



How steel is hardened

It's commonly held that a state cannot be economically independent without its own metallurgy branch **Page 5**



Old Dubrovno's timeless legacy

Tissot, Romanson and Orient are brands currently setting watchmaking trends globally but there was a day when Belarusian timepieces were famous **Page 7**



What did Scarlett O'Hara wear?

Fashion brightly reflects time, with its own history **Page 10**

Clear words from UN tribune addressed to world community

Speaking at plenary meeting of 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit in New York, on September 27th, President of Belarus urges responsibility in ensuring peace and security

"If we don't stop the bloodshed in Europe, this fratricidal slaughter and the escalation of conflict, the entire civilised world will become 'hot'. Forgive me, but we'll take another step towards a global conflict, and perhaps towards another world war -- this time, at the centre of the civilised and advanced world," announced Mr. Lukashenko, as reported by the state BelTA News Agency. "Having entered a new millennium, do we not understand the fragility of this world and human civilisation?"

The Head of the Belarusian state emphasised his desire to see the 'great' understand a particular idea. "It's obvious that, today, there is no power that can stop you. All of you, however, are religious and many even pray in public. The Lord sees everything and is truthful. What if He becomes angry and punishes the guilty? Your people will innocently suffer because of your ventures," he urged.

He continued, "I think it is high time you stopped. We need to help people from poor countries acquire clothes, treatment and education. Feed the hungry and save children from death and you'll be rewarded. The 'great' of this world decided to democratise Iraq under the pretence of presence of chemical weapons in the country. Where are these chemical weapons? Where is democracy in Iraq? Why did you kill the President of Iraq? Where is this country now and what future is there for the Iraqi people? Do people in this country have better lives now? No."

The President of Belarus stressed, "You, guilty, would say it was a mistake and that it would be better to stop. But no, you have moved further. You began with Tunisia and ended up in Libya, playing the same scenario. You crucified President Gaddafi, destroying his state. Has it become better in Libya? No. Where is Libya today?"

"Gentlemen, maybe it was time to stop. No, you rushed to Syria. Why? Why are you killing people? Why are you throwing the President out of office? How does this concern you? Moreover, in destroying the country,

you have been destroying the first traces of our (and your) civilisation," stated Mr. Lukashenko. "From this very platform of the UN General Assembly, tell the world community what you want, what you are striving for."

"Today we need responsible politicians who are able to act globally and strategically, being ready to make decisions in the interest of the entire international community, and who are ready to meet halfway for the public good," the President of Belarus believes.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, in the modern world, many decisions are based on self-interest and short-term advantages.

In his words, steps taken by some states within the international arena do not take into account reality: the individuality of other countries and societies.

"I'm convinced that this is behind hundreds of human victims in Iraq, Libya, Syria and other countries. It has generated a mass flow of refugees running from war. There would have been no Islamic State. There would have been no eruption of terrorism in Europe and civil war in Ukraine. The 'would have been no' list is long," said

Mr. Lukashenko. "It is vital to talk about this because people from these countries will not understand us talking about development while millions, even billions, of people seek only to survive until the morning!" he said.

"Only mutual understanding and responsibility, the recognition of our diversity, and the renewal of trust will help us unite and safeguard peace and security, finding effective responses to global challenges and threats," Mr. Lukashenko added. He believes that such efforts would result in sustainable development of all states and would help enhance the role of the United Nations Organisation in global policy.

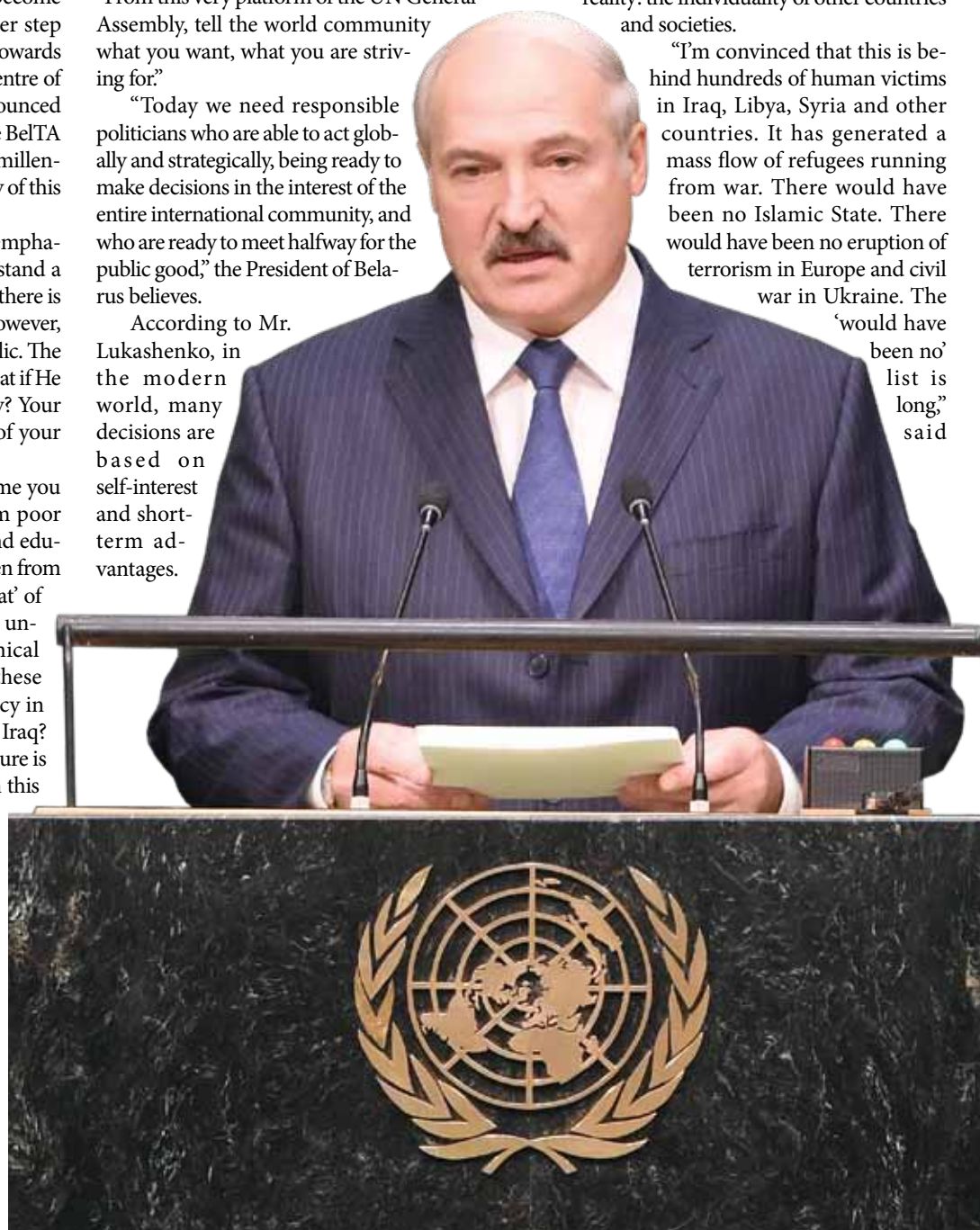
According to Mr. Lukashenko, the balance of power lost with the disintegration of the Soviet Union has never been restored. "There is no balance of power. There is no peace, no stability. There is systemic crisis. In any system, if only one 'power' exists, uncontrolled, it will seek only its own prosperity, addressing issues at the expense of others," the President of Belarus believes.

"The policy of hegemonism and national egoism leads to the wide use of pressure, sanctions, restrictions and military moves. As a result, we lose trust in each other," Mr. Lukashenko said. "It is clear that the rebalance of power is a long way off yet, before we have a multi-polar world. We can approach this goal if we act, rather than wait idly by."

According to the President of Belarus, to achieve this, we need to conduct dialogue, agreeing and finding ways for constructive co-operation.

"History teaches us that any state that pursues its sole leadership without a backward glance at the interests of others is doomed to failure and self-destruction. Any advantage at the expense of someone else is short-lived and loss-prone. Conventional wisdom says that one cannot build happiness upon others' unhappiness," Mr. Lukashenko stated.

Continued on page 3



PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS—2015

In full compliance with the law

Two largest observation missions in Belarus — from CIS and OSCE ODIHR — publish their interim reports on Presidential elections

By Marat Orekhov

The CIS observation team has declared: ‘The Republic of Belarus has created all necessary legal and organisational-technical conditions for international election observation, which testifies to the openness and transparency of the electoral process.’

The CIS observers note an equal approach towards all contenders during verification of signatures collected, and that the promotion and registration of candidates for the position of President, as well as investigation into complaints and addresses, was held in compliance with the Electoral Code.

The preliminary report from the OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights describes in detail the structure of our election system and the process of the pre-election campaign. The report states that some of those polled by the mission, including former candidates for the Presidential post, noted a ‘lack of equal opportunities’: believing that the process of signature verification wasn’t sufficiently transparent. The report doesn’t name its sources specifically but remarks that some opposition leaders called on that voters ‘ignore’ the elections. The report also states that limits on financial funding of candidates for the Presidential position have been raised.



Observer Alexander Kobrinsky conducts monitoring of pre-election campaign in Mogilev Region

How have these reports been perceived by participants of the elections?

