

Pleasant discoveries for foreign patients

Medical tours to Belarus become more popular and more in demand

By Tatiana Anisimova

A friend from Antwerp asked if she might stay at my Minsk flat for a week, but actually ended up staying a fortnight — she became so involved in visiting the dental clinic, cosmetologist and hairdressing salon that time flew. Moreover, the Minsk prices pleased her greatly. She was born in the Vitebsk Region and married a rich Belgian in the 1990s, but now spends all her vacations in her homeland.

Foreigners arrive in Belarus not only to rest but to take advantage of our medical services; those who once went to Hungary, Poland, the Czech

Republic, Slovakia and Romania now travel to Belarