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MICHAEL PINIEVSKY

# Round loaf was to taste

Belarusians don't only gather harvest in their fields. Our National Day was recently celebrated in Milan at the EXPO-2015 World Fair. A large business delegation headed by Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov attended the fair.



MICHAEL PINIEVSKY

# Happy birthday, dear capital!

Minsk has celebrated its 948th birthday at more than 60 festive venues

By Alexander Pimenov

As is traditional, the holiday opened with the laying of flowers on the Minsk Hero-City Memorial, other major solemn events taking place near the Palace of Sports. The *Stars of the Capital* festive programme also took place and invited guests enjoyed an exhibition of folk craftsmen, as well as a tournament of strength.

The Upper Town hosted a *Heart of the Capital* thematic programme and both native Minskites and visitors to the city were invited to immerse themselves in other ages during the international festival of historical reconstruction taking place on the crossroads of Pobediteley Avenue and Masharov Avenue, in the green zone area. Meanwhile, nine couples exchanged wedding rings in the historic centre of the Upper Town. On entering the Concert Hall, the couples were welcomed by courtiers (dressed in costume) and musicians. After the solemn registration of the wedding, some took



VITALY GIL



VITALY GIL

rides in a horse-drawn carriage.

Belarus 1 TV Channel presented Minskites and guests with a large

concert held on the open ground near the Palace of Sports and featuring popular Belarusian soloists



VITALY GIL



BELTA

**Real holiday for city residents and visitors to the capital**

and bands. The famous singers and Belarus 1 TV hosts, Teo and Daria, created a festive mood. The concert also featured Uzari, Daniil Dubravyn, Sasha Nemo, Bycity, Ruslan Aslanov (who represented Belarus at the 2015 International *Junior Eurovision Contest*) and other artists.



BELTA

The celebrations closed with musical fireworks, near the Minsk Hero-City Memorial.

# Round loaf was to taste

By Inna Pavlova

The theme of this year's event was 'Feeding the Planet. Energy for Life', thus harvest was an appropriate subject. Those Italians, who had not heard about our *Dazhynki* festival, now know a new word. Our traditional round loaf was also a new experience and one that was enjoyed by all. The exhibition offers an unmissable opportunity to taste food from many different countries. Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov described how Belarusians have embraced the EXPO's atmosphere, "Now Italy has numerous admirers of our dishes such as draniki and machanka. While many Italians have discovered that Belarus is both modern and beautiful."

It is a little known fact that every tenth tractor and every third mine dump truck in the world comes from Belarus. Italy is the seventh most important trading partner of Belarus and last year the trade turnover between the two countries exceeded 2 billion Euros. Every year Italian families receive thousands children from Belarus, thanks to them strong ties between our people have developed. The director of the Belarusian exhibition hall, Natalia Kurash, de-

scribed how, for four months, many Italian families visited our exhibition hall with their Belarusian guests. The Belarusian diaspora is notable in Italy. During the National Day of Belarus I made the acquaintance of two Tatanas who have lived in Italy for many years. They do not forget their native land, moreover, they actively promote it: both are members of the society BellaRus (containing the Italian word bella which means 'beautiful'), and they came to Milan purposefully to participate in our *Dazhynki*. They asked for photos, as they want to write about our 'Beautiful Belarus' for their local newspaper.

Beautiful people, a melodious language, picturesque costumes and song are heard as Belarus celebrated its National Day during the EXPO. The organisers asked all participants to perform their national ceremonies, rituals, dances and songs connected with the agricultural cycle and traditions of harvesting in their countries. The choice for our day was natural: *Dazhynki* in Italy! Even if Italians and other visitors of the EXPO have not heard such a word almost all cultures have a harvest festival. The Prime Minister of Belarus explained, "The theme of the trade



MICHAEL PINIEVSKY

**Lively interest in the Belarusian pavilion among exhibition visitors**

fair is 'feeding the planet', it is absolutely the right theme, but first of all it is necessary to feed our own people. Fortunately, the food problem in Belarus has been solved; moreover we have turned from net-importers into net-exporters of foodstuffs. Last year, our agricultural exports totalled almost \$6bn. This year, in spite of the fact that it was difficult year in terms of natural-climatic conditions, we gathered almost a tonne of grain per head. The fact that we rank amongst the top five countries

exporting dairy products is also significant. It shows that we have good potential and advanced technology which we can showcase today."

It is this business aspect of the exhibition that is hidden from the eyes of visitors who like Belarusian draniki, machanka and birch sap, but for the sake of which, hundreds of businessmen from every corner of the globe visit. According to Mr. Kobyakov, the results of Belarusian participation in EXPO-2015 will be collated later (the exhibition con-

tinues until October 31st), but it is already clear that there will be long-term benefits for our national economy and for the representation of Belarusians in the world. He added, "Imagine how many people come through our exhibition hall? About 50,000 every week! Some discover Belarus for the first time, while some see it from a new perspective of our industrial, tourism and cultural potential, they learn that there exists an attractive country in the centre of Europe and that it is possible to be on friendly terms with it in order to build business. That is worth a lot."

The First Deputy Minister for Italian Economic Development, Carlo Calenda, thanked our country for its considerable participation and praised Belarus' adherence to the idea of food safety. Mr. Calenda explained how trade not only increases the income and general well being of the countries and people involved in it, but also brings people together. On September 11th there was a presentation of tourist opportunities in Belarus while Belarusian science days are to be held on September 29-30th. The Mogilev and Minsk regions will be demonstrating at the Milan platform until the end of October.

# No closed topics in talks with India

## Belarus and India to fully achieve agreements reached at top level

By Vladimir Khromov

This century, Asian states are expected to dictate the climate of the global economy. Among them is rapidly-growing India, with its population of almost 1.3 billion and GDP of \$2 trillion. It could yet join the world's leading economies. Belarus is yet to make full use of the grand possibilities boasted by the Indian market, to bring benefit to our state, but our countries have top-level understanding of each other's wishes.

This May, the Indian President visited Belarus for talks with Alexander Lukashenko. Pranab Mukherjee signed a 'road map' outlining priorities for our interaction and the time has now come to activate these agreements. Minsk was recently visited by the Indian Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman, who also met the President.

While waiting for the meeting to begin, I recollected Mr. Lukashenko's recent talks with leaders from China, India and Pakistan. Many warm

words were spoken, agreements signed and contracts concluded, giving grounds for pride. We are friends with major world players, who are interested in co-operation with Belarus, showing that we are respected and appreciated as a promising and reliable partner.

We now need to convert these words into concrete projects. Mr. Lukashenko believes that success lies in realising our agreements and on the efficiency of our key ministries' interaction. He notes that no obstacles are to be created on the Belarusian side, saying, "We have no closed topics. Belarus is ready for open co-operation with India along every avenue."

As regards mutual turnover, over the past seven months, this has risen by almost 30 percent, to reach \$300m. However, more can be achieved. The President emphasises the close trade-economic relations which the USSR and India once enjoyed, and which can be revived.

A governmental *Make in India* programme is be-



Alexander Lukashenko and Nirmala Sitharaman

ing realised, aiming to attract new production technologies into India. Our partners are interested in establishing joint facilities in the sphere of machine building. Moreover, India plans to triple its extraction from its rich deposits of stone coal, using heavy-duty dump trucks which could be provided by Belarusian BelAZ. Vehicles have successfully passed tests to operate in up to 50 degrees tropical

climate, demonstrating better results than Japanese or American analogues.

Belarusian tractors have been working on Indian fields since Soviet times, without problems, but a new fleet is now needed. MAZ and Gomselmash have found partners in India and Mr. Lukashenko views the issue strategically, proposing to establish a large industrial centre in India — uniting production, sales and

service maintenance of Belarusian machinery.

Our Indian guest appreciated the idea and has already voiced Indian companies' readiness not only to buy potash fertilisers but to invest into the Belarusian potassium branch. Some time ago, the Government, under Jawaharlal Nehru, proposed that citizens expand their learning; as a result, the Indian IT market is now among the most fast

growing in the world. Belarusian IT specialists are also among the best so it seems reasonable to unite efforts, to generate more profit.

Pharmacologists have already taken action, launching several investment projects, including the production of cancer-treatment drugs. To realise projects of the kind, the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park is being set up, accommodating some high-tech Indian companies. In taking residency, they receive free access to the Eurasian Economic Union market and good prospects of mastering EU markets. Truly, no better logistics are to be found: Belarus is situated between these two economic giants.

The Indian Minister's visit coincided with the end of the diplomatic mission of the Indian Ambassador, Manoj Kumar Bharti, to Belarus. The latter is now moving to Ukraine. Mr. Lukashenko warmly thanked the diplomat for his work and expressed hope that the new ambassador will cope with his task no less successfully.

## PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS—2015

# Marathon for candidates

By Maxim Osipov

**Central Commission on Elections and Republican Referenda officially registers candidates for the Presidential post**

The candidates are; Sergei Gaidukevich, Tatiana Korotkevich, Alexander Lukashenko and Nikolay Ulakhovich. Our reporter attended the official registration meeting.

The autumn weather was unusually sunny and the meeting hall on the second floor of the House of Government was crowded. National and international observers and journalists were in attendance, but the 'stars' were the participants of the Presidential campaign and their representatives. The Central Election Commission studied a range of issues during the run up to registration of the candidates. The procedure met legislation in every respect: initially, the Central Election Commission received reports by the regional election commissions on the results of signature collection. The process lasted for over an hour and the official information made interesting reading.

After detailed analysis, the registration of Victor Tereshchenko and Zhanna Romanovskaya was refused. The latter's campaign group collected just 789 signatures (against the required minimum of 100,000). Tatiana Korotkevich became the first registered candidate. Her team collected over 107,000 signatures, with almost 105,000 of them confirmed. The first woman in the history of the Belarusian Presidential campaign does not think this is exclusively the result of her own



Lidia Yermoshina answers journalists questions

personality. "This has happened because of the work of my team, as well as those who signed in my favour. My candidacy is the single democratic alternative. The authority should change but peacefully," she said. The second certification went to Sergei Gaidukevich who collected over 139,000 signatures. He commented, "I stand for strong, democratic, independent and calm country. I wish for peace and that its citizens enjoy worthy salaries and pensions. I'm for Belarus!"

Nikolay Ulakhovich was the third to be registered, with 149,000 signatures. On receiving his certificate, the candidate said, "I'm participating in this important campaign for the first time. However, I view myself as a strong economy expert as have worked in many areas. I hope I can bring my experience to benefit my country. We'll overcome the economic crisis jointly."

Alexander Lukashenko's certificate was handed to the head of his campaign group, Mikhail Orda. Who

commented, "Our initiative group worked everywhere — in large cities and small villages. While collecting signatures, we became convinced that people are not indifferent to elections. They clearly understand that, these days, the country's fate is being decided upon. As a result, our candidate enjoys unprecedented support by the people."

Four candidates officially begin the pre-election fight. The campaign period has begun and the contenders will have the opportunity to publicise their manifestos widely. Apart from publishing them in state media, the candidates will be able to appear on the Belarus 1 TV Channel free of charge: from September 14th-25th at 7-8pm. Moreover, the candidates will also have access to radio broadcasting to present their programmes; the most 'popular' slots will be provided: from 6.10-7.10am from September 21st-October 2nd (working days). The most 'spectacular' action is scheduled for October 3rd: TV debates.

# Open for dialogue

By Maxim Osipov

**The National Assembly's House of Representatives hosted a meeting with members of PACE's preliminary mission for the observation of Presidential elections. The event's keynote was to demonstrate that our country is ready to render all possible assistance for the realisation of its mandate.**

On welcoming the guests, the Chairman of the House of Representatives, Vladimir Andreichenko, said, "We are pleased to meet again with PACE representatives and hope these contacts will become a good basis for further co-operation in all issues of mutual interest. As a result of the elections, our Parliament is ready to take into consideration all the recommendations of the international observers. Where necessary, we will make changes to election legislation in the future."

The Head of PACE's preliminary mission, a Turkish parlia-

ment deputy, Reha Demenec, thanked the Chairman for the invitation to participate in observations of the Presidential elections. Some time still lies ahead and, with this in mind, Mr. Demenec commented, "We are here to receive information from your side, also to listen to your recommendations and proposals."

The Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikov, replied, "We are fully open to dialogue and discussion of all issues."

In turn, Mr. Demenec stressed, "Belarus is a unique country in a positive sense. In this respect, we are keen to receive more information about it from you."

The PACE delegation should have been headed by an Armenian deputy, Arpine Ovannisyan. However, she was recently appointed Armenia's Justice Minister and so the Turkish parliamentarian leads the mission. The team of observers also included Andrea Rigoni, the present rapporteur of the PACE's Committee on Political Affairs and Democracy.

## DIRECT SPEECH

Vladimir ANDREICHENKO, the Chairman of the House of Representatives:

It's of principal importance for political competition that the election campaign is held in full accordance with Belarusian legislation. It should be held against the background of public order, peace and concordance. We have seen the results of the lack of political responsibility in other states — including our neighbours. The result is economic chaos and refugees; both the country and its people suffer where systems fail.

# Economic life as it is

Grodno is hosting the Eurasian Intergovernmental Council meeting, with heads of government focusing on integration issues of the formation of common markets for oil, gas, finances and agricultural co-operation

By Ulyana Bushkova

On opening the session, Belarus' PM Andrei Kobyakov noted that, while moving along the path of liberalisation and lifting barriers to trade, countries inevitably approach sensitive issues requiring a compromise for supranational interests. Moreover, the period after the Union's launch is even more intense than during the process of the Agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union development. This is a natural process, since practice always puts everything into perspective and issues come to the fore. Meanwhile, reports of the commission on the development of acts and international agreements proceeding from the Agreement on the Eurasian Economic Union, as well as initiatives of the Belarusian chairmanship aim to elaborate and make detailed action plans for the implementation of policies. The Union members will need to investigate the further liberalisation of the service market and the protection of intellectual property.

Mr. Kobyakov proposed paying special attention to the formation of industrial policy, in particular, the development of a draft project dealing with the major avenues of industrial co-operation within the Eurasian Economic Union. It's now important to control the process of preparation for the common markets of oil, gas and oil products, as well as being ready for the launch on January 1st, 2016, of the common market for drugs and medicinal



Eurasian Intergovernmental Council session in expanded format

products. In addition, the interaction of key economic establishments — the ministries of economy, finance and the national banks — is high on the agenda.

Meanwhile, as Russian PM Dmitry Medvedev noted, complicated processes in the global economy are a good impetus for the consolidation of forces and uniting of the members of the Eurasian Economic Union. "We are facing a rather difficult economic situation in comparison to that seen when our Union was formed. Global economic affairs are not simple nor are they fully worked out in advance. Turbulence

is observed on the stock and capital markets in a number of states. As a result, variability on financial and commodity grounds is a key factor of new economic life; we must take this into account while outlining our own policy. These all create additional risks for national economies, which have already been manifested in some respects," he said.

According to Mr. Medvedev, the Eurasian Economic Union states now need to move to the establishment of a single market for goods, works and services, while continuing work on the formation of a legally based agreement — primarily

regarding barriers and withdrawals, as well as some sort of lack of transparency (which is still observed). In the coming months, a new Customs Code will be adopted — to come in force in 2016. Until the end of the year, agreements will be prepared on the concluding of international agreements and approaches to settling foreign currency relations and activity on financial markets — alongside many other documents. Interaction in the field of macroeconomic currency and financial policy is of special significance for all countries; its mechanism is already determined.

## Points for further growth

By Alexander Pimenov

**Joint ventures represent points for growing trade and economic relations with India — as noted by the Chairman of the National Assembly's Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikovich, on meeting the Indian Minister of State for Commerce and Industry, Nirmala Sitharaman**

"The growth points are the establishment of joint ventures we have agreed on in Belarus and India. They represent not only co-operation in trade, economics and merchandise but also investment collaboration," noted the Belarusian MP.

Among other projects there are proposals to set up a Belarusian vehicle centre in India and a medical centre in Belarus. The former is expected to offer products made by BelAZ and Amkodor and, possibly, MAZ and MTZ — providing pre-delivery inspection, localisation, maintenance and personnel training. In turn, Belarus' prerequisites for setting up an Indian medical centre are represented by five enterprises designed to produce medications. These are being built with assistance of Indian capital in Beshenkovich, Nesvizh, Skidel and Kolyadichi.

The second important area of co-operation is the development of the free trade area agreement between the Eurasian Economic Union and India. Apart from that, it is necessary to step up parliamentary contacts by refreshing the friendship groups in the parliaments of Belarus and India.

## Valuable experience worth emulating

**Belarus keen to follow Georgian experience in property registration, notes Director General of National Cadastral Agency of Belarus, Andrei Filippenko, on meeting representatives from the National Agency of Public Registry at Georgian Justice Ministry**

"Belarus is interested in the Georgian approach towards personal identification, inter-departmental interaction and integration of services," notes Mr. Filippenko. Georgia has also announced its interest in learning from Belarusian experience in the sphere of state information resources. "Belarus and Georgia have similar start-up conditions, which makes experience sharing interesting and useful," stresses the Chairman of the National Agency of Public Registry, Papuna Ugrehelidze.

The visit by representatives of the National Agency of Public Registry at the Georgian Justice Ministry to Belarus lasted six days. In particular, our Georgian colleagues presented a pilot project to create a system of mass property registration and cadastre assessment, using the Brest Region's Kobrin District and Minsk's Sovetsky District as an example. Georgia is a leader in the World Bank's *Doing Business* rating for 'Property Registration' while Belarus is ranked third.

## Through knowledge — to success

By Alexander Fiodorov

**High-Tech Park enrolls listeners to free basic courses on innovative entrepreneurship**

'Entrepreneurs who are already implementing or are planning to launch start-up projects in the sphere of information and communication technologies are invited,' notes the HTP's Press Service.

The courses at the HTP business incubator aim to provide practical assistance in developing a start-up community. The programme includes basic topics useful to new businesses, with leading experts in IT business sharing practical tips and experience. Entrepreneurs will be able to receive personal consultations from leading specialists working with HTP resident companies, learning the secrets of their success.

More details are provided on the HTP official site, in the 'Business Incubator' section.

## Goods selling like hot cakes

By Maria Dronova

**For the 12th time, Minsk has chosen the best construction product of the year**

To be more precise, there are many winners, as the list contains 72 businesses, including foreign companies that have produced and dispatched at least 96 varieties of goods. Alexander Patutin, Chairman of the organising committee of the *Best Construction Product of the Year 2015* Award, says that entries have been received for the first time from a dozen different manufacturers, some of which have only recently appeared on the market. Neiman Glassworks is an example of a locally produced innovation, offering a new type of isolation material — heat-insulating mats made from glass wool. The Mogilev Polymer Pipes plant has also done well, being awarded the prize for insulated polymer pipe products.

"There were four candidates and the discussion was very intense, as usually goods are being assessed by



their technical characteristics and quality. In the case of the Grand Prix, all aspects are taken into account: the history of the enterprise, its position on the market and export supplies. Moreover, a focus on the innovative nature of the products is also important, as is the share of innovations in the total amount of goods produced," explains Mr. Patutin.

This year, the expert jury has been expanded, with 25 people se-



lecting the best out of more than 125 companies. While the judges were deciding, the participants underwent five practical seminars dedicated to the promotion of goods to foreign and domestic markets, alongside the enhancement of production efficiency.

Remarkably, the winners of this year's event include traditional leaders, in particular, Krasnoselskstroy-materialy, Krichevmentnoshifer, the Belarusian Cement Plant, Berzastroymaterialy, Bel-Izolit, the Polymer Pipes plant, the BSW – A Management Company of BMC Holding, Belsplat, Belzarubezhstroy and BATE (Borisov Plant of Automotive and Tractor and Equipment). The latter business began manufacturing heat-insulating boards three years ago, and its produce is currently in high demand in the domestic market, as well as in Russia, Ukraine and Lithuania.



Call centre's operators able to answer any question

# Work that never ceases

Belarus' largest Banking Processing Centre — used by 14 banks and which has issued 9.5m cards — reveals some of its secrets to our *MT* reporter

By Anna Osokina

It's hardly possible to find a modern family not relying on banking cards for their day to day spending. Over 12.3m cards are in circulation in Belarus (up 500,000 over the last 12 months); in 2012, Belarusians held just 9.9m cards. No doubt, non-cash payments are convenient, especially now that most retailers accept them. They are great for travelling and allow us to access allowances, salaries, scholarships, pensions and wages with ease. However, despite it appearing 'easy' (we think nothing of paying for souvenirs abroad by VISA), the process is quite complicated. When funds are taken from your account, they need to be sent to the exact 'receiving' bank account, with processing centres acting as bridges between countries and banks. Card validity also needs to be verified, alongside the presence of adequate funds. International payments are just one of numerous avenues of banking activity.

Some banks — like Priorbank and Belvnesheconombank — have their own processing centres, but most financial institutions in Belarus use the Banking Processing Centre: it serves around 78 percent of all Belarusian cards and a similar share of trade and service organisa-



tions which use payment terminals (connected to the Centre's software complex).

Work is continuous, with transfers being processed, including inter-bank settlements and those conducted at terminals, info-kiosks and cash machines. The Centre's data processing systems work 24/7, processing up to 5.5m inquiries daily. In addition, over 10,000 banking cards are activated each day, including data held within magnetic strips and micro-processors. Meanwhile, non-contact cards, not requiring a terminal (only a special reader) are becoming more widespread. Specialists forecast that mobile phones, watches and other

devices using a micro-processor with a non-contact interface could become commonplace.

The Centre acts as a public receiving office (also known as client servicing). A single operator can process over 10,000 calls monthly, while the Centre receives 450-490,000 in total each month. Employing around 40 employees, it takes most calls during the day, with a few at night. Specialists can block a card (at a holder's request) if lost, or unblock a card after the user makes a three-time mistake in their PIN-code. Moreover, employees can inform of account balances and give advice on whether an operation has been carried out

## MT'S REFERENCE:

As of July 1st, 42.7 percent of cards in Belarus were BELCARD, and 43.8 percent were VISA, with 13.5 percent run by Mastercard. American Express cards are soon to be introduced for the first time in Belarus, offering additional services. In 2009, just 41 percent of card operations were cashless; now, this figure has reached 75 percent.

Moreover, small businesses can purchase relatively cheap mobile terminals — known as M-POS — for use with smartphones and the Internet. The Banking Processing Centre already has 19 offices in regional centres and other large cities across the Republic.

The Deputy General Director of the Banking Processing Centre, Yelena Odinochenko, explains that a group of risk-analysts daily work at the Centre, using specialised software to detect suspicious operations. If a card operation occurs in Belarus and then, an hour later, in Singapore (not online but at an ordinary shop or cash machine), they are alerted. Evidently, it's impossible to travel from Belarus to Singapore in such a short period of time, indicating criminal activity. In this situation, the Centre would block the card and inform the bank.

In analysing fraud operations, the Centre may learn of card owners' data being stolen in great volumes in a certain country. In this case, this country receives the status of a 'high risk state'. If operations involving great sums are conducted outside Belarus in a high risk state, they are automatically viewed as suspicious. When the Centre's systems detect cases of this kind, cards are immediately blocked and banks are informed of the need to investigate.

successfully (if a client has doubts).

The Centre also helps trade and service organisations find out about their sales figures and can send repair technicians for terminals. Information support is not the main activity but the Centre aims to expand the number of places accepting card payment and is responsible for infrastructure development — providing terminals and cash machines to banks and other organisations.

Trade and service enterprises — including individual entrepreneurs — can choose the best scheme for receiving and servicing equipment (taking into consideration their abilities and plans).

# Thoughts on mutual welfare

By Alexander Fiodorov

## Slavonic international economic forum held in Bryansk

Over ten agreements on economic co-operation have been signed at the 4th Slavonic International Economic Forum in Bryansk, worth over 40bn Roubles. Belarusian cities sent representative delegations to Bryansk, taking part in negotiating investment contracts.

Representatives of authorities and business joined experts in discussing ways of developing the economies of Belarus and Russia, as well as other Slavic states. Sanctions and the current difficulties are encouraging us to care for each other and think about mutual welfare. As a matter of fact, the Gomel Region has liaisons with all Russia, and

the Bryansk Region is among the top-five partners in terms of goods turnover, thanks to close economic relations with Gomselmash, metallurgical plants and some others. The Bryansk Region's goods turnover with Belarus exceeds \$800m.

Mogilevliftmash has made overtures towards Bryansk, which have been accepted. A regional programme of modernisation is essential for the lift industry and co-production is a good path forward. In turn, the Mogilev Region is interested in machinery made at Zhukovsky Motorcycle Plant.

Participants of the forum toured Bryansk Arsenal Plant, discussing possibilities for import-substitution. Bryansk has already begun investment projects to modernise manufacturing and to launch new

products at 13 enterprises (at a cost of over 14bn Roubles). Both Arsenal and the Cardboard Factory, Proletariy, located in Surazh, have revamped their manufacturing facilities. According to the Director General of Proletariy, Nikolay Kovtunov, the enterprise is doing well. He explains, "We're simply producing goods which were once imported from abroad."

Eko-Kremniy enterprise is using the fall in the Rouble exchange rate to its advantage, with its number of orders on the rise. Sergey Shtepa, who heads nano-manufacturing company Metaclay, tells us that his enterprise has mastered production of traditional 'Russian-made' materials for insulating large-diameter pipes. He notes, "Since October, 20 percent of pipes have been insulated with our new



During the work of the forum

material, replacing past imports from Germany and other countries."

According to Valery Fadeev, who heads Expert Media Holding, such progress confirms the necessity of close interaction between authorities and businesses. Development of ties between the border regions of Russia and Belarus is essential. Over the past

seven months, industry in the Bryansk Region has grown by 12 percent, as has been noted by representatives of federal ministries and departments. Co-operation with Belarus is having a positive affect on the economy. Together with neighbours, the Bryansk Region is developing dairy manufacturing and other branches of agriculture.



# Comfortable Krugloe

Not long ago, this was a district centre where few desired to stay long. Situated far from central roads, you felt that the town had sunk into a chasm, away from reality. It lacked bright facades, flowers on its streets and modern children's playgrounds. Moreover, local residents seemed not to appreciate their town.

By Pavel Minchenko

Tamara Aksenova, the Deputy Chair of the Krugloe District Executive Committee, recalls, "There were times when we were simply afraid to plant flowers in the streets, as they were immediately torn out by vandals. The situation is different now. Just have a look: what beauty surrounds us."

Grey, dull Krugloe has transformed into a centre of hospitality. Around 7,500 people live here and, since early 2015, almost 8,000 tourists have visited. Moreover, the flow of guests never stops: Krugloe's hotels have no vacant rooms at the weekend. In addition, the town boasts seven fast food outlets: around one per 1,000 citizens (including the elderly and babies). It's not difficult for tourists to find a meal.

People arrive from remote Minsk, as well as Vitebsk and Russia, all eager to rest and relax: in recent years, the local entertainment indus-

try has grown in Krugloe, with the Izumrud (Emerald) complex uniting a restaurant, hotel and bowling. It even offers medical services.

Parking my car, I meet Vladimir Odintsov, from the village of Rakushevo. He tells us, "It's truly changed here. In the past, Krugloe was a hole; now, it's charming. There's real pleasure to be had in walking through its streets, as all are beautiful. I've taken up bowling, having heard a lot about it in books and on TV. I visited once and found I enjoyed playing!"

Izumrud was built in Krugloe by PMK-266. The head of the local company, Nikolay Patronchik, admits, "Krugloe's entertainment industry provides a safety cushion for our enterprise. There were times when we had plenty of orders but, suddenly, their number began to fall. We thought of creating something innovative for the construction sphere, and Izumrud was launched. It has offered new jobs, and pleasingly embellished our town. Krugloe is now



truly beautiful. It attracts couples for wedding celebrations from all over the country and, even, Russia."

Not long ago, another interesting site opened near Krugloe: the Nikolaevskie Prudy tourist base, which attracts plenty of holiday-makers. Around a dozen cars were in the car park as I went by, displaying plates from the Mogilev, Vitebsk and Minsk regions, as well as from Moscow.

Krugloe is managing to 'persuade' the younger generation to stay, as the Deputy Director of Pride Union enterprise, Yevgeny Kamaev, tells us. Most of his employees are young people.

It's so comfortable to live in this small town that the birth rate is now higher than that for mortality. The Chairman of the Krugloe District Executive Committee, Anatoly Shchuplenkov, notes, "In the first half of 2015, 89 babies were born (three more than in 2014). We're building accommodation and, soon, a block of 40 flats will welcome its first residents. A two-flat house is being built, as are 10 houses constructed by individuals. Overall, 4,200 square metres of new accommodation will have been built by late 2015." This offers the greatest proof that the town has bright prospects.

# Navigator shows the way

By Anton Kostyukevich

## Belarus develops electronic navigator to help schoolchildren better master chemistry

The innovation aims to supplement usual textbook learning, but is especially useful in including multimedia content: verbal, graphic, audio and visual. It also uses hypertext, to take students automatically to the correct chapter, paragraph, vocabulary or tests, from one part of the e-book to another quickly

and efficiently.

Work began on the project in early summer and, by late 2015, a draft version will launch for 10th grade chemistry, explains the Head of the National Education Institute's Educational Centre, Candidate of Philological Sciences Irina Shevlyakova-Borzenko. She notes, "As with an ordinary paper textbook, this electronic book needs to pass all stages of expert assessment and be approved by the Education Ministry. Only then will it be introduced

into schools. We'll study how it meets the needs of the curriculum, and the efficiency of its design, as well as its safety. At the same time, we're looking at the best use of electronic devices in the classroom: interactive whiteboards, personal computer terminals and mobile phone links. E-textbooks can significantly expand the possibilities of an ordinary printed book"

The new e-textbook is compatible with several e-devices: tablets, interactive whiteboards, notebooks and



smartphones. It can be used at home, on a large multimedia screen, and at school, via a pupil's tablet. It's practical for individual use at school, during laboratory work, enabling pupils to compare their

results with 'display' experiments (recorded by a group of teachers). In addition, it contains experiments unsafe for recreation in class and links to references in encyclopaedias or elsewhere.

# High-tech medical assistance

By Olga Potvorova

## Belarus leads within CIS for number of organ and tissue transplants

Organ and tissue transplants are at the cutting edge of high-tech medical care in Belarus, which stands foremost among CIS member states for its number of such operations per million citizens.

Belarusian specialists are eager to share their experience with foreign colleagues, including those from Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Turkmenistan, Georgia, Tajikistan and Russia. As many as 408 organ transplantations were performed in 2014, including 45 heart transplants, 285 kidney transplants, 77 liver transplants, and one lung transplant.

The Health Ministry is stepping up provision of high-tech medical care, in line with public needs. Many high-tech medical services are becoming common practice across the Belarusian regions, including cardiac surgeries and joint replacements, as well as brain and spinal tumour surgeries.

More than 13,000 high-tech operations were carried out in Belarus in 2014. "High-tech methods of medical treatment being introduced fully meet international standards, while our medical devices comply with international quality standards," notes the Health Ministry.

# Scientific substantiation

By Dmitry Krymov

## Belarusian and Chinese scientists to ensure scientific substantiation and accompaniment of joint projects

Beijing recently hosted a forum involving Belarus' National Academy of Sciences and the Chinese Academy of Sciences, focusing on the establishment of a joint institute to oversee the global Silk Road Economic Belt project. The Deputy Chairman of the National Academy of Sciences' Presidium, Sergey Chizhik, informs us that the liaison is the first of its kind in the history of interstate relations, with a similar topic being hosted by Minsk. "Scientists have the chance to develop logics and a strategy of relations," Mr. Chizhik adds.

The Vice-President of the Chinese Academy of Social Sciences, Cai Fang, agrees, saying, "Academic contacts are vital. As regards the institute relating to the Silk Road Academy, we believe the experience of Belarusian specialists will be welcome in relation to personnel training and rendering of intellectual assistance to businesses, as part of the Silk Road Economic Belt initiative."

The Director of the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Economics, Alexey Daineko, comments, "This has been agreed by our two states' heads and the mechanism is currently being elaborated. We'll think over the establishment of a department in Belarus and corresponding work will be conducted in China."

# City of high architecture

Minsk hosts 11th National Festival of Architecture *Minsk-2015*, using near-permanent stage beside restored Church of the Holy Spirit

By Valery Kravtsov

For the first time, the forum was held 'on the street', having been previously hosted by the Palace of Arts. The new venue is fitting, being located in the city's beautiful historical centre, surrounded by masterpieces of architecture. The stage is also known for hosting various cultural, musical and theatrical events.

Meandering through the 'upper town' (known once as the 'high place', I couldn't help but notice that the designs on show hark back to former architectural styles, combining these with modern technologies. Tatiana Keskevich, with her husband and co-author Yevgeny Lyashuk, designed a home in the village of Khodosy, in the Zhabinka District, for which they won the Small Grand Prix at Minsk's *Leonardo-2015*, International Biannual Exhibition of Young Architects. They shared the award with Spaniard Antonio Linan, for his apartment house design in the Spanish city of Ceuta.

This has been the first time that Belarusians have claimed the main prize at the international *Leonardo*, surpassing nearly 150 entrants, from 20 countries, judged by an international jury of seven experts.

Yekaterina Korbut, the director of *Leonardo-2015*, tells us, "Works recognised as best are those which have high artistic, engineering and economic characteristics."

Keskevich and Lyashuk realised their dream in creating a home in a village environment, which included all modern conveniences: a dream shared by most of us. It is one of eight houses they have designed and which are already being built in Khodosy. They always ensure that living spaces face south, to receive the sun's warmth (which saves on



Tatiana and Yevgeny introduce their Khodosy house design

heating). Other rooms are permitted to face north, including the garage. Their facades are trimmed with a distinctive herring-bone pat-

tern, which is characteristic of Belarusian rural architecture. Yevgeny noticed this style while travelling. Tatiana designs open plan kitchen-

living areas, featuring traditional stoves for cooking and heating. You can imagine sleeping on the stove, as in a fairy tale.

The pair insist that the project and materials aren't expensive, with most funds required to pay builders. 150 square metres is enough for a large family. Of course, having such a comfortable home inspires the birth of children and their upbringing surrounded by nature.

The festival was held until September 14th, on Oktyabrskaya Square and in the Upper Town, showing projects by modern architects from Belarus and from abroad. Comparing the works of our designers with those from Slovakia, Lithuania and Russia, I'm happy to see that the Belarusian school operates at a worthy European level.



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

Reviving an older building can be a more difficult task, as those who reconstructed the former sausage workshop into the Neres shopping and entertainment centre, in Vileika, know well. Its architects have combined classical elements from the former building, ensuring that the new design is harmonious with its historical environment. The Neres centre doesn't mask its surrounding low-rise buildings, or the local church, which gracefully peeps from the roof of the entertainment centre. All is well-balanced.

Examining the stands, there's much to admire and many wonderful ideas to inspire us. If the best of the designs come to fruition, they will beautify our country indeed.

## MT'S REFERENCE:

Walking along Kiril i Mefodiy Street, and along Herzen Street, you are sure to notice the unusual and courageous statues, produced by *ArTRESHtki* project, organised by the Belarusian Union of Designers. It inspires contradictory feelings already by its title, comprising 'art', and 'trash' and 'reshtki' (translated as the 'remains' from the Belarusian). There are magnificent mosaics and, even, a large red metal bull! If it doesn't scare anyone too much, it may remain on Herzen Street after the festival.

# Special kitchen garden for ice continent

By Dmitry Gomelsky

**Belarusian scientists able to grow vegetables on ice continent, as Russian polar researchers confirm**

The Belarusian polar kitchen garden comprises two small greenhouses: around 1 square metre each. This high-tech bio-complex of enhanced productivity grows salad, fennel, parsley, basil and other herbs. The technology has been developed at the National Academy of Sciences' Centre of Photodiode and Optic Electronic Technologies, and at the V. Kuprevich Institute of Experimental Botany. The establishments have provided arctic workers with seeds and special soil and instructed them on how greenhouses should be used.

"The Antarctic kitchen garden has met our expectations, so we are thankful to its developers," says the Head of the 7th Belarusian Antarctic expedition, Alexey Gaidashov. Having just returned from the ice continent, he explains, "It's great that polar researchers

## MT'S REFERENCE:

In line with the Arctic Treaty, any country has the right to set up its own station for scientific purposes, south of the 60° southern latitude. At present, 40 countries run polar stations in the most southern part of the globe. Overall, 45 all-year-round scientific stations operate in Antarctica. Belarus began conducting its arctic studies in 2006 but yet lacks its own base on the ice continent. The opening of a Belarusian owned base is planned by the Republic in the near future.

can eat greens. Their kitchen garden is experimental and not large but we plan to increase its size."

Russian colleagues appreciate the development, having provided the Vechernyaya Gora (Evening Mountain) base to Belarusians for free use.



It's not easy to grow greens in the Arctic

The station has been operational since Soviet times. "They are our dear guests and, each time, we treat them with fresh greens — ever new," Mr. Gaidashov smiles.

Russian stations boast nothing of the kind as yet, although the USA, France, Italy, China and the UK run kitchen gardens at their arctic bases. Greenhouses for hydroponic cultures are envisaged within their station

projects. "The secret to our high-tech kitchen garden is the lighting system; which uses a special spectrum to ensure a good harvest," explains the acting head of the laboratory at the Institute of Experimental Botany, Lyudmila Obukhovskaya. "Various reactions in plant cells are inspired by waves of different length. For example, the bio-synthesis of chlorophyll and the transportation of electrons, as

well as the regulation of plant growth, have different spectra to those controlling seed growth and root development."

In manipulating waves of different length, it's possible to measure the speed of vitamin and carbohydrate accumulation and the intensity of protein production. These discoveries are helping scientists to develop light-emitting diodes, to respond to plant needs more accurately than traditional lamps. For example, leafy salads and tomatoes needs different spectra. Each Belarusian expedition has a limited term so the plants chosen for growth must come to maturity quickly. However, other choices will be proposed for longer arctic trips.

Antarctic greenhouses allow us to apply new technologies, testing them under extreme conditions. Scientists hope to be able to apply their discoveries on a large scale, at industrial greenhouses. Special lamps for tomatoes are now ready and Minsk's Vegetable Factory is testing a 1km technological line.

# Germany introduces 'temporary' controls along Austrian border

Ahead of an EU Interior Ministers' crisis meeting the strain of absorbing so many refugees may be starting to tell in Germany

Berlin is reintroducing border controls starting with its Austrian frontier, and has suspended rail traffic from there. Railway stations around the country are beginning to resemble camps, with people sleeping where they can and luggage laying in piles. "The Dublin Rules and the regulations on registration are still in force. And I ask all EU member states to maintain them. That means, the responsible member state has not only to register the asylum seeker but also to conduct the follow-up of any asylum request," said German Interior Minister Thomas de Maiziere.

In Bavaria, the first stop for most of the people seeking refuge, the state government has held an emergency meeting to discuss the situation as Munich station is overflowing and refugee trains will no longer stop there. Instead the terminus will be



Syrian refugees pray after arriving on the shores of the Greek island aboard an inflatable boat

moved further north in a bid to relieve pressure and get the migrants moving more smoothly to their final destinations in other states. Meanwhile, thousands have taken to the streets of the Hungarian capital to demonstrate against the Prime Minister Viktor Orbán. The crowd marched across Budapest city centre along the river

Danube to the Parliament building. The protest, organised by civil rights groups and opposition parties, reject Orbán's hard line stance against asylum seekers.

"My conscience did not let me stay at home doing nothing. This is my contribution, the minimum I can do to finally stop this maltreatment

of asylum seekers," said one young woman. "I'm a foreigner, living in Hungary for 7 years. I'm a migrant. A legal one, because I was lucky. I came here today to demonstrate my solidarity to those poor refugees. They have received inhuman treatment from the government," explained an Englishman in Hungary.



## Italy's glaciers are melting too quickly

**In the past century, Alpine glaciers are estimated to have lost about half of their total area**

Today, Italy's 900 glaciers cover a total area of 370 square kilometres compared to 570 square kilometres half a century ago. The latest studies show a growing fragmentation of the glaciers, and experts believe many could disappear within the next 20 years. The Careser glacier in the Ortler Alps is one of them.

"The glacier keeps retreating. It has lost 80 percent of its surface, mostly in the past 25 years. Over the past 15 years, it has melted twice as fast as in previous decades, which means it has lost 50 percent of its surface since the year 2000. It is likely that

within 20 years, nothing will remain of it," says Alberto Trenti, Director at Meteo Trentino. Since the start of the 20th century, the Careser glacier has receded more than one kilometre. Nowadays it is divided into 6 parts and dark crevasses appear through the ice layer. In the past five years alone, the ice level has receded by 4 metres. The Mandrone glacier is the largest Italian glacier, and it, too, is melting fast according to experts.

"In 2011, the glacier reached up to just a few metres from where we are standing. As you can see, in the space of just a few years we have seen a large setback, and that's just over a very short period of time," deplores meteorologist Gianluca Tognoni.

## Homo Naledi: A new human-like species discovered in South Africa

**Experts have discovered Homo Naledi, a new human-like species**

The remains of 15 skeletons have been found secreted deep in a cave system in South Africa. Experts are excited by the find, not least because they say it is evidence of ritual behaviour and symbolic thought previously only found in Homo Sapiens.

"The idea that we recognised our own mortality and other self and that we would go to great effort to remove friends, relatives and even the un-related bodies from the external environment and place them away from that world: we saw ourselves as different. We have now seen, we believe, a species that had that same capacity," said Wits University Professor Lee Berger.



Professor Lee Berger

The bones were found hidden in a tiny chamber in the Rising Star cave, an area known as the 'Cradle of Mankind'. It is thought it may have been used for burials. The skeletons, which are both male and female, young, middle-aged and elderly, could be up to three million years old.

Experts are divided, though, on whether the new discovery can be described as a primitive human.

## Ireland's economy surpasses Eurozone rivals as recovery continues

**Ireland is set to be Europe's fastest-growing economy for the second year running**

The country's economy grew by 1.9 percent quarter-on-quarter from April to June — the eighth time it has expanded in the last nine quarters. Figures from the Central Statistics Office (CSO) show GDP was 6.7 percent ahead of the second quarter a year ago thanks to the strong second quarter plus upwardly revised growth of 2.1 percent in the first three months.

The recovery is far stronger than originally forecast. The economy is expected to grow by around 6 percent this year. Back in April the government had forecast that the economy would grow by 4 percent this year. One analyst said that on top of the economy's natural recovery, exports had been stimulated by the weak Euro, while low oil prices and tax cuts had helped incomes.

## Meltdown on Mont Blanc: mountain 'shrinks' 1.3 metres

**Mont Blanc seems to be in a meltdown**

The latest measurements of Western Europe's highest mountain appear to show it has shrunk a full 1.3 metres compared to 2013. Scientists put the often varying height of the mountain down to changing weather conditions at the summit. However, they report it has nothing to do with the heat waves seen across Europe this summer

## Thousands flee the flames as northern California battles wildfires

**A fast-moving wildfire in California's Sierra Nevada mountains has destroyed more than a dozen homes and threatened many more**

The so-called 'Butte Fire' has been burning in the rural Amador and Calaveras counties, where it covers an estimated 64,728 acres. Thousands of residents in the area were required to evacuate. About 100 miles (161 km) to the northwest, the so-called 'Valley Fire' injured four firefighters in Lake County, where they had been combating the fast-moving, 400 acre (162 hectare) blaze.

Flames from a larger Sierra Nevada blaze, dubbed the Rough Fire in central California, speeded north toward McKenzie Ridge, where firefighters continued to strengthen containment lines. About 3,500 people were affected by a mandatory evacuation in the area. The governor of California, Jerry Brown, has declared a state of emergency in the Napa and Lake communities.

Hundreds more towns and villages are under threat. The extreme nature of the wildfires is being blamed on high temperatures and years of drought.

**Materials prepared with aid of information agencies**



# Attracting guests to festival of bright medieval culture

## Sixth Golshany Castle Festival offers time travel

By Victor Andreev

Golshany recently celebrated three jubilees: the 735th anniversary of its first mention in historical chronicles; the 610th anniversary of the birth of the mother of the Polish-Lithuanian Jagiellon family — Sofia Golshanskaya; and the 405th anniversary of the building of the 'black castle' — praised by Belarusian writer Vladimir Korotkevich in his detective novel. Entitled *The Black Castle of Olshany*, it was published in the late 1970s and early 1980s, and broke ground in its style and content. The palace of the Sapegi family is still attracting thousands of guests from Belarus and abroad, largely thanks to its festival of medieval culture.

It's pleasant to see its halls cleaned and prepared for renovation, although the process will be long, since it is costing billions of Roubles. In 2015, Br400m was allocated as part of the *Culture of Belarus* state programme and, according to Galina Balinskaya — who heads the Oshmyany District Executive Committee's Department for Ideology, Culture and Youth Affairs, this money is enough to roof one tower. Br5bn has already been spent on restoration. In late July, Culture Minister Boris Svetlov visited the site, showing the state's involvement.

The *Golshany Castle* Festival was recently held for the sixth time, as part of local event tourism. Pleasingly, Golshany boasts the necessary potential, being a magnet for artistic entertainers. The festival draws guests not only from the Os-



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA

Thousands of guests from countrywide and abroad have arrived for the festival of medieval culture

hmyany but from the neighbouring Voronovo District. It's truly prestigious to perform there.

I was most impressed by the Vir Street Theatre, whose show was based on famous pictures by Dutch artist Hieronymus Bosch, with costumes and decorations to suit the period.

It seems that our entertainers are always pleased to share their skills with others, as Minsk's Soleil proved with its master class in medieval dancing. Meanwhile, the Belarusian State Musical Theatre performed extracts of classical

works. This theatre has previously visited Golshany, forming a good tradition. Among other attractions were the cutting of the cabbage with a sword, and lifting handkerchiefs from the ground with a lance.

A portrait of Vladimir Korotkevich should have been placed visibly, having masterminded the revival of the holiday, which remained in oblivion for many years in this provincial town. Souvenir editions of his *Black Castle of Olshany* could also have been offered for sale. The novel is translated into many languages — including Lithuanian;

in fact, guests from neighbouring Lithuania are common here. Such an edition could have included illustrations and drawings depicting the palace. Since the 19th century, many artists and photographers have drawn and photographed the site, including Yazep Drozdovich. Their pictures are rarely seen but would perfectly suit the book.

I'm convinced that the Oshmyany and Golshany authorities will realise plenty of ideas in time for the next festival, making it even brighter and the walls of the legendary palace even stronger.



## A remarkable place to go

By Valentina Kozlova

Two decades ago, a theatrical festival was born in Brest; now, it has international appeal, having attracted troupes from 55 countries over the years. The border city this year celebrated the 20th jubilee *Belaya Vezha* Festival, welcoming 21 teams from 13 countries, and amazing guests and city residents with a host of surprises.

Alexander Kozak, the Director of the Brest Academic Drama Theatre, is the chief organiser and director of the event. He tells us that the main performances at this year's *Belaya Vezha* are by past Grand Prix winners, saying, "They are the best of the best. Many have come with new shows. This year, instead of awarding a Grand Prix, we'll simply celebrate our jubilee; the organisational committee has decided not to appoint a traditional jury. We've invited famous theatrical critics though, from Belarus, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Russia, Ukraine and Estonia."

Drama performances will account for most of the jubilee programme, with the festival opened by the Maxim Gorky National Academic Theatre's *Viva Comedia* and closed by the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre's *Paulinka*. In all, there will be 22 performances, staged largely in Russian and Belarusian. Some are in English, Lithuanian and Arabic, with subtitle translation. Polish and Ukrainian are not to be translated, as Brest residents know these languages.

The festival programme also includes master classes by Brest choreographic school alumni — on the basis of *Me, You and Others*: a show staged by Polish Biuro Podróży Theatre. The best participants are involved.

# Sharing wonderful feeling of festive unity

It seems the 11th Republican Festival of National Cultures is on an even greater scale, more beautiful and impressive than last year's jubilee event. The organisers have added a new decade of artistic work with plenty of fresh ideas. Many of them were shown on September 12th, near the Palace of Sports: the ground housed the opening ceremony and attracted anyone eager to share in the spirit of festive unity. The director of the ceremony, Alexey Kaminsky, kept his ideas secret but hinted that we should be prepared for a grand show.

By Irina Ovsova

The Director of the Republican Centre of National Cultures, Mikhail Rybakov, disclosed some details of the festival on the eve of its opening. He promised audiences would be amazed, "This year, the range of participants is expanding. Audiences will see a performance of the *Solar Georgia* ensemble, in addition to the famous and much

beloved *Erebuni* troupe dancing national Armenian dances. The ensemble of Korean dance and music, *Arirang*, will also perform, as well as the Nikitina Russian Choir and teams of Spanish, Gipsy and Indian dances."

The Chairman of the Advisory Committee under the Plenipotentiary Representative for Religious and Nationality Affairs, Georgy Yegiazaryan, is convinced that the



Republican Festival of National Cultures is definitely the most significant event in the life of Belarus' national associations. He noted, "We, the heads of national associations, have visited seven states to share our experience: Poland, Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia, Ukraine, Austria and Slovenia. Nowhere else

is a similar festival organised. This is a great holiday for us as we have an opportunity to demonstrate the culture and traditions of many different nations. However, I'd also like to mention the festivSal's another side. This is a mirror of the policy conducted in our country with respect to the international issue. We have an equal attitude to people of different nationalities, and make no distinction between them."

The first festival united 11 nationalities but there were 36 of them at the 10th event. Every region hosts selective rounds and the

finals are held in Grodno every two years. Depending on the selection process, traditional participants can be supplemented with nationalities that have no diasporas of their own: they simply need to take part in a regional round and then reach the finals.

The cultural session of nationalities residing in Belarus is not a mere formality. Many Belarusian pop stars view it as highly prestigious to participate in the festival: among them are Iskui Abalyan, Stell and Gunesh. They perform not only as invited singers but as representatives of their nationalities. No-one can easily describe their feelings on visiting the event; they only repeat: 'it's well worth attending, you must see for yourself'.

# Biathlon legends gathered in Raubichi sport complex

The Legend Race — Biathlon Stars for Peace Festival was held in Raubichi. 20 of the strongest athletes, including Olympic champions and world champions, took part.

By Kirill Pirogov

Darya Domracheva, triple Olympic Champion and inspiration for the festival, opened it. Welcoming participants and visitors, the biathlete said, "Let today make history as the birthday of the Legend Race, as the day which will breathe new life into Raubichi. Famous athletes, from all corners of the world, have created the history of our sport. These people have earned the right to have at least one day in a year when they can revisit the atmosphere of the biathlon family once again, and feel that competitive excitement."

The biathlon stars were indeed full of anticipation. The women opened the competitive programme: ten of the strongest skiing marksmen appeared at the start with the aim not only to win, but also to relive the whole emotional experience. France's Olympic champion, Florence Baverel-Robert, was the best in the super-sprint. She covered the distance in 13 minutes 32 seconds, having outstripped her nearest rival, Norway's legendary Liv Grete Poirée by 6.1 seconds! Bronze in this discipline went to Germany's biathlete, Simone Hauswald. Yelena Zubrilova, repeated world champion, who was representing Belarus, came 5th in the event. Having completed the race, Florence admitted that she had not considered winning, "When I received the invitation to take part from Darya Domracheva several weeks ago, I accepted with pleasure. It is also very nice to win! There is a great atmosphere here in Raubichi."

Immediately after the women, the men appeared at the start. The well-known Norwegian biathlete, Olympic champion and double world champion, Frode Andresen, became the champion of the super-sprint. Michael Greis and Sven Fischer finished right behind him,



PAVEL CHUYKO



PAVEL CHUYKO

with a difference of just a tenth of a second. Belarus' Alexander Popov finished in tenth place. Frode Andersen said after the race, "Many similar races are held in Norway in the summer, but here, in Raubichi, I could experience all the atmosphere of the festival, the fans were great!"

After the individual competitions, previous champions paired up for a mixed relay race. Sven Fischer and Florence Baverel-Robert won

the event. While Swedish-German duet Helena Ekholm and Michael Greis took second place, Bulgarian-German pair Ekaterina Dafovska-Ricco Groß came in third.

All the winners received medals and prizes. Darya Domracheva, though not taking part in the competition, also received an award, a special prize as the best athlete of 2014. Summing up the results of the festival, Domracheva praised the



PAVEL CHUYKO



BELTA

**The Legend Race should become a symbol of Raubichi sport complex**

organisers for providing a real holiday for all fans and amateurs of the biathlon, "I have already had experience of the organisation of similar activities, but the Legend Race, with its scale and ambition, differed from all others. It was a real treat for the fans! I think in the future it will be easier to organise the Legend Race: both athletes, and fans will be impatiently waiting for the event!"

There is no doubt about the suc-

cess of the event, even after end of the races, the visitors were in no hurry to leave the stands, while the athletes remained to thank Darya Domracheva. Sven Fischer said it was very exciting for him to be an active athlete again and to feel the emotions from performing in the festival. Michael Greis described how the race gave him the chance to meet up with colleagues after so many years, and also to compete with senior athletes; "We all leave Belarus with a great impression and very positive feelings of returning to sport."

## Azarenko stopped at quarter final stage

By Igor Leshin

**Victoria Azarenko — ranked 20th in the WTA — loses to Romania's second seed Simona Halep in the quarterfinal of the US Open 2015**

The two players have met twice before, with the Belarusian winning each time. It has been three years since their last match. At that time, the Belarusian was in a higher position in the ranking but the situation

has now reversed: Victoria is now attempting to restore her top position in the WTA. Meanwhile, the Romanian is currently the second seed, behind the American Serena Williams. Despite this, bookmakers believed the Belarusian would win.

The beginning of the match was a success for Azarenko: she broke her rival's serve but then yielded four games in a row. The Belarusian failed to recover her position and the set ended in the Romanian's favour 6:3. The second set began deci-

sively with Azarenko pressuring her opponent and making fewer mistakes. The result was a positive 6:4. Rain stopped play when the third set was at 2:1 (Azarenko leading); the match was resumed 90 minutes later. The break was really not to the Belarusian's advantage: she gave up her lead to lose the set 4:6.

As a result, Azarenko finished her performance in New York for the second time at the quarter finals stage. A year ago, she lost to Russian Yekaterina Makarova but in the pre-



vious two years in a row had made the finals, leaving titled Serena Williams behind. Her recent match against Halep lasted for 2 hours

and 40 minutes. Azarenko served no aces and made 6 double faults, while Halep scored three aces and made two double faults of her own.



# Festival of sport as a true present for city



On Minsk City Day, around 19,000 runners participated in Minsk's Polo Marathon. Among them were Belarusian participants and almost 400 sportsmen from 33 countries.

By Kirill Karin

Lithuania, Latvia and Russia sent the greatest number of runners. Officially, 16,099 participants were registered but almost 3,000 more joined on the way. Runners could choose any of the three distances: 5, 10 or 21,097km, with the shortest enjoying the greatest popularity — attracting almost 15,000 participants. Around 700 people decided to run 10km and another 1,500 braved the longest distance, which was a half-marathon. The runners were not affected by early morning rain, which soon cleared as the race began. They all started simultaneously and a mere 15 minutes later, those running the shortest distance crossed the finish line. Each participant was awarded a commemorative medal.

The Chairman of the Athletics Federation, Vadim Devyatovsky, also decided to run 5km, commenting, "It was easy to run and I've never before seen such a positive atmosphere! I



A large-scale sporting event first organised in Minsk

met many people who encouraged me along the way and I can now say for sure that the first pancake is not always a failure!"

Some time later, the 10km runners finished: among the men, Sergey Yushchenko was first, Latvia's Denis Seregin came second and Belarusian

Denis Gramatovsky, third. In the women's race, the 10km distance was won by Belarusians: Anastasia Ivanova, Olga Kravtsova and Tatiana Stepanenko.

Belarusian men failed to achieve a top spot in the long distance race, where first place was occupied by

Ukraine's Vitaly Shafar (who participated in the London Olympics); the second went to Ukraine's Nikolay Yukhimchuk and third to Russia's Sergey Popov. In the women's distance, Olga Mazurenok led, confirming her top class position; in the past, Olga has won numerous marathons and

achieved silver at the European team championships. Second and third places went to Marina Domantsevich and Nina Savina.

After the awards ceremony (where the winners of the 10 and 21,097km distances were awarded diplomas and money prizes), the President of the European Federation of Athletics, Svein Arne Hansen, summed up the results, "I'm extremely impressed with the organisation of the half-marathon in Minsk. It is unusual for competitions at this level to enjoy such success for the first time." Mr. Hansen believes that after an athletics stadium is operational in Minsk, the country's chances of hosting a major international tournament will significantly increase. Belarus already has a good chance of hosting the European Indoor Athletics Championship in 2019. It is hoped that Minsk's half-marathon could soon be included in the list of international sporting events.

## Doing well in the home match

By Igor Grishin

**Belarus won 2:0 against Luxembourg in the 2016 European Championship qualifying round match hosted by Borisov-Arena**

After a recent defeat in Lvov against Ukraine (1:3), Belarusians aimed to beat Luxembourg. Compared to the previous match, the line-up was changed by the head coach Alexander Khatskevich. Six new footballers joined the others on the field: Zhevnov, Bordachev, Nekhaichik, Bressan, Dragun and Gordeichuk.

At the start of the match, the new team failed to establish itself and made some simple mistakes. However, after ten minutes on the field, the Belarusians began to show some well thought out play, helped greatly by Alexander Hleb's perfor-



Result has been reached, yet questions remain

mance. His partners — Renan Bressan, Maxim Bordachev and Sergey Kornilenko — also played well.

Sadly, their numerous attacks failed to bring any success until the 34th minute: a quick combination

with the participation of Bordachev, Bressan and Kornilenko was accurately completed by Mikhail Gordeichuk — 1:0. In turn, the guests' play before the break was slow, creating no threat for Yuri Zhevnov in goal.

In the second half, the Luxembourg team made two changes and headed to recover their loss but to no effect. The Belarusians began defending their goals strongly, relying on their rivals' mistakes. One of them was eventually used in the 62nd minute: Sergey Kislyak (substituting Hleb) brought Gordeichuk to the shooting position and the latter scored — setting the final result at 2:0.

After the match, Mr. Khatskevich commented that, after their loss in Lvov, the team has achieved an important positive result. The Belarusians performed well in defence, though there were several technical mistakes when attacking. Many attacks were hampered by excessive passes, when a shot at goal was needed, or sluggishness. In a month, the Belarusian footballers will play an away match against Slovakia, trying to build on their success and earn points.

## New role for coach

By Yegor Glebov

**Belarusian football specialist Victor Goncharenko appointed senior coach of Moscow CSKA**

"In the current situation when our coaching staff have to work on 'four fronts', the leadership of the CSKA squad has made a decision that the team needs support. We're grateful to Mr. Goncharenko who has accepted the proposal from our club," reads the message on the club's official site. Being senior coach, Mr. Goncharenko will assist CSKA's head coach Leonid Slutsky, who has recently been appointed to the position of the head of the Russian national football team.

Victor Goncharenko headed BATE Borisov for many years, then moved to the Russian Premier League where he worked with Kuban and Ural.

# Festival of the week



Bulgaria's Revival Theatre presents its *Diary of a Madman* (based on Gogol's plays) at the *Belaya Vezha* Festival

## Exhibitions

### NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street

Until 27th September. *Belarusian*

*Iconostas* Until 27th September.

*A Husband, a Man, a Warrior*

Until 28th September.

*Tissues of Thoughts*

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*

### WANKOWICZ HOUSE-MUSEUM

33A Internatsionalnaya Street

Until 25th December. *A Prophet*

*of his Time. Adam Mickiewicz.*

*Illustrations and Medals*

### MAXIM BOGDANOVICH

### LITERARY MUSEUM

7A M. Bogdanovich Street

Until 1st December. *Maxim's Garden*

### MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN

### CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street

Until 4th October. *Life in Fairy-tales*

### ZABRODIE

### ETHNOGRAPHICAL

### COMPLEX

Zabrodie village

Until 31st October. Exhibition

of Retro Technique

Until 31st October. Museum

of Century-Old Way of Life

## Theatres

### BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square

18.09. Seven Beauties 20.09. The Queen of Spades

21.09. From the 19th to the 21st Century

Ballet Night: Portraits. Anna German

22.09. Prince Igor 23 and 24.09. The Swan Lake

### BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC

### MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myashnikov Street

Tours of the Sverdlovsk State Academic

Theatre of Musical Comedy:

18 and 24.09. www.silikonovaya dura.net

19 and 23.09. Scarlet Sails

20.09. The Cat; Park of the Soviet Period

21.09. Catherine the Great

22.09. The Duchess of Chicago

### MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL

### ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street

18.09. The Husband Leaves His Wife

19.09. Pesnyar 20.09. Private Lives

22.09. Ninochka 23.09. Truth is

Good but Happiness is Better

24.09. An Intimidated Apostle (Oracle)

### YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL

### ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street

18.09. Evening 20.09. The Dinner Game

23.09. The Seagull 24.09. Paulinka

### THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue

18.09. The Makropoulos Case

19 and 20.09. ...Forgetting Herostratos!

22 and 23.09. The Battlefield

24.09. Robbery at Midnight

### REPUBLICAN THEATRE

### OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street

18.09. Maybe? 19.09. Feint-Kruaze

21.09. Living till the Premiere

22.09. Circle Paradise

23.09. An Uninvited Guest 24.09. Mr. Joke

# Kaleidoscope of history unveiled

## September of decades and centuries past comes to life

**September 18th.** In 1937, a coach (water jumping), a Master of Sports of the USSR and an Honoured Coach of Belarus — Anatoly Ryabchikov — was born. Among his trainees was A. Kogalev — a Master of Sports (of international class).

**September 19th.** In 1797, artist Yanuar Sukhodolsky was born in Grodno. He authored romantic pictures of historical theme: *Battle under Rashin*, *Cross of Napoleonic Army over Berezina*, and others.

**September 20th.** In 1947, a musical expert, a teacher and a Doctor of Arts — Tatiana Mdivani — was born in Polotsk.

**September 21st.** In 1920, an Honoured Architect — Sergey Musinsky — was born. Among his works are the Yunost (Youth) fountain near the Minsk Hotel, the Palace of Arts in Minsk, the Belarus Sanatorium in Sochi, the Vyazynka Memorial Complex in the Molodechno District, and others.

**September 22nd.** In 1910, a USSR Hero — Stepan Aleshkevich — was born in the village of Perevoz of the

Borisov District.

**September 23rd.** In 1955, Valery Kashcheev was born — a popular TV host of the Our Morning ONT Channel.

**September 20th.** In 1945, the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum opened in Minsk.

a decision was made to open a city pawnshop and an auction hall.

**September 18th.** In 1998, the Belarusian Scientific-Research Centre of E-Documentation was established.

**September 19th.** In 1768,

it was ruined and, in 1944, was restored as the Neman Glassworks.

**September 19th.** In 1952, the first trolley bus line was launched in Minsk

**September 19th.** In 1967, the National Polotsk Historical-Cultural Reserve was founded.

**September 19th.** In 1991, the Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic was re-named into the Republic of Belarus.

**September 19th.** In 2003, presidents of Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan signed an agreement and concept on the establishment of a Single Economic Space which outlined the principles of these states' economic integration.

**September 20th.** In 1997, Gomel hosted the 1st International Festival of Choreographic Art: *Sozhsky Karagod*.

**September 21st.** In 1952, a monument to Iosif Stalin solemnly opened in Minsk's Tsentralnaya (now known as Oktyabrskaya) Square, gathering crowds of people.

**September 21st.** In 1977, Minsk hosted the first all-USSR Fighting Championship (classical and freestyle fighting, as well of sambo).



**September 24th.** In 1949, a Belarusian surgeon, a Doctor of Medical Sciences and a Professor — Vladimir Anichkin — was born.

**September 18th.** In 1881, the Yeast Distillery (named after Gotovsky) was founded. Its steam boiler also serviced the mill operating at the plant.

**September 18th.** In 1890,

*Vitebsk's Chronicles* was completed — becoming a Polish-language monument of the 18th century Belarusian city. Written by S. Averka, it is now kept at the Russian National Library (St. Petersburg).

**September 19th.** In 1883, a glass plant was set up in Berezhovka, of the Lida District. During the Great Patriotic War,