Sergey Pigarev, Deputy Chairman of the Board of the Belaya Rus organisation, of the electoral headquarters of Presidential post candidate Alexander Lukashenko, notes that the assessments are ‘better’ than have been in past years. However, he admits, ‘We’ve already faced a situation of preliminary reports inspiring optimism, which has been later dispelled by final reports. We’ll be able

to speak closely on the assessment of the elections by international observers only after voting is complete. Now, the major conclusion from both reports is as follows: no one should relax, as we need to remain organised and disciplined, strictly observing all the requirements of our electoral legislation, without exception.’

The electoral headquarters of Sergei Gaidukevich agrees with both documents. Its head, Oleg Gaidukevich, explains, ‘We view both

reports as unbiased documents; definite shortcomings remain in the organisation of the elections. Much improvement is still required within the election system but, this time, our campaigning pickets have been broadcast daily on television and in the newspapers. This wasn’t the case previously, so it shows huge progress.’

The electoral headquarters of candidate Nikolay Ulakhovich completely agrees with the preliminary conclusions of the CIS team. As far

as the OSCE ODIHR mission report is concerned, the head of the headquarters, Mikhail Obrazov, remarks, ‘We don’t agree with the comments regarding lack of equal rights and opportunities among Presidential election candidates in Belarus. If some former contenders for the top position ‘had a chance to swing but failed to make the stroke’ they need to take responsibility themselves, rather than blame the election system. Both reports are, however, prudent and objective.’

Tatiana Korotkevich’s electoral headquarters isn’t yet ready to comment on the CIS observation mission report but the head of the headquarters, Andrey Dmitriev, believes that the document prepared by the OSCE ODIHR is weighty. He asserts, ‘It notes positive aspects in the election campaign, as well as those arousing concern, e.g., the mechanism of formation of electoral commissions. However, we hope that the calculation of votes by these commissions will be objective and fair.’

Undoubtedly, it’s good to receive weighty authoritative assessments from ‘outside’. However, we need to remember the most important aspect: the citizens of Belarus conduct elections primarily for themselves and are interested more than anyone else in them being organised smoothly, in full compliance with the law. We must all take our civil responsibility to vote seriously.

No grounds for disappointment

By Marat Orekhov

Interim reports on Presidential election monitoring — prepared by CIS observation mission and OSCE Office for Democratic Institutions and Human Rights (ODIHR) — have been already released, with other international structures also demonstrating interest towards our electoral process

The OSCE Parliamentary Assembly is among those keen to follow the elections closely, with its observation mission led by special co-ordinator Kent Harstedt, a Swedish parliamentarian. Mr. Harstedt is also the Vice President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly and is a truly interesting personality, being among the 138 passengers who survived the sinking of the Estonia ferry in 1994, with 989 people on board. Twenty years later, in 2015, Mr. Harstedt headed a mission of OSCE short-term observers to Ukraine’s parliamentary elections. This is his second visit to Belarus in just a few months. His recent talks with the Deputy Chairman of the House of Representatives, Victor Guminsky, resembled a warm meeting

of friends. Mr. Guminsky underlined, ‘I’m delighted that many issues — as we discussed during our previous meeting — are steadily being realised. Belarus is doing everything possible to ensure that you experience no problems during your mission in our country. I’m convinced that your high professionalism and huge experience in election observations will enable you to fulfil your mission successfully.’ He also expressed gratitude to Mr. Harstedt, asking him to send thanks to the President of the OSCE Parliamentary Assembly, Ilkka Kanerva, for the OSCE PA’s acceptance of Belarus’ invitation to observe the Presidential elections.

In turn, Mr. Harstedt thanked Belarus for its invitation, saying, ‘It’s a good sign that you’ve invited us and the Council of Europe, whose representatives will be observing the elections for the first time in many years. We welcome the fact that you’ve invited so many of us — to ensure our efficient work. Pleasingly, we’ve established interaction, which will simplify the work of our short-term observers. At the moment, we have every chance of fulfilling our goals, without obstacles.’



Meeting with OSCE Parliamentary Assembly Vice President Kent Harstedt

BE AWARE!

Elections-2015 for iPhones and iPads

The 2015 Elections mobile application is now available for iOS devices: iPhones and iPads. Previously, only Android based handsets were able to download the application. Already, over 3,500 users have done so, to gain information on the Belarusian election campaign. The application makes such data accessible and convenient for all.

OSCE PA representatives also visited the Foreign Ministry and met the Chair of the Central Election Committee, Lidia Yermoshina, who later commented, ‘They’ve expressed satisfaction with the process of our election campaign, noting their belief that they’ll face no disappointment on election day.’

A mission of short-term observers — led by Kent Harstedt — is due to come to Belarus on October 7th.

DIRECT SPEECH

Sergei LEBEDEV, the head of the CIS observation mission:

Thoughts that elections in Belarus are tiresome have no grounds. Everything is calm. Such a calm campaign indicates a stable society. It’s great that we haven’t seen any fighting or confrontation. I’ve been closely following the election campaign and appreciate the calm tone of candidates’ speeches, as well as their well-thought out ideas. This constructive approach shows a high organisational level and a sense of personal responsibility for the peace and stability of Belarus.

MT’S REFERENCE:

TV debates scheduled for October 3rd

Three Presidential candidates are to participate in TV debates. The Belarusian TV and Radio Company has received applications from Sergei Gaidukevich, Tatiana Korotkevich and Nikolay Ulakhovich. TV debates are scheduled for Saturday, October 3rd, at 5pm, lasting for an hour.

In memory of those who died during terrorist attacks on September 11th

On a working visit to the United States of America, the Head of the Belarusian state laid a wreath at the September 11 National Memorial & Museum, in New York, and upon the commemorative slab bearing the name of Irina Buslo of Belarus: one of

the 9/11 victims.

The memorial was built in memory of 3,000 people who died in terrorist acts on September 11th, 2001, near buildings of the World Trade Centre, the Pentagon, and also six people died in terrorist act in World

Trade Centre in February 1993. The memorial is located on the place of former buildings of World Trade Centre in a business part of Manhattan, near Wall Street.

Two water reservoirs of the memorial symbolise grief over victims

and represent the largest man-made waterfalls in the North America. The pools are located in foundation ditches of the Twin Towers of the World Trade Centre. The names of all people died in 2001 and 1993 were carved on bronze panels of facing of the pools.

Belarus stands for prevention of armed conflicts and threats to human life

Constructive role deserves respect

UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon thanks President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, for constructive support of the UN and the activities of Belarus in the organisation during the meeting on September 27th

Alexander Lukashenko and Ban Ki-moon discussed the situation in the south-east of Ukraine, stressing that victims among peaceful citizens are inadmissible.

The President of Belarus pointed out the importance of taking prompt resolute measures aimed at ending hostilities, especially in view of the possible escalation of the conflict in the entire Europe.

The UN Secretary General thanked Mr. Lukashenko for constructive role in the resolution of the conflict in Ukraine and noted that Minsk had become a symbol of peace.

Alexander Lukashenko also signed the Distinguished Guests Book.



Alexander Lukashenko and Ban Ki-moon



During the ceremony



Alexander Lukashenko and Raul Castro



Meeting with Christine Lagarde

This was noted by Alexander Lukashenko as he spoke at the plenary session of 2015 UN Sustainable Development Summit

According to the Belarusian Head of State, sustainable development of any country is impossible without peace and security. "The Belarusian people learned this enduring truth from their life experience. Last century, Belarus was the place of the bloodiest battles of the two world wars," reminded the President.

"Having lost one third of its population in the war against fascism, Belarus rose from the ashes, and now cherishes peace and concord in the society while striving to secure the well-being of its people and sustainable development of the state," underlines Mr. Lukashenko. The President paid attention that during the years of sovereign existence Belarus has fulfilled with honour the millennium development goals related to eradicating extreme poverty and hunger, achieving 100 percent adult literacy, promoting gender equality, social-political stability, and preventing ethnic and religious discrimination.

"We have no maternal mortality while the child mortality is the lowest in the world. The democracy is about these things rather than the ideas that our Western teachers are trying to impose on us," stresses Mr. Lukashenko.

Balanced approach for new programme

Belarus' co-operative prospects with International Monetary Fund (IMF), including possible new co-operation programme, discussed at a meeting between President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, and IMF Managing Director, Christine Lagarde

The Head of State expressed hope that the new programme will use a balanced approach to take into account the interests of the country and its policy, ensuring a high level of social security of its people.

During conversation the President thanked the IMF for a successful implementa-

tion of the Stand-by arrangement for 2009-2010 which softened the negative consequences of the external economic crisis.

The \$2.46bn Stand-By arrangement was approved in January 2009 for the period of 15 months. Later the programme was extended to \$3.52bn. In April 2010, the programme was successfully accomplished. In 2010-2014, Belarus was visited by the IMF post-programme monitoring missions. The loan was paid off in full in March 2015. Measures and events implemented under the programme helped the country secure a positive dynamics on a number of economic and monetary positions.



During the meeting with Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

Expressing gratitude for supporting the initiative

Belarus is committed to true human rights and won't ever allow their politicisation, notes President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on meeting UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Zeid Ra'ad Al Hussein

Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus has been closely co-operating with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights. The President assured that Belarus would stay committed to the true human rights. "However, I would like to be frank with you: we will not allow anybody to impose so-called human rights on us and politicise them. It's absolutely unacceptable and I know

your standpoint: you have never welcomed the politicisation of human rights," stresses the Head of the Belarusian state.

Mr. Lukashenko thanked the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights for the support of the Belarusian initiative of combating trafficking in people. "I'd like to assure you that we will stay committed to this policy. We will promote it worldwide and will make a good example for other states in combating trafficking in persons," underlines the President.

The UN High Commissioner for Human Rights thanked the Belarusian leader for collaboration with the Office in a range of areas, including fight against human trafficking.

Prospects for bilateral relations

Alexander Lukashenko meets President of the Council of State and the Council of Ministers of Cuba, Raul Castro, on sidelines of UN assembly in New York

The leaders of the two countries have discussed the state and prospects of the Belarusian-Cuban relations across most important areas, placing a special emphasis on the trade-economic sector. The parties have noted the existing potential for further strengthening the bilateral comprehensive co-operation.

Alexander Lukashenko and Raul Castro have shared opinions on the most important issues of the current international agenda, confirming the course on mutual support on the international arena.

Cuba is Belarus' important trading partner in Latin America. Belarusian main exports include industrial products while Cuba primarily buys Belarusian automotive engineering goods, eternal-combustion engines, spare parts, machine-tool equipment and mineral fertilisers.

High praise where it's due

UAE Ambassador to Belarus, Mohammed Abdullah Al Ghafli, completes his posting, receiving thanks from President of Belarus for his furthering of inter-state relations

The President praised the Ambassador's activity during his work as head of mission, saying, "We've determined and outlined major areas for co-operation with the UAE. I'm so grateful to you for this; you'll be a welcome guest in Belarus always. You may enter our

country without any formalities. We'll be pleased to see you."

Mohammed Abdullah Al Ghafli is likely to transfer a good piece of advice to his successor on how to further develop interaction. Obviously, political dialogue is on the rise but much re-

mains to be done from an economic point of view.

President Lukashenko expressed hope that the new ambassador of the UAE arriving in Belarus will continue to develop bilateral relations. The President noted that the existing turnover of \$70m far from meets our

potential, as the diplomat agrees. All grounds exist for increasing this figure many times.

The President assured his guest that Belarus can propose collaboration across various areas of interest to the United Arab Emirates, saying, "The main

thing is to implement the roadmap we've worked out with the UAE leadership. I'm convinced that we'll have the opportunity to see each other in the UAE. Leaders of your country can also visit Belarus."

Mohammed Abdullah Al Ghafli thanked Alex-



Mohammed Abdullah Al Ghafli and Lukashenko for his kind words and assured him that his country is working hard to implement the agreements reached by our leaders.

Present choice lays solid foundations for the future

Minsk hosts 4th Forum of Young Journalists as part of the Year of Youth

By Olga Pasiyak

Under the title 'A Common View to the Future: Journalism as the Choice of the Young', the media event proved dynamic, attracting

representatives of newspapers, radio and TV from across Belarus. Aged under 30 years, the young professionals had the chance to share professional experience across

a range of topics, from rental housing to the major political event of the year: the Presidential elections.

The forum launched with Information Minister Lilia Ananich outlining key ideas. She announced, "At present, the entire media participates in forming public opinion.

Accordingly, it's important to ensure that a true personality is behind each newspaper line or Internet report. In this way, the ultimate target will be achieved: quality reporting. Use this journalistic work-

shop to expand your knowledge; journalism is a responsible profession and — as no other — bears supreme civil responsibility. You are not merely the future of our information space, you are its present. You are the pens which form public opinion."

Most guests at the forum arrived from the regions so, unsurprisingly, questions from district and regional editions dominated the beginning of the event. Ms. Ananich emphasised the role



Lilia Ananich



150 media representatives take part in forum

of the regional media and its popularity, since readers always like to know what's happening close to home. The Belarusian Radio and TV Company's recent launch of a separate channel for Mogilev offers best proof.

On the first day of the forum, *Znamya Yunosti* newspaper summed up the results of a contest of social films

and artistic essays: *Live and Flourish, Belarus*. Irina Mazuro, a *Slutsky Krai* reporter was named its winner, while a second degree diploma went to *SB* special reporter Svetlana Isaenok. Natalia Tyshkovskaya, from *Krai Smalyavitski*, came third. All deserve the heartiest congratulations.

The young journalists quickly turned to their pro-

fessional activity — attending training at state media editorial offices, and taking part in informal discussion sessions. The Belarusian Union of Journalists awarded its *Debut* award in five nominations — naming the best reporter, columnist, radio programme host, TV programme host and photo correspondent.

Strong youth and strong country

By Sergey Kanashits

Recently, the National Olympic Committee's Minsk headquarters hosted Alexander Lukashenko's signing of our official application to participate. In addition, the President helped launch the planting of an avenue of glory, alongside renowned champions and young sportsmen.

It had been some time since so many champions gathered but their inspired faces, smiles and easy chatting showed their delight. Among them were Darya Domracheva, Victoria Azarenko, Alexandra Gerasimenya, Anton Kushnir, Dmitry Dashchinsky, Lyubov Cherkashina, Nikolay Kozeko, Vadim Devyatovsky, Vladimir Shantarovich, Yulia Nesterenko and Valery Shariy: the pride of our nation! Their achievements have made our country known worldwide, creating an image energetic, youthful and sporting.



Olympic avenue

In his address to those present, the President noted the role played by sport in shaping our image internationally. He underlined, "Sport is the spirit of a nation! Successful performance at international competitions brings state prestige. Your victories are more important than politics!"

Mr. Lukashenko is known as a sporting expert, being personally acquainted with our champions, and with special words for each. Meanwhile, the National Olympic Committee registers success and failure within the international arena.

Laying a bridge to the future and signing our official Belarusian application for the Brazilian Games, the President stressed that he expects results from our athletes and coaches, in return for investments made. "Train seriously. We are behind you. Don't lose your nerve! Your duty is to perform well at the Olympics. Tell us if you need anything. We've constructed many sporting sites and they must be used — to ensure benefit," he said.

Everything is relative in life

By Victoria Kozlova

Belarusian State University sociologists conduct online monitoring of public perceptions of socio-economic and political situation

A BSU survey from last year showed an improvement in Belarusian families' perceptions of their material welfare, explains the Director of the Centre for Sociological and Political Research, Prof. David Rotman. In 2014, almost one family in four (23.1 percent) felt provided with enough money to lead quite a comfortable life. Just 20 years ago, the figure stood at less than 3 percent. Almost half of all families (46.3 percent) felt they could eat and dress well while 1.3 percent underlined that they felt able to make expensive purchases (such as a new car or flat). In 1994, more than half of Belarusian

families (57.6 percent) reported failing to purchase even essential foodstuffs (against last year's 3.3 percent).

MT'S COMMENT:

Over 70 percent of families in Belarus don't feel that they are experiencing significant material problems. Recent economic difficulties have been beyond national control, since our export-oriented economy is greatly dependent on external factors. Negative trends on world markets, and among our major trade partners, naturally, affect our economic situation.

Nevertheless, we are in a much better position than in the mid-1990s, when even simple foods such as sugar, milk, meat, butter and cereals were rationed. Today's young people have no awareness of such a situation, but many of us can recall queuing to buy food, clothes

Long-term use items in households per 100 households, by unit

| Year | colour TV | personal computers | refrigerators and freezers | automatic washing machines |
|------|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 2005 | 118 | 13 | 116 | 25 |
| 2006 | 126 | 18 | 118 | 32 |
| 2007 | 135 | 26 | 122 | 41 |
| 2008 | 140 | 32 | 124 | 50 |
| 2009 | 145 | 40 | 127 | 58 |
| 2010 | 149 | 44 | 128 | 63 |
| 2011 | 152 | 51 | 128 | 68 |
| 2012 | 154 | 59 | 134 | 73 |
| 2013 | 152 | 70 | 135 | 78 |
| 2014 | 155 | 78 | 139 | 80 |

and footwear. Salaries (of \$20-30 per month equivalent) were always delayed, and people sometimes lacked even the money to pay for public transport. Those were troubled times. However, the country withstood them and learnt the importance of 'pulling together'. We may still find reasons to complain

about life, and wish to see our living standards improve further, but there is no comparison with life two decades ago. Last year alone, Belarusians bought 135,400 cars: there are over 300 vehicles per 1,000 Belarusians. The number of appliances per household is also rising (see diagram).

How steel is hardened

It's commonly held that a state cannot be economically independent without its own metallurgy branch. Fortunately, Belarus has a great example of the latter in the Belarusian Steel Works. If all the pipes it has produced over the past 30 years were placed in line, they'd circumnavigate the globe twice over.

By Victoria Kozlova

The plant is not merely a flagship of Belarusian industry but a convincing example of how gradual modernisation can help us find a way out of the most complicated situations. Recently, the President of Belarus has visited the Zhlobin enterprise, to launch a new bar-rolling mill.

The new 200m long workshop almost appears to be a quite separate plant. Touring its machinery, it feels futuristic, since the entire process is automated. It's unique across the former USSR, as noted by the Belarusian Steel Works' General Director, Anatoly Savenok. Reporting to Mr. Lukashenko on the company's development and plans for the future, he admitted to facing challenges, due to changes in the global market. Who could have predicted that export prices for steel would halve in the space of five years? Sales to Russia have almost halved; fortunately, volumes to Ireland, South Korea and Columbia have been rising in compensation.

The launch of the new bar-rolling mill aims to meet the very real needs of the plant to process its increased volumes of steel production; the 'old' processing workshop couldn't cope, leaving up to 500,000 tonnes semi-finished. It still sold well abroad but falling global prices made production far less profitable. Now, with the con-



Zhlobin's BMZ new production line control centre

struction of the new bar-rolling mill, a wide range is possible, enjoying high added value: metal cord, fixing hardware, diverse shafts and gears, as well as car valves and pistons.

Mr. Lukashenko symbolically launched production via the central panel board, with iron 'rolled' at a speed of 120 metres per second: twice as fast as a Boeing airplane at take-off! Up to a million tonnes of rolled iron

will be produced here annually, with around 25 percent bought by Belarusian machine building giants, and the remainder sold abroad.

After the launch ceremony, Mr. Lukashenko chatted with employees, sharing his views on the following:

On the situation on the Ukrainian border

Around 150,000 have already

come to us from Ukraine. We're doing our best to provide them with jobs. However, we'll be seriously 'sorting out' everyone, to ensure that no criminals arrive, aiming to destabilise the situation in Belarus. They are coming, bringing weapons and guns, so we're strengthening our border. It's a major issue of Presidential responsibility: to ensure inner security and the country's defensive capacity. We

face no problems in this respect and no problems will emerge in the future.

On illegal migration

This flow will not move towards Belarus. We are not the European Union or America. We didn't fight over there. It was they who destroyed Libya, killing Muammar Gaddafi and Saddam Hussein. The latter may not have been good but he kept the situation under control in his country. They [the West] fully destabilised the Arab East, producing these current problems.

On Belarusians fighting in Ukraine

We'll tackle those who have been fighting once they return to Belarus. I've warned everyone and we've made a decision at legislative level: if you go to join this fighting, you go to kill — irrespective of whether you are fighting on the side of Donbass or against. We'll punish you for crimes against humanity. There are few such people — probably, around two dozen.

On patriotism

A person must love their country and be confident that it's their home. Whichever President you have, neither he nor officials should destroy or sack the country. If we did so, the country would fail quicker than Ukraine has done.

Sides reach agreement

By Alexandra Udaltsova

Business circles of Belarus and Hungary show considerable interest in joint work

The recent Belarusian-Hungarian Business Forum, held during a session of the Intergovernmental Belarusian-Hungarian Commission on Economic Co-operation, has demonstrated that joint work between our business circles could bring considerable profit.

"The list of participants at the forum confirms that businessmen from our two countries are eager to co-operate and intensify economic ties between Belarus and Hungary. Unfortunately, we aren't yet discussing serious investment. Rather, we're laying the groundwork for the future," noted Natalia Nikandrova, Director of the National Agency of Investment and Privatisation (NAIP) of Belarus.

Participants of the forum discussed the current state of trade-economic co-operation between our two countries, opportunities for bolstering bilateral ties, and the implementation of joint projects in the most promising areas.

Hungary has expressed interest in expanding interaction across the railway sector, including freight services and modernisation of infrastructure. Meanwhile,



During the forum's work

Belarusian businessmen are focusing their attention on the export to Hungary of metal and hardware products, engines, household appliances, and farm machinery.

"Belarusian tractors are well known to Hungarian farmers. Belarus-made vehicles account for over 50 percent of the Hungarian tractor market, with over a thousand Belarus tractors sold in Hungary annually. Our vehicles are reliable and simple to use. Moreover, their price is reasonable," states the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Hungary, Alexander Khainovsky.

The parties have agreed to consider additional opportunities for co-operation in healthcare, primarily in pharmaceuticals and the production of medical equipment. Hungarian companies Egis Pharmaceuticals and Gedeon Richter have already found their niche on the Belarusian market. Last year, Belarus imported some \$40 million of Hungarian medical products.

The NAIP says that Hungary firmly holds its position among Belarus' 30 trade partners worldwide. In 2014, our mutual trade in goods and services reached \$250m.

Issues to be settled in the near future

By Yelena Kovrova

Western European fashion retailers interested in joining Belarusian market

The Baltic group of advertising agencies — Hunters — has recently conducted a poll showing that almost 90 percent of Western European fashion retail chains questioned are interested in joining the Belarusian market. The poll further showed that the reasons for their lack of presence in our markets currently are due to our trading centres not complying with European regulations, as well as lack of management skills and non-standard rental agreements. Hunters expert Kestutis Isakas explains, "The economic crisis or the Belarusian Rouble rate do not matter to them. Retail chains such as Deichmann, New Yorker and Takko Fashion came to Lithuania in a period of economic crisis, as this can be a beneficial time for development. Sadly, many trading centres in Belarus do not meet the technical demands of European retail, such as the height of ceilings or distance between columns." He adds that Europeans traders do not appreciate high rentals.

Mr. Isakas is convinced that Inditex, LPP, Deichmann, New Yor-



ker and other European footwear and clothing shops will soon be able to join the Belarusian market. "These issues will be settled in a year or two and the respondents are keen to expand into the country when possible," he added.

Hunters Communications Group (established in 1993) is an international group of marketing and communication agencies that works in Latvia, Lithuania, Belarus, Russia and Estonia.

Easily finding fellow travellers on holiday

Belarusian State University's Journalism Institute second year student Ivan Klechkovsky tells of many traveller-friends who have inspired him

By Olga Kosyakova

If you aren't fluent in English, it can be tricky to chat to foreigners. Ivan was once told, "Wouldn't it be great to have a mobile application to provide phrases for routine situations. Chatting with foreigners wouldn't then be a problem."

Ivan decided to make the 'dream' a reality, with his mobile 'Tourist Assistant' application. It's already proving popular with those who love to travel, helping us to communicate and learn more about the world.

Ivan opens his application and various icons appear on the screen of his smartphone: 'List of Topics / Phrases'; 'Countries'; 'Before Departure'; 'Self-Teacher'; and 'On this Programme'. The young man developed his application during his 11th year at school, assisted by Dmitry Rubanov — a teacher of informatics and physics.

Ivan clicks the first option to demonstrate his application in operation. A female voice pronounces phrases and sentences for use in a shop, theatre, cinema or airport. The voice belongs to an English language teacher. At the moment, around 150 phrases are recorded but the 'vocabulary' will be extended in the future.

Australia, France, Thailand... Before travelling, a tourist can take a virtual tour with a single click. Interesting information on a country is provided in this section. 'Before Departure' is especially for busy tourists or those who often lose or forget their belongings. Its phrases include: 'pay a fee', 'prepare cash, ID and luggage', 'buy tickets', and 'number of hotel — by heart'.

"There's so much to think about before going abroad. I've developed this to remind people not to forget anything important," he explains. The 'Self-Teacher' section takes the user to a site to study English inde-

pendently but is yet to be completed.

To access all 'chapters', you need a phone with an Internet connection. The application is available on Google Play Market free of charge, and has a download of 16Mb. Over 1,000 travellers already use it, with reviews averaging 'four'. Ivan is now gradually perfecting his programme.

With his teacher, Dmitry Rubanov, Ivan is now developing an-

other project: 'School Experiment'. He explains, "Plisa school — where I studied — has Internet TV. Using it as the basis, we decided to record a video of physics laboratory experiments: not to cheat but to aid training. It shows pupils how they can solve problems. Later on, we plan something similar for chemistry."

Ivan ran his own programme on school TV: 'My Cup of Tea'. Among

his guests were poets, inventors and local rappers. Before entering the institute, he tried his hand at working as a reporter and feels now as if his future profession is predetermined.

Ivan is searching for his own path in journalism. "I take an active role in youth issues,

including reviewing films. I also plan

to start my own video blog," he comments.

The future journalist boasts diverse interests and hobbies, being fond of psychology, coin collecting, writing video scripts and entry in scientific and artistic competitions. He also helps tourists not to lose their way.

PERSONAL DATA

Ivan Klechkovsky is a second year student at the Belarusian State University's Journalism Institute, and graduated from Plisa secondary school. In 2014, he was placed second at the Republican *Techno-Intellect* Contest, and was a finalist in the *100 Ideas for Belarus 2015* competition. This year, Ivan was awarded by the Belarusian Republican Youth Union for 'Best Mobile Application'.



EXPERT OPINION

Alesya VINNIK, a co-ordinator of the *100 Ideas for Belarus* project

The sphere of information and communication technologies is among the key sci-tech avenues for advancement. It's vital that young people develop such projects. The Tourist Assistant is familiarising the global community with Belarus, being much downloaded. We began noticing Ivan Klechkovsky 18 months ago. His programme is functional, helping tourists feel comfortable on arrival in a new country. We've been looking into whether similar developments exist and we know that nothing else of the kind has ever been registered in Belarus.

Academy of Sciences undertakes commitments

By Alexey Fedotov

Within six years, Belarusian scientists plan to implement around 200 investment projects at the National BelBiograd Technopark

BelBiograd is a special technological zone with its own preferential tax regime, aimed at encouraging projects in the spheres of bio- and nanotechnologies, pharmaceuticals, and micro- and nano-system machines.

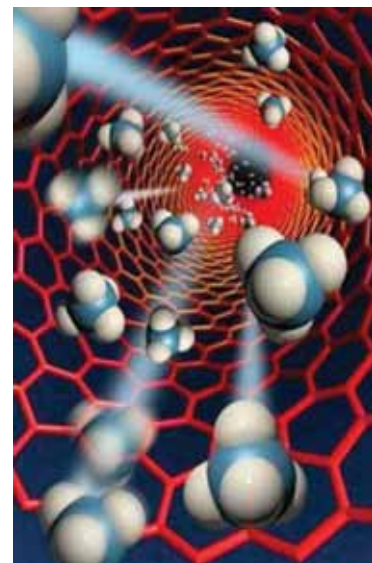
According to Emilia Kolomiyets, Director General of the Chemical Synthesis and Biotechnologies State R&D Group, and Director of the Microbiology Institute of the National

Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the project has been under consideration for a long time. BelBiograd will benefit from not having to start from scratch, as there are many research institutions close to the district, near the High-Tech Park: the Institute of Bioorganic Chemistry of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus; the Physical-Engineering Institute; the New Materials Chemistry Institute; and the Microbiology Institute.

