

# Urbanities used to summer heat although some still suffering sorely

Incredibly hot weather surprises Belarusians despite being a recent annual trend

By Marina Shumilo

Since ancient times, walking over hot stones or sand has been viewed as a remedy for certain ailments. This year, urban asphalt pavements and cobblestoned squares have taken on the role, heated by the burning sun. "If the trend continues, our thermometers could soon reach 36 Celsius," asserts the chief meteorologist at the Republican Hydro-Meteorological Centre, Olga Fedotova. "Even at night, temperatures aren't falling below 20 degrees. It's the hottest weather since three decades ago but such heat is becoming more common in summer."

At the beginning of summer, it seemed rainy. Warm, sunny days seemed like a dream never to be fulfilled. Then, as if to order, heat arrived from Europe. Amusingly, Belarusians are now looking forward to rain — but the hot weather has no plan to recede. "Rain and thunderstorms will ease the heat in Belarus temporarily but it will return," Ms. Fedotova stresses.

A temperature record was

recently set, with Belarus' southern town of Lelchitsy registering 33 Celsius; meteorologists consider that it's quite possible that the capital will be next in line. Naturally, life in Minsk goes on, even in hot weather. Traffic flows through the streets and people gather at bus stops: some hurrying to work and others to meet friends. Routines continue and long queues gather to buy cooling kvass — a traditional beverage. Children play outside while ducks bob forward in park ponds, crowding to collect bread crumbs...

Since our lake temperatures are rivalling those of southern resorts, people are flocking to relax there. Most Minskians are choosing Minsk Sea and Lake Komsomolskoe, where they can either sunbathe or play water sports.

Our refrigeration plants and non-alcoholic beverage making facilities are facing the greatest challenge, with demand skyrocketing during these hot days. Of course, they long ago prepared for the summer season, so there is no lack of ice-cream or cold drinks.



Swimming in city fountain seems quite appropriate on hot summer day

## City patroness appears in all her monumental beauty

By Nadezhda Radionova

**Vertical monumental stela depicting Holy Mother erected at entrance to Molodechno**

The monument was jointly designed by sculptor Alexander Finsky and architect Armen Sardarov. Mr. Finsky is an associate professor at the Belarusian State Arts Academy and a holder of the Belarusian

President's special award, having created monuments to Adam Mickiewicz (in Minsk) and Simeon Polotsky (in Polotsk). The Dean of the Belarusian National Technical University's Architecture Department, Mr. Sardarov, is known for his 'Beginning of Belarusian Roads' sign on Minsk's Oktyabrskaya Square and has designed bridges and turnpikes in Minsk,

Vitebsk, Mogilev, Gomel and Orsha.

The 'Shroud of the Holy Mother' bronze composition is 15m tall, weighing about 2 tonnes, and features Mary wearing a golden crown, blue-gold clothes and a golden cape with a red lining. She stands against a blue background, on a silver cloud, holding a blue cover with three cavaliere crosses.

## Younger generation chooses settlement in remote village

By Yelena Borisevich

**Young couples develop lonely village in Lepel District**

The first stage of a reality show-style contest has just finished in the Vitebsk Region. The innovative project aims to promote village life by sending young families to live in the remote and lonely village of Antonovka,

which has only one resident — a pensioner. Five families spent three days in the village, competing against each other to show their 'survival' skills.

Despite difficulties, each family was keen to remain and do their best, catching fish, mowing grass, gathering mushrooms and berries, sewing and sorting the 'archives' of abandoned hous-

es, finding out about the life of former residents.

The Kovalev family has won the first stage of the contest, which is to run for three years. Olga works as a programmer at Lepel's Dairy-Canning Combine while her husband Dmitry is an electrician. Next year, the entrants will meet again for the next stage of the *House in a Village* project.

## Barrier free school studies are suitable for everyone

By Yevgenia Novikova

**First new barrier free school ready for launch in Grodno**

The school boasts everything necessary for the integrated training of healthy and physically challenged youngsters — including lifts,

wheelchair ramps and specially equipped classrooms. Located in the residential district of Vishnevets-3, it is ready to welcome 930 pupils, with preparatory works almost finished. A computer and language room are being equipped, in addition to a gym, an assembly hall, a

library with Internet access, chill-out rooms and classrooms. The school has a canteen, medical rooms, a stadium and two tennis courts situated nearby. New teaching staff are being interviewed by the Grodno City Executive Committee, ready to commence work at the premises.

## Electronic bracelet helps monitor movement

**Minsk District experiment could seriously modify penal system**

Special GSM-bracelets, designed to trace people's movement, are currently being tested near Minsk, helping control those under house arrest. According to experts, this preventive measure could be more widely applied in our country; if the experiment is a success, practice may finally change.

A meeting of the General Prosecutor's Office has tackled electronic bracelets and prospects for the wider application of punishments outside of imprisonment. Early in the year, a system of measures to deter criminal acts and improve



Electronic bracelet to help police

criminal responsibility was signed. In particular, until recently, imprisonment accounted for almost a third of punishments — too high for our calm and quiet country. Moreover, this solution is expensive, since over 32,000 people are currently resident in prison.

Speaking of the concept's implementation, Deputy General Prosecutor Alexey Stuk notes

that fewer people have been imprisoned this year.

At the same time, criminal acts incurring fines, which act as a deterrent, have risen as a portion of the total by just 0.8 percent. Some acts are to be decriminalised but Mr. Stuk is yet to reveal which are to be eliminated from the Criminal Code; a special inter-departmental group is still working on the issue but certain financial crimes are likely to be reduced to fine penalties, as will some misdeeds while holding official office.