks to his mother, Yegor has become a champion. When he ran out with the cup in his hands, Tatiana's hands shook with excitement!" comments his grandmother. It then became clear that everything hadn't been in vain — including the money spent on coaching, participation in tournaments, and the stress, nerves and tiredness of thirty problems solved daily. He has now won six cups at various US tournaments.

Gomel's famous chess sports school No. 3 is also following Yegor's progress. Located on the ground floor of an ordinary apartment building in the city centre, there are always crowds of adults in the corridors; a quiet hum prevails, as its three halls host regular internal tournaments. Despite their young age (most being no older than Yegor), the students have already amassed incredible skill, amazing their parents.



Seven-year-old champion ready to conquer new peaks

Gala-concert of the week



Vitebsk hosts gala-concert of closing of 8th international inter-university modern dance festival, *Take a Step Forward!*

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 22nd April. *Vladimir Khodorovich. Painting: dedication to the artist's 70th birthday* Until 15th May. *Serving to the Homeland* Until 27th May. *Territory of Earthly Hopes*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 30th April. *Warriors on One Field* Until 1st May. Exhibition of Salvador Dali's graphics: *Divine Comedy*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 25th May. *Red Banner Belarusian Military District: History in Faces* Until 13th August. *Piotr Masherov: His Heart Beats for People*

STATE MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN LITERATURE HISTORY

13 Maxim Bogdanovich Street
Until 16th April. *Timkovichi: Treasury of Inspiration*

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 16th April. *Awaken Zhaleika*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 15th April. *Fiodor Yastreb's Poetic Palette* Until 20th April. *Belarusian ABC-Book: 400 Years of History* Until 28th April. *Natalia Kaminskaya: Personal* Until 31st August. *Enlightenment. Experience. Progress*

YAKUB KOLAS MUSEUM

5 Akademicheskaya Street
Until 20th April. *In Love to Homeland*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 16th April. *Treasury of Warmth* Until 18th April. *Look by Leo Timm* (Munich, Germany) Until 22nd April. *Nikas Safronov: Spring of Impressions* Until 13th May. *Bronislav Pilsudsky (1866-1918). From Sakhalin to Zakopane: Ethnographic Travel*

VANKOVICH'S HOUSE

33a Internatsionalnaya
Until 15th April. *Ivan Shishkin: Graphics*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 27th April. *World of Sergey Drozdov's Author's Dolls*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
12.04. *Spartacus*
13.04. *Cavalleria Rusticana* 15.04. *The Sleeping Beauty; The Nutcracker; Singing Together* 19.04. *With Love to Opera*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
12.04. *Tristan and Isolde* 13.04. *True Story of Lieutenant Rzhnevsky* 14.04. *Pygmalion* 15.04. *Thumbelina; Hotel of Two Worlds*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
12.04. *Fourth Planet* 13.04. *Zoika's Flat* 14.04. *An Ideal Husband* 15.04. *Red Hot Mamas* 18.04. *Lady for a Day* 19.04. *Tricks of Khanuma*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
12.04. *Bigamist; Zhmurik* 13.04. *Male, Singular* 14.04. *Goat's Island* 15.04. *Celestino's Career* 18.04. *Fool* 19.04. *Dreamworks*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
15.04. *Adventures of Hare Pif* 15.04. *Comedy*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
12.04. *School of Taxpayers; Shabany* 13.04. *Jeweller's Jubilee; Elza's Land* 14.04. *ART; Love as Militarism* 15.04. *Kolyady Night* 18.04. *Seagull* 19.04. *School of Taxpayers; Elza's Land*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
12.04. *Nobody Ever Said Life Would Be Easy* 13.04. *Abduction of Yelena* 14.04. *Who Laughs Last* 15.04. *Mechanical Man* 16.04. *Master and Margarita* 18.04. *Forgetting Herostratos* 19.04. *Aisedora. Dance of Love*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
12.04. *Adam's Jokes* 13.04. *Suffering of Common Sense* 14.04. *Three Giselles* 15.04. *Concrete* 18.04. *Doctor Raus' Career* 19.04. *Belarus. Didactics*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
12.04. *Interview with Witches* 13.04. *Belvedere* 14.04. *Little Red Riding Hood* 15.04. *Wash'Em'Clean* 18.04. *Tartuffe* 19.04. *Silk*