These organisations will become the foundation for creating BelBiograd. Moreover, these research institutes have their own manufacturing divisions, making their own products. According to Ms. Kolomiyets,

it's a good start. She notes that when the Deputy Prime Minister of Belarus, Vladimir Semashko, visited the Institute, it was decided that BelBiograd would enjoy extraterritoriality. The principle allows companies, institutions, and enterprises from the regions to become BelBiograd residents, and start manufacturing. However, Ms. Kolomiyets underlines that their projects must satisfy a number of special requirements.

In 2013, the Belarusian Economy Ministry undertook preparatory work to create the national technological cluster, BelBiograd. A Presidential Decree was drafted, and a land plot chosen. Preliminary cost-benefit



analysis was carried out, and possible participants listed. A government conference in October 2013 decided that the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus would take care of consequent efforts.

Online-project provides great opportunities for students

By Polina Kononova

Electronic guide for first year students launches at Belarusian State University

The BSU's Media Centre has developed the online-project. The electronic guide targets first-year students, showing how to find a hostel place, reduce educational fees and feed yourself affordably. Students can also find out about youth organisations and bodies of student self-governance, as well as creative and sports clubs operating in the university. "At present, opportunities for international exchange are of great importance. The guide helps you to make your application for an internship or an educational project abroad," comments the university's press service.

The website (<http://info.bsu.by/>) gives social advice to students, including information on receiving a pass to a swimming pool or a gym and how to use the university's spa. Electronic data is provided through infographics and video.

According to the Head of the BSU's Media Centre, Pavel Soloviev, it's vital for first-year students to socially adapt as soon as possible. The website's major task is to help 'novices' find their feet in this way. Students should be aware of the many opportunities provided by the BSU, to take full advantage.

Turkish seashore is dearer to us

By Vladimir Nikolaichuk

Last year, over 660,000 Belarusians travelled abroad for holidays, with most heading to the coast, since we are one of the few European countries to lack our own shoreline. Countries not requiring visas and which are accessible by charter flight are among the most popular destinations. This year, routes were busy not only from Minsk, but from regional centres.

Until last year, Ukraine was the most visited destination, with 175,000 Belarusians travelling in 2013 (against only 5,600 in 2014). Now, only cheap bus tours to the Odessa Region are in demand, costing about \$200 for 10 days.

The countries currently most visited by Belarusian tourists include Turkey, Bulgaria, Egypt, Poland, Russia, Greece, Lithuania, Spain, Italy and the Czech Republic. These account for 82.7 percent of our holidaymakers. Poland is ranked fourth for inexpensive shopping trips, rather than as a country for holidaymaking.

Ever more tourists are heading to Thailand, Slovakia and Montenegro while Belarusians rarely now go to Tunisia, which was very popular until recently.

Old Dubrovno's timeless legacy

Tissot, Romanson and Orient are brands currently setting watchmaking trends globally but there was a day when Belarusian timepieces were famous. The Hermitage Museum holds three silver-cased pocket watches, with white enamel faces; one bears the mark of Dubrovno Plant.

By Alexandra Udaltsova

During the time of Tsar Peter the Great, Russia saw increased interest in Western European science and technologies, including the manufacture of clocks and watches. In 1757, the Academy of Arts opened in St. Petersburg, with inventor Ivan Kulibin heading its mechanical workshops from 1769 until 1801. These became the major hub of instrument engineering, attracting various scientists and inventors from the West, who considered co-operation with the Russian Academy to be an honour. They donated their research and participated in competitions organised by the Academy.

Demand for clocks and watches rose rapidly in the 18th century, inspiring the government to launch two state plants manufacturing of clocks and watches in 1769: in Moscow and in St. Petersburg. The Moscow workshop existed only until 1778 but, in 1770, its workers installed a chiming clock inside the Kremlin's Spasskaya Tower. A third such factory opened in 1784, at the initiative of Prince Grigory

Potemkin-Tavrisheski, the owner of Kupavna silk plant.

Located on his Dubrovno estate, in the Mogilev Province, the workshop produced refined technical innovations, with Peter Nordsteén at the helm.

Born in Sweden, he had been living in Germany and arrived in Russia at the beginning of the reign of Empress



Catherine II, holding a patent from the Stockholm Academy of Sciences for a new design of pocket watch.

The Empress wanted to develop industry in Russia and so set about attracting foreign masters. At that time, clocks and watches were luxury goods only affordable by the wealthy. In order to win

over Empress Catherine II, Mr. Nordsteén presented her with a unique ring containing a watch. This so impressed her that she immediately appointed him as head of the Academy of Arts' watchmaking department: the first to train watchmakers. Fortunately, being a favourite of Catherine, Grigory Potemkin was permitted to 'poach' Peter Nor-

steén for the factory on his own estate. Thereafter, Nordsteén's name was inseparably connected with 18th century watch production.

The move to the Mogilev Region seems an unlikely attraction for the inventor, but he had built up debts in St. Petersburg, despite being given a state apartment with heating

and light and a good salary of 250 Roubles a year. With creditors in pursuit, he accepted Potemkin's offer, which included a salary of 12,000 Roubles over 10 years.

His obligations included apprenticing 30-40 reasonably literate children from garrison schools, and he was prohibited from importing machinery or other tools without paying duty. Mr. Nordsteén even had to support his pupils at own expense. Nevertheless, his workshop proved viable and operated until war broke out in 1812.

Over a relatively short time, he trained 33 teenagers in various types of clock and watch production. He wrote that they learnt 'how to make a variety of pocket watches, wall clocks and large, fighting timepieces, alongside cases, and how to draw figures on the faces and enamel them, as well as making chains for watches, engraving and gilding, constructing springs, and making various saws and geometrical tools'.

The workshop operated under the principle of division of labour, with each master fulfilling a certain operation,



Worthy exhibits for museum

before assemblage and regulation. They produced up to 10 pocket watches a month, supplying the imperial court. However, after Potemkin's death, the treasury purchased the factory. At the order of the Empress, in 1795, several dozen young boys and girls were transported first to Moscow, and then to the nearby village of Kupavna, to continue the work of the factory. It finally closed in December 1804, unable to compete with European manufacturing.

Dubrovno lost its chance of supplying components to Kupavna but archives tell us that, on May 30th, 1793, three years before her death, Empress Catherine II issued a decree commanding that 'peasant families specialising

in the making of cloth, clocks, galloon lace and candles, who had originally come from Dubrovno, should be resettled in Yekaterinoslav'.

At that time, the city (now Dnepropetrovsk) was growing in size, and had 285 families (1792 residents). It became known as Dubrovensk, and then Sloboda Surskaya (from the name of the River Sura, which flows into the Dnieper).

Among the settlers were first class watchmaker graduates from Dubrovno Plant, including Fiodor Kowalski, who joined colleagues in opening a studio in Yekaterinoslav. By the early 19th century, it had become a Russian centre of manufacturing for such devices, using techniques first developed in Dubrovno.

Silk Road drives economy

The centre of commerce, science, technology, education and culture of the Chinese Province of Gansu has opened in Minsk, beginning the implementation of the Silk Road Economic Belt project



Centre aims to promote implementation of projects

By Victoria Kozlova

The Deputy Head of the Commerce Department of the Province, Zhang Shien, announced this during the opening ceremony. Over 1,600km of the Silk Road Economic

Belt will go through Gansu. For centuries the region has been a vitally important corridor between China and Central Asia. This province was the 'golden part' of the ancient Great Silk Road testified by the numerous churches, monasteries, pagodas,

towers and ancient castles situated along the Silk Road. In addition, a major part of the Great Wall of China is located there.

Zhang Shien stressed that the region is developing strongly. The biggest Chinese corporations are already situated there. One of these is the Wuwei Quansheng Corporation. The representatives of this enterprise have arrived in Minsk to establish ties with their Belarusian colleagues. Alongside contacts with Minsk colleagues, the company is also interested in interaction with Grodno partners. In particular, there are plans to implement Belarusian-Chinese tourism projects in Grodno. The two sides will also develop collaboration in agriculture, especially in the dairy industry.

An agreement on co-operation between the Belarusian National Technical University and China's Wuwei Quansheng Corporation was signed at the opening ceremony.



Books definitely open up the world

By Alexey Fedotov

Libraries Week hosted by Novopolotsk

The event is hosted by the so-called 'oil city'; local residents can not only mine oil but show their love of books. Novopolotsk's libraries have prepared and organised numerous festive celebrations for the week. The first of these was hosted by the S. Marshak Children's Library. In addition, staff of the V. Korotkevich Library invited pre-school children to re-enact a fairy-tale. The event entitled 'Open up the World with Books' involved book swapping and the distribution

of leaflets devoted to reading, books and libraries.

The S. Marshak Library, in turn, is summing up the results of its 'Reading Island' and 'Sunny Field of Summer' reading competitions, with the best readers among the children chosen from the library's summer visitors. The V. Mayakovsky Central Library has invited them to its book boulevard, with a free book fair and *Poetic Window* exhibition.

The Libraries Week ends with senior schoolchildren meeting writers from the Polotskaya Vetr (Polotsk's Branch) Association, hosted by the S. Marshak Library.

Volkswagen is facing uphill battle to repair its tarnished image

How far will the fallout from the VW emissions tests scandal stretch?

Until recently the words 'German engineering' carried connotations of excellence, expertise, performance and reliability. Now that good reputation is under threat. The danger for VW — and perhaps the wider car industry — is that information or publicity about vehicles' technological capabilities will be met with scepticism. Volkswagen has admitted deliberately misleading regulators and consumers — will they trust the company in future?

The response of two motorists in London was unequivocal. "With this scandal that's come out actually no. I can't trust the information and actually wider form a brand perspective, can I really trust them? I'm not sure anymore," said one woman.

"I don't think I'd buy a VW or any German car at all because of the publicity that VW have had," a male driver added. Volkswagen in particular has long projected a 'green' brand image. It wrote in its last annual report that making 'attractive and environmentally friendly' cars was key to its growth and ability to weather economic trouble.

The company will be hoping that in the face of an avalanche of negative news, honesty will play in



Problems do exist but VW assembly line continues to work

its favour. Its chief executive Martin Winterkorn has resigned and Volkswagen has issued numerous apologies since the tests scandal broke.

"The car industry is one of the leading and key industries in Germany, and VW is practically leading," said Dr. Martin Gornig of the German Institute for Economic Research (DIW).

"The question is what they can do now. One can make an effort to limit the damage, to open up and make transparent how tests are made and what they want to test. A stronger involvement of the state into the control systems? This would certainly be a reaction that could restore lost confidence."

Volkswagen's future depends

on its response to customers who may take an extra interest from now on in the fumes being emitted from car exhaust pipes — as well as how much it costs to run their vehicle. In general, motorists are likely to be even more demanding when buying a car — and above all to be sure they are not being taken for a ride.

German states to receive more funds to cope with migrant crisis

The German government has agreed to give its 16 states a total of around 4 billion Euros next year to help them deal with the increased number of migrants and refugees who have entered the country

Regional public finances have been stretched due to the crisis. Following a meeting with state premiers in Berlin, Chancellor Angela Merkel, explained the details of the deal.

"The federal government is ready to pay a lump sum of 670 Euros per month to cover the asylum-seekers costs. It will begin from the day of first registration until the case is decided. This is based on 800,000 people claiming with an average processing time of five months," said Merkel.

Earlier, the Chancellor told the German Parliament that the EU needed to support the US, Russia and countries in the Middle East to help tackle the underlying causes of the refugee crisis. Berlin has been weighing up the impact the increased numbers will have on its economy with the country's Finance Minister determined to maintain a balanced budget in 2016. Critics, however, claim that may be difficult to achieve.

Bones found in Florence likely belong to Mona Lisa

Experts think that bone fragments found at a monastery in Florence likely belong to the woman many people believe was immortalised in the Mona Lisa

But the absence of a skull has thwarted their efforts to reconstruct the face of noblewoman Lisa Gherardini to compare it with the face Leonardo da Vinci depicted in one of the world's most famous paintings.

Supersonic car unveiled in London

The developers of the Bloodhound Supersonic Car have unveiled what they say will be the world's fastest land vehicle at Canary Wharf in London

With a fighter jet engine and rockets, the 135,000-horsepower car is as powerful as 180 Formula One racing cars. Next year, the Bloodhound team will take the car to a desert race track in South Africa designed especially for the supersonic machine. The plan will be to reach 1,287 kilometres per hour before attempting to travel at over 1,600 kilometres per hour in 2017.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



China's solar ambitions

China wants to become the world's leading producer of solar energy and is investing massively in solar panels that now cover huge swathes of desert

The nation is the biggest market for solar energy in the world and home to most of the largest panel manufacturers. When completed, the Gao Tai solar park will cover 319 square kilometres — that's three times the size of Paris, or 80,000 solar panels per square kilometre.

"This used to be the Gobi desert, there was nothing here, just stones and wind, the earth wasn't arable,

it wasn't profitable, but now, it's a treasure," says Wei Lang, Director of the Gao Tai solar park. A nearby coal factory is spewing dark smoke. China knows its dependency on coal is no longer viable. Its towns are suffocating while pressure from the public opinion is growing.

And China has considerable natural assets according to the Head of the Huineng Solar Plant, "It's not always like this, we have more than 280 days of sunshine a year. Winters are very cold, but associated with a clear blue sky, this produces increased efficiency," says Dong Zhen Qiang.

Catalan pro-independence parties celebrate major win in regional poll

Celebrations in Barcelona as pro-independence parties win a clear majority of seats in Catalonia's regional parliament

In what was billed as a defacto referendum on splitting from Madrid, the acting regional government head and fellow separatist leaders vowed to declare independence within 18 months.

"Tonight the Yes vote has won, but democracy has also won. And that is very important. Two victories in one. The Yes and democracy," said acting Regional President Artur Mas.

Oriol Junqueras, whose party ERC is a member of the main separatist 'Junts pel Si' alliance added, "Having this legitimacy, with a high turn out and an absolute majority in the Parliament, and having more citizens voting for independence than against, we have all the requirements, with no excuses, to accomplish this democratic mandate given to us by the Catalan people."

Together the main separatist alliance 'Junts pel Si' (Together For Yes) and the smaller CUP party won 72 of the 135 — strong assem-



bly, however they still polled less than 50 percent of the vote. Opinion polls suggest a majority of Catalans favour a referendum on independence but are evenly divided over whether they want to secede.

Spain's constitution does not allow any region to break away, so the prospect remains highly hypothetical. Analysts believe the most likely outcome of the election will be to force a dialogue between Catalan and the Spanish authorities.

Architectural masterpiece being preserved for future

Unique Polotsk cathedral receiving team of Union State restorers

By Viktor Korbut

Belarus' oldest church — the Holy Transfiguration Church in Polotsk — is among the few having survived from Old Rus times, with its 12th century frescoes. Since 2007, Belarusians have been working jointly with the Russian Culture Ministry's Inter-regional Scientific-Restoration Art Department to clean the frescoes. Meanwhile, this spring, archaeologists from St. Petersburg's Hermitage joined in digging near the church walls.

The Belarusian Culture Ministry is keen to again attract architect-restorers to the ancient monument, establishing a joint Russian-Belarusian team of specialists (funded by the Union State) to preserve the unique church for future generations, notes Belarus' Culture Minister, Boris Svetlov. The Archbishop of Polotsk and Glubokoe, Feodosy, has announced his support.

Russian specialists have visited the church, which was built during the time of St. Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, gaining a full picture of the work to be undertaken. Sergey Lalazarov, a senior architectural restorer from St. Petersburg's Spetsproek-



Years required for masters to 'open' ancient frescoes layer by layer

trestavratsiya Scientific-Research Institute, specialises in Old Russian architecture, having worked on St. Georgy's Church in Staraya Ladoga (among the few remaining 12th century churches in Russia). As in Polotsk, its frescoes survived, although just 20 percent of the original number. The Polotsk site retains over 90 percent of its wonderful fresco artwork, much to Mr. Lalazarov's excitement.

He explains that recent digs have significantly changed our views on the church's initial appearance, saying, "Discovered fragments of galleries prove that we don't know everything about the monument and our previous reconstructions of the facades were incorrect."

Yelena Nikolaeva, a senior engineer-restorer and a member of the Russian Culture Ministry's Federal Scientific-Methodic Council, has been working in the sphere of restoration since 1975. Impressed by Polotsk church's strong walls, she notes, "Almost the entire construction has survived since the 12th century. It seems to me that the architects of the past had better construction materials than we have today!"

Speaking with these experts on Old Russian architecture, I realise that some are only seeing the unique church for the first time. Mikhail Milchik, the Deputy Chairman of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Department for the St. Petersburg Government, is among them. He

tells me, "I've been studying Old Russian architecture since the 1960s and can say that Polotsk church enjoys global significance in terms of its preservation. We need to work on its inclusion on the UNESCO World Heritage List, as an example of restoration works. I support the Belarusian Culture Ministry's proposal to create a specialist team and to address the Union State. This monument unites us."

The Russians are proposing that the team should be headed by a specialist in 12th century sites, appreciating that preservation of the unique church is the priority, regardless of individual contribution by either side. The building was painted by Byzantine artists but is viewed as a



shared treasure within our historical-cultural legacy.

Oleg Ioannisyanyan, the Head of the State Hermitage's Architectural Archaeology Department and a permanent member of the Cultural Heritage Preservation Department for the St. Petersburg Government, is one of the oldest specialists to have researched Polotsk church, having visited in 1967, with famous Soviet archaeologist Pavel Rappoport, who supervised digs in Polotsk.

Mr. Ioannisyanyan tells us, "I felt culture shock on seeing the church, which is such a wonderful monument of our shared ancient civilisation. It would be more correct to call it Byzantium rather than Old Russian; not only Eastern Europe and the Balkans were under Byzantium's influence but part of Asia. Byzantium influenced conceptions of beauty. I'm convinced that Polotsk should be visited by foreign specialists, who would find the church a revelation, making them see Belarus with new eyes."

Life is beautiful both in summer and autumn

By Irina Velekhova

Lasandr Art Gallery showcases an exhibition of paintings from its own archives — open until the end of October

The exhibitions feature works by famous Belarusian artists. Among them are Nikolay Bushchik, Vladimir Kozhukh, Alexey Korabelnikov, Alexey Marochkin, Yekaterina Filyuta and many other masters well known among art lovers.

The *Indian Summer* exhibition unites diverse styles and genres. Each painting is unique; their special colours, plots and mood



create a feeling of comfort and charm. The calendar summer is short but memorable; the 'velvet' warmth of September days brings



back the experience. Although it's cooler outside, and the autumn wind brings coolness to the air, the *Indian Summer* inspires us to appreciate the state of nature and be amazed by the wonderful changes in the environment.

