

One hundred thousand participants meet online

By Olga Prudnikova

World of Tanks game gains place in Guinness Book of World Records, for number of simultaneous players on single game server

The 'Most Players Online Simultaneously on One MMO Server' record was broken in late January, with an impressive near 100,000 gamers taking part. The achievement will be included in the Guinness World Records Gamer's Edition Book in late 2011.

In less than 12 months, *World of Tanks* has attracted a million fans worldwide. Its main advantage is that the game does not form an addiction. A representative of Belarusian Game Stream Company, which developed the project, notes, "Some games exist which keep you addicted for a long time; they're like a drug. However, we haven't observed any such addiction to our game. People tend to spend just an hour or an hour and a half after work; they relax, gain an adrenalin rush, then log off."

Game Stream now plans to improve its *World of Tanks*, developing a simulation for Military Academy training. In fact, military students will be able to use it as part of their practical military training.

Thoroughbred horses of the colour of bleached flax

Europe's tallest horse and Arab horses on show at wonderful exhibition



BELTA

Exhibition organisers hold an interesting and educational show

By Yelena Filippovich

Minsk has hosted its first thoroughbred horse show, with several dozen animals from Belarusian equestrian clubs and private stables taking part. The BelExpo National Exhibition Centre also hosted two

special guests from Russia: beautiful shire and tinker horses.

Visitors flocked to the exhibition pavilion from early in the morning. Equestrian enthusiasts were joined by members of the general public; young fathers imitated sniffing horses to entertain toddlers on their

shoulders, smiling and laughing.

Undoubtedly, the demonstration of various horse breeds was the highlight of the day. Orlov Trotters and Belarusian draught horses proudly walked around the arena, joined by Latvian, Frisian, Arab and Trakehner horses. Belarusian draught horses

are our only national breed, being the colour of creamy bleached flax (a national symbol). In comparison to the heavy draught horses from Russia, there were miniature Scottish ponies, creating a spectacular sight.

Shire horse Harlequin is the tallest horse in Europe, being 197cm to his shoulder; only one other is taller — being 203cm tall, in Australia. Shire horses were bred for knights to use in battle and are very friendly and calm, despite their impressive size and power. Hairy-hoofed Harlequin shifted from walking to trotting at his master's command, showing off in front of the audience. A great piebald Irish Cob, or tinker horse, performed alongside. Of course, Arabian horses are the most graceful, being modest in size and very light on their feet; their 'dry feet' (as equestrians say) seem to fly over the ground.

Riders from an equestrian school in the Pukhovichi District (Zazerie village) gave a demonstration, as did those from the Golden Spur Historical Club. Horse harnesses, carriages and special equestrian clothing were on show, while children were offered the chance to ride a horse or take a trip in a horse-drawn cart.

The exhibition of horses seems likely to occupy the same place in the capital's cultural life as pedigree cat and dog shows. The organisers worked hard to ensure an interesting and educational event.

Ultraviolet rays and ozone holes fall under investigation

Belarusian scientists to contribute to global research of Antarctic

By Leonid Burmistrov

For several years, Belarusian polar researchers have been observing the ozone layer from the ice continent. During their recent expedition, they conducted investigations while travelling in the Academician Fedorov — a scientific research vessel. It was their first ever such expedition. "On the one hand, it's quite hard to collect and analyse such data but, on the other, we gain the opportunity to process data from our satellite and other sources, uniting it," explains the Director of the National Scientific-Research Centre of Ozone Layer Monitoring, at the Belarusian State University, Alexander

Krasovsky. The Centre is soon to analyse data collected by our polar researchers during their last Antarctic expedition. Belarusian scientists have already published the results of their previous polar studies of the ozone layer in the Russian journal *Problems of Arctic and Antarctic*. New scientific papers should help Belarusian science take its rightful place in the global study of the ozone layer above the ice continent.

Naturally, such studies are of great interest to global scientific circles, which are keen to gauge how far the damaged ozone layer is restoring itself. "Scientists have already modelled the process of destruction, but restoration is yet to be studied," notes

Mr. Krasovsky. "Interestingly, despite the restoration of the ozone, the average temperature of the stratosphere is falling. This situation needs to be reversed. Greenhouse gases are to blame, with their concentration cooling the stratosphere. Other effects are also possible, with scientists still researching the effects."

The National Scientific-Research Centre of Ozone Layer Monitoring keeps track of the ozone layer and ultraviolet rays. Using special technologies, it forecasts levels of UV several days ahead, warning us of where danger lies. Information is then sent to the World Ozone and Ultraviolet Radiation Data Centre, in Canada.



Studying the ice continent

Capital ready for invasion of cars

By Lidia Overkova

Minsk ahead of Moscow, Kiev and St. Petersburg regarding cars per capita

Every year, the capital's traffic rises by 35,000; there are currently around 400,000 cars on its roads. With this in mind, local authorities are taking measures to ensure free movement through Minsk.

The Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee, Nikolai Ladutko, tells us that a programme of road junction construction is being realised. "Among our achievements is the simultaneous building of four junctions, each costing \$25-30m, funded from the city's budget. Preparatory works comprise half of this sum, covering the laying of engineering communications and the demolishing of old buildings," he notes.

Minsk recently adopted its '400 thousand' programme, focused primarily on the creation of parking spaces, funded by residents and the local budget. In 2011, each city district should gain a thousand parking spaces, owing to the extension of passages in courtyards.

Everything seen and monitored from above

By Olga Belyavskaya

Remote Earth sensing system under creation, with many levels

The space segment isn't fully-fledged enough for the system, since Belarus' common cloud and rain af-

fect the efficiency of satellites. Moreover, each satellite has its own orbit, which takes time to be changed if specific locations are to be observed; the laws of physics and ballistics must be obeyed. Of course, the easiest solution is to have multiple satellites in orbit but this is very costly.

Scientists believe it's vital that the remote Earth sensing system is comprehensive and multi-level, embracing space and aviation segments. Primarily, pilotless aircraft can supplement the satellite; this multi-level system truly gives objective information, while constantly monitoring the

land from above. Serious financial injections are necessary to further develop this sphere, since the high technologies required for manufacturing pilotless aircraft and equipping them with on-board equipment are expensive. However, with time, the system would pay for itself.