

Gaining reputation as elite publishers

Belarusian publishers take part in 12th Vilnius International Book Fair

By Olga Shvaikova

The participation of Belarusian book publishers in the February book forum in Vilnius is already a tradition. The national stand of Belarus always enjoys great popularity among Lithuanian book lovers. This year, the country presented around 1,000 editions at the event, opened by the President of Lithuania, Dalia Grybauskaitė.

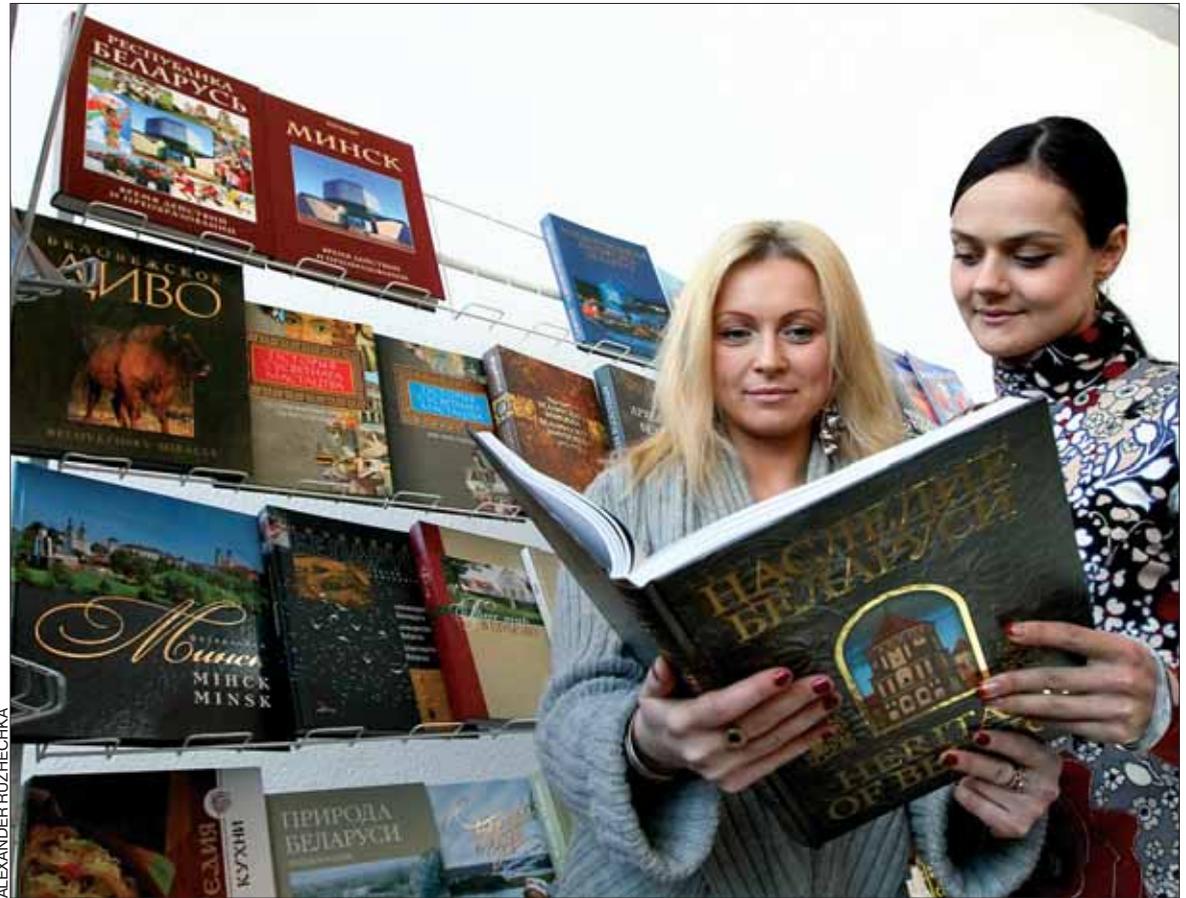
The Director of the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House, Tatiana Belova, presented the President of Lithuania with two books: *Belarusians Abroad* (a scientific-popular edition containing unique historical material) and *History of the Belarusian Book*.

The Belarusian stand hosted several presentations of unique editions, including a 522 page folio entitled *Radziwills. Album of*

Portraits. 18th-19th Century, released by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House. Only 2,000 copies have been released, each containing the genealogy of the Radziwills family. It details biographies and shows portraits (reproductions of engravings and drawings) of 165 members of the magnate family, including 104 women. The biographies include information on parents, children, wives, dates and places of birth, christening and death, in addition to data about their creative activities.

A gift edition of Vladimir Korotkevich's *Wild Hunt of King Stakh* was presented, released on the eve of the 80th anniversary of the birth of the Belarusian writer. Boasting unique illustrations, it is now published in Belarusian, Russian, Ukrainian and English.

Belarus also presented chil-



National book stands of Belarus always enjoy great popularity among readers

dren's books by Lithuanian writer Jeronimas Laucius — the first Lithuanian writer to be adopted into the Belarusian Union of Writers. "This forum focuses on literature which details our shared lives: history, economy and humanitarian collaboration. This arouses sincere interest among Lithuanian readers and, undoubtedly, promotes ties between our two nations. Such co-operation helps us solve many economic and political issues," stressed the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Lithuania, H.E. Mr. Vladimir Drazhin.

Visitors to the Belarusian stand were offered a diverse cultural programme, including various presentations and performances by artistic bands. After the exhibition, some editions are to be donated to the Frantsisk Skorina Belarusian school.

In fact, this year will be especially rich in book publishing events. We recently hosted the largest book forum: Minsk's International Book Fair. The St. Petersburg International Book Salon and the International Salon of Books for Children and Youth in Chisinau are next in line. In May, domestic

book publishers will attend the 56th Warsaw International Book Fair as an honorary guest and, in August, we'll head for Kiev's International Book Fair. Autumn will be no less active, with Belarus taking part in international book fairs in Moscow, Azerbaijan, Turkmenistan and Frankfurt.

Belarusian book publishers also traditionally participate in national expositions of Belarus abroad. The 8th CIS International Art of Book Contest, and the Art of Book competition, organised during the Leipzig International Book Fair, are other key events coming up soon.

Stadler electric train arrives on schedule from Switzerland

Super-modern electric train for suburban travel arrives in Minsk for constant use



Stadler electric train gains constant registration at Minsk train depot

By Igor Savostnin

Almost a year ago, Belarusian Railways signed a contract with Swiss Stadler Bussnang AG for the supply of the first ten modern electric trains, each costing almost 6m Euros, for urban passenger transportation (under 'City Lines' format). Their purchase has been overseen by the state programme for Belarus' railway transport development.

The Swiss dispatched the car-

riages of the new train by lorry, taking them on six 34m long platforms. The train arrived at Baranovichi's locomotive depot, after almost a week of transportation by night through Germany and Poland, choosing roads with less traffic. Belarus is the only CIS state so far to receive these ultra-modern electric trains. The first train has been assembled in Baranovichi by the Swiss, with onboard equipment adjusted over a period of several days. Once the technicali-

ties were complete, the train was sent to Minsk's depot, where it is to be permanently housed. In March, two more trains will arrive, also to be assembled in Baranovichi.

The new electric trains are distinctly modern, with new technical and design solutions, allowing passengers more open passage between carriages during journeys, a low floor for easier boarding and wide, automatic doors. Additionally, the carriages boast sockets to charge mobile phones and use laptop computers. The stylish cabins boast stationary chairs and convenient folding chairs while a spacious zone is designated for passengers with children's prams and bicycles. A separate carriage has a special area for disabled passengers, ensuring fastening for wheelchairs.

By late March, the first Stadler electric train will become operational from Minsk-Passazhirsky station, covering the route from Minsk-Passazhirsky to Zhdanovichi; later, the route will be extended to the city of Zaslavl. By summer, several trains will be operational, connecting the capital with its satellite-cities. Necessary infrastructure is being built to ensure the success of the 'City Lines'.

February rainbow appears over city

By Inna Kabysheva

Nature gives Minsk a fantastic show of colour: huge light pillars over the night skyline followed by a full rainbow

According to witnesses, bright pillars of light were seen over major buildings and constructions, each with their own illumination — for instance, near the National Library and Pobedy Square. The phenomenon might be compared with the Northern Lights or a laser show but was, in fact, the result of ice crystals in the air. It was easy to imagine that Minsk was being used as the set for a blockbuster film about aliens landing!

The February rainbow and foggy pillars over the city were impressive although their cause was nothing out of the ordinary, with frost and humidity creating the small crystals of ice. These accumulated in the air, dissipating light, and resulted in the illumination of buildings. Yevgeny Tolkachev, chief research officer at the National Academy of Sciences' Physics Institute, explains that this rare optical phenomenon in the atmosphere is caused by the refraction and reflection of light in water drops. Similar



February rainbow over the city conditions can also create halos: circular bands of coloured light around the Sun.