The Lasandr Art Gallery has chosen this beautiful season to host its show. The bright colours and subjects, diverse nuances, motifs and mood of the paintings attract a great deal of attention. Each work is a door to the world of personal memories of the past summer and hopes for the coming autumn. On looking at the works, anyone would feel nostalgic, reinforcing the belief that life is beautiful.

Jimmy the cat is chief among project leaders

By Alexey Semenov

Cat Museum Gallery, in Minsk, welcomes its first visitors; most of them children and their parents

Alla Narovskaya, who oversees the project, noted that children are mostly attracted by the gallery's furry residents with whom they could take photos or pet. The young people were extremely interested in the *Cats in the City* exhibition; named after the diptych of the same name. Overall, more than 50 pieces were exhibited, in addition to works of decorative-and-applied arts. In the future, sculptural works will also be added to the display.

The Cat Museum is not a new idea: similar museums work all over the world. Ms. Narovskaya decided



Alla Narovskaya and Jimmy

on the idea after enjoying the experience of organising the *March Cats* show, held in Minsk annually since 2004. The Cat Museum primarily features works by Belarusian artists (which can be bought); similar works by foreign artists will also be displayed.

The organisers of the event plan to host themed exhibitions on a regular basis. After *Cats in the City*, they plan to show *Cats of Antique Rome* and *Women and Cats*. The gallery also plans to host other cultural and enlightening events. In addition, there will be a café offering coffee, cocktails and ice cream to its guests.

At present, the museum is home to five live animals, including the 'director', Scottish Jimmy.

What did Scarlett O'Hara wear?

Fashion brightly reflects time, with its own

By Irina Ovsepyan

We may be between theatre seasons, but we still need to seek out cultural enrichment. Museums offer more than just shelter from the exasperating summer heat, with short-term exhibitions as well as permanent. A unique exhibition at the National History Museum has been delighting visitors with its display of original women's costumes, hats and accessories, dating from the late 19th and early 20th century. Many people have already enjoyed exploring its exhibits, including our correspondent.

From *Hoop Skirts and Tournures to Modern: History of Fashion from the Early 20th Century* arrived in Minsk from Kiev's Museum of Fashion: the only such in post-Soviet territory. Its large private collection boasts around 150 original costumes.

National History Museum Director Oleg Ryzhkov notes that ticket



sales aim to generate a profit, although prices are still modest (even if you take a tour with a guide). He notes, "This isn't the first joint project we've organised with our neighbouring country. Some years ago, we presented *Treasures of Ukraine*, introducing items made from gold, and china, among many others. Now, we're introducing a private collection; there are so many high quality exhibits that we can call this project unique."

Undoubtedly, the exhibition is interesting to anyone professionally engaged in design, fashion and history. How often do you see 30 historic costumes on show in Belarus (10-15 are more common). Each is a work of art, sewn by hand and worn by ladies who once graced ballrooms. For many long years, these beautiful dresses were stored in family wardrobes, until donated to the museum.

Collector Marina Ivanova tells us, "A unique wedding dress, in champagne ivory, and a children's blue costume worn with a bustle, were given to me by actress Lyudmila Artemieva, who appeared in *Svaty* (Matchmakers). These belonged to

her family. Most of the dresses came from my own grandmother, who was a dressmaker. Among the most expensive and valuable is my great-grandmother's ball tippet, from 1910. She kept hold of it even during the hungry war years, when she could have exchanged it for food."

Just a third of Marina Ivanova's collection is on show in Minsk, with Kiev hosting more than 150 outfits and numberless accessories, alongside children's toys, bandboxes and other unique treasures. Such things are rarely bought by museums, generally being donated.

"Not all museums like to exhibit clothes, as they can disintegrate unless stored properly," she explains. "They don't make a good investment. It's better to purchase samovars, which never deteriorate, or furniture, or stamps: things easier to preserve. It's very difficult to preserve dresses. We spend all our money on keeping them in good condition."

The exhibition's mannequins are rather like plaster sculptures. In fact, they're handmade, by the owner of the collection and her assistants; they believe that modern mannequins simply aren't appropriate for antique clothing. Ms. Ivanova explains, "We'd like to buy ready-made mannequins, but those of today are too tall for the costumes. One and a half centuries ago, or even a century ago, ladies were only 140-145 centimetres in height. Besides which, they wore tight corsets, giving a waist of perhaps only 50cm. Mannequins of today have measurements of 61cm or more. This olive green dress has a waist of 48cm; we remade the mannequin three times, as the corset was too small! The widest waist we've come across is 55cm. To make costumes sit properly, you need a perfect fit, especially for children's clothes."

Children's outfits are rarely seen in museum collections as they tend to have worn out, having been altered and passed from one child to another. Unsur-



From the 'fashion history museum' exhibition, by author-collector Marina Ivanova

prisingly, few remain in good enough condition for display. However, it's fascinating to see the dresses worn by young girls in the same styles as their elders, complete with corset, bustle (a small pillow which sat at the base of the spine), 12 underskirts and then their dress, coat and accessories.

Ms. Ivanova complains, "We spent two days at the border from Ukraine, and had to leave a number of exhibits, including a rug upon which our child mannequins usually sit. We planned to set up a children's room. However we had to leave the rug behind. We also had to

leave our silver bags and some rare hatboxes from metal and wood, of various designs, as well as porcelain dolls, and bicycles in the form of horses. All failed to get through the border, being of major value. So, we brought what we could: enough for the exhibition." The National History Museum plans to continue its co-operation with Kiev colleagues, planning a larger exhibition for late 2016 or 2017. However, the current display is enough to gain an impression about the evolution of fashion for almost a whole century. Each period (fashions changed dramatically about every decade) is represented by 2-3 costumes from Russia, Western Europe or the USA.

There are several walking costumes from 1860, visiting dresses from 1880, those in Modern and Art Deco styles, and some from the 1930s. Meanwhile, there is a wealth of lacy chemisettes, ball gloves, satin shoes, hats decorated with stuffed birds, bags knitted from beads (like large purses for small change), fans and umbrellas decorated with lace. It's no wonder that, a century ago, men might be driven to put a bullet through their brains on having been bankrupted by their wives and daughters. Fans of Scarlett O'Hara and other heroines from the 19th century will adore perusing the collection, seeing perhaps what their great-grandmothers wore (fashions in Belarusian cities were similar to those in Russian and Western European cities).

Don't delay to see English printed cotton and Indian cashmere from the late 19th century. Your heart will be sure to leap with excitement.



Life in focus within more than twenty years

By Irina Solovei

Sovereign Belarus: Era of Achievements exhibition by Belarusian Telegraph Agency opens at Minsk's Moskva cinema

The exhibition showcases 50 photos, of which 25 are in colour, showing how we lived 25-30 years ago, compared to today.

Human memory is unable to keep every detail from fading, but photos help us recall past events

and restore our impressions. They enable us to assess the scale of change. According to BelTA Director General Dmitry Zhuk, the project primarily targets young people, who will be able to learn more about the history of their country.

The Deputy Chair of the Standing Commission for Healthcare, Physical Education, Family and Youth Policy at the House of Representatives at the National Assembly, Yelena Shamal, notes that the exhibition



50 photographic shots on show at exhibition

makes history more accessible for the young while jogging the memories of the

older generation. "I hope that this exhibition will help us remember the things that

are really valuable to us," she said.

The event is part of BelTA's project to illustrate the changes of the past 20 years in Belarus. Comparing modern photos with those from the archives, we can see industrial and agricultural progress, as well as that in transport infrastructure, science, medicine, and the Armed Forces. Recent shots show the spheres of life in which our country has made the greatest progress and of which it can be

most proud. The exhibition runs until October 16th in Minsk, with a mobile version having already travelled to Shchuchin, for the Day of Belarusian Written Language. It will later tour the regional centres of Belarus.

The Belarusian Telegraph Agency's *Sovereign Belarus: Era of Achievements* project shows the scale of change countrywide in a short period. Visit bylostoalo.belta.by website to view the photos for yourself.

Brilliant wins inspire optimism

Belarusians capture two gold medals at World Road Cycling Championship, in Richmond



Vasily Kirienko has waited more than a year to achieve his championship title

By Kirill Karin

Alena Omelyusik won the team race, while Vasily Kirienko became world champion for his individual race, with separate start. The President congratulated both athletes, saying, "Your confident performance in American Richmond has confirmed the glory of Belarusian sport."

Mr. Lukashenko wished the national team's sportsmen good health, success and the conquering of Olympic summits.

It has taken several years for Kirienko to attain success, and his win is a unique event for Belarusian road cycling. Vasily is the

only such Belarusian champion in the history of our country's independence. His gold medal brings him world recognition and fame, alongside such cycling legends as Bradley Wiggins, Tony Martin, Tom Dumoulin and Fabian Cancellara.

Vasily covered 53.5km in Richmond, in a time of one hour, two minutes and 29 seconds: nine seconds ahead of Italy's Adriano Malori (who was placed second). Third place went to French Jérôme Coppele. Kirienko has, as a result, won a place at the 2016 Rio Olympics.

Early in his race, our champion set the pace, leaving behind all the usual favourites: Tony Martin,

Tom Dumoulin, Taylor Phinney and Rohan Dennis. By the middle of his distance, Vasily's advantage stood at around 30 seconds, although Malori began to gradually catch up. However, it was too late for him to win.

2015 has been the most successful year in the career of the 34 year old, who, after the World Cycling Championship, won gold at the European Games in Baku, and won a leg of the Giro d'Italia. Speaking of his Richmond victory, Vasily notes, "I cannot find words to describe how long it has taken me to attain this result. I've spent so many hours on a bicycle, training for this day. An individual



Alena Omelyusik

race requires a thorough approach and attention to aerodynamics. It's been vital to find my own pace and balance, and I've succeeded. I want to thank all members of Team Sky. I planned my race jointly with them and, owing to my preparations with this club, I've managed to defeat strong rivals. I devote my victory to my team."

Vasily is among the few cyclists in the world who train both on the track and road. In 2008, he won the World Cycling Championship and then performed brilliantly at the Giro d'Italia, winning one leg and coming second twice.

Alena Omelyusik also deserves our pride, having helped German Velocio-SRAM team win the world championship title, across a distance of 38.8km. In Richmond, her team finished in 47 minutes, and 35.72 seconds. Second and third places went to Dutch teams: Boels-Dolmans (6.66 seconds behind the winner) and Rabobank-Liv Woman (56.12 seconds behind). Yelena was also placed 8th in her individual race, winning a ticket to the 2016 Olympics for Belarus.

Victoria Azarenko holds master class in Minsk

By Igor Leshin

Belarus' top tennis player organises master class for children, and para-athletes, at Minsk's Centre of Olympic Tennis Training

Around 200 people came to meet the former world tennis first seed — to train, ask questions and receive autographs. Victoria, joined by her partner, Sasha Bazhin, noted that an increasing number of children attend her master classes each year. She commented, "It's clear that tennis is developing dynamically in our country. Major new courts, with various surfaces, have opened, as have modern gyms. Children have great conditions in which to develop their skills. However, much more needs to be done to train sportsmen and coaches."

Victoria discussed how best to improve training for tennis players during her meeting with the Sports and Tourism Minister, Alexander Shamko. Moreover, after her master class, she mentioned her desire to follow the training of athletes readying themselves for the Rio de Janeiro Paralympic Games. Victoria plans to take part in the 2016 Olympics in the singles event, having already won Olympic gold in London, in the mixed doubles. She tells us, "In Rio de Janeiro, I'll try to win the women's tournament. I want gold for Belarus!"

Analysing her performance in this year's tennis season, Azarenko notes that her best play was during the US Open Championship: in the quarter-finals, she lost to Romania's Simona Halep. At present, Victoria is ranked 23rd by the WTA. She plans to participate in three Asian tournaments, aiming to reach the final WTA championship in Singapore.



Earning leadership in handball group

By Igor Grishin

Meshkov Brest HC tops Group C in EHF Champions League after victory over Tatran Prešov, earning 4 points after two matches

The first half ended with a small advantage of the Belarusian club — 14:11. After the break the difference in score began to increase and resulted in final '+10' points in favour of Brest Meshkov handball club. Brest players have achieved their first away victory during the Champions League group

stage. In a small interview for the European Handball Federation website, head coach of Meshkov Brest HC, Sergey Bebesheko, said, "We've come to Prešov to gain victory. My trainees have prepared well and dominated during the whole game, especially in the second half." Rivals have also ensured Brest team leadership in Group C: Spanish Logroño defeated Portugal's Porto — 30:23 — while Serbian Vojvodina beat Russian Chekhov Bears — 26:24. This latter team is the next opponent for the Brest squad.

First finals of career

Alexandra Sasnovich reaches WTA finals in Seoul but, sadly, loses to Romania's Irina-Camelia Begu in decisive match — 3:6, 1:6

By Yegor Glebov

In the WTA ratings, over 100 places separated the rivals, with Begu ranked 29th and Sasnovich just 136th. The Romanian tennis player confirmed her supremacy in Seoul, returning six serves from the Belarusian while Alexandra only managed two breaks. Moreover, Begu has made one ace. The match lasted one hour and 17 minutes.

It was the first time that Alexandra, 21, had reached the finals of a professional WTA tournament, so the result was one of which she should be proud. On her route to the finals, she smashed several famous tennis players: Alexandra Dulgheru, Magdalena Rybarikova, Sloane Stephens and Anna Karolina Schmiedlova.

Her success will propel Alexan-



Alexandra Sasnovich reaches the finals

dra up the ratings, approaching the top hundred.

Her performance in Seoul was covered by major international information agencies, who called

it a sensation. The Western media called the event a 'dream', 'impressive', and a 'giant killing run'; the Belarusian was represented as 'a slayer of giants'.

Extreme walking



ARTUR PRUPAS

Extreme tight-rope walking, between two Minsk office buildings, at height of 70m

Exhibitions

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 2nd November. *Great Patriotic War in Art*

Until 11th December. *From Realism to Impressionism* (19th-20th century painting)

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

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 11th October. Exhibition by the Sergei Andriyaka State Academy of Watercolours and Fine Arts

Until 31st December. *Major Presentation of Museum Relics: 79 Steps Inside History*

MUSEUM OF MATURE AND ECOLOGY OF BELARUS

12 Karl Marx Street

Until 6th March. *Jungles behind the Window*

Until 17th January.

Mummies of the World

WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz. Illustrations and Medals*

Illustrations and Medals

ZABRODIE ETHNOGRAPHICAL COMPLEX

Zabrodie village

Until 31st October. Exhibition of Retro Technique

Until 31st October. Museum of Century-Old Way of Life

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

38 Karl Marx Street

Until 16th October. *Via Scientiarum. From the History of Belarusian Education*

From the History of Belarusian Education

Theatres

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

02 and 04.10. *The Nutcracker, or One More Christmas Story...* 03.10. *A Masked Ball; Three Little Pigs* 04.10. *Aybolit*

06.10. *Carmen* 07.10. *Night of One-Act Operas at Chamber Hall; Vytautas*

08.10. *The Flying Dutchman*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street

02.10. *The Gypsy Baron* 03.10.

Buratino.by; Shalom Aleichem!

04.10. *Aladdin and His Magic Lamp; Once in Chicago* 05.10. *Blue Cameo*

07.10. *Mister X* 08.10. *A Glass of Water*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

02.10. *Taming of the Shrew* 03.10. *Esfir*

04.10. *Viva Commedia!; Stars of the Seventh Sky*

06.10. *Tricks of Khanuma* 07.10. *Bridegrooms*

08.10. *Truth is Good but Happiness is Better*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

02.10. *Night* 04.10. *Paulinka*

06.10. *The Black Lady of Nesvizh*

07.10. *Local Cabaret* 08.10. *Office*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

02.10. *No One Ever Said Life Would Be Easy*

03 and 04.10. *Abduction of Yelena*

06 and 07.10. *Robbery at Midnight*

08.10. *...Forgetting Herostratos!*

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Square

02.10. *Para Pa Param*

03.10. *Love and Doves*

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Square

08.10. *An Ideal Wife*

Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

October of decades and centuries past comes to life

October 2nd. In 1895, Rear Admiral Dmitry Rogachev was born — a participant in BSSR defensive fighting in the summer of 1941. From 1940, he commanded Pink's military fleet, which fought fiercely against the Fascists from June until August 1941, along the rivers Berezina, Dnieper, Pina and Pripyat.

October 3rd. In 1948, Belarusian international draughts grand master Anatoly Gantvarg was born — an Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR and an Honoured Coach of Belarus, who won world and European championships many times (as part of a team).

October 4th. In 1956, Nikolay Samoseiko was born — the Chairman of the Standing Committee of the House of Representatives for International Affairs and the Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian-Russian Union's Parliamentary Assembly.

October 5th. In 1930, Soviet pilot-cosmonaut Pavel Popovich was born. The twice USSR Hero and General Mayor of Aviation spent 18.7 days in space.

October 6th. In 1950, bal-

let dancer and People's Artiste Yuri Troyan was born in Minsk. From 1968, he performed with the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre.

October 7th. In 1905, botanist Prof. Nikolay Smolsky was born in Narovlya — an academician, a Doctor of Bio-



logical Sciences, and an Honoured Figure of Sciences.

October 8th. In 1909, architect Natalia Makletsova was born. Among her works are Minsk's residential house for specialists, an 8-storey house in Yakub Kolas Square, and the reconstructed main building of the Belarusian Polytechnic Institute.

October 2nd. In 1943, the

Dribin District of the Mogilev Region was released from Fascists; its western part was cleared in June 1944.

October 4th. In 1994, the Dudutki Non-State Museum Complex of Ancient Folk Crafts and Technologies was founded.

October 2nd. In 1981, the Maxim Gorky monument was erected in the Central Children's Park.

October 2nd. In 1990, the first issue of *Narodnaya Gazeta* (People's Newspaper) was released — published in Russian and Belarusian in Minsk.

October 2nd. In 1990, the Belarusian Institute of Political Sciences and Social Leadership

was established.

October 3rd. In 1924, the first issue of *Uchitelskaya Gazeta* (Teachers' Newspaper) was published.

October 3rd. In 1989, the Belarusian Design-Technological Institute to Process and Store Fruits, Vegetables and Potatoes was established.

October 3rd. In 2001, the Folk Museum of Belarusian Education welcomed its first visitors at Minsk's gymnasium #12.

October 4th. In 1929, the first issue of Belarusian language *Pioner Belarusi* (The Pioneer of Belarus) newspaper was published — known as *Ranitsa* (Morning) since 1994.

October 4th. In 1963, the 1000 Melochei (Thousand Small Items) shop opened in Kalinin Square.

October 4th. In 2003, a monument to poet Adam Mickiewicz was unveiled in Minsk, at the crossroads of Gorodskoi Val and Nemiga streets.

October 5th. In 1990, Belarus' Federation of Trade Unions was established.

October 6th. In 1929, Minsk's Central Radio Transmission Centre began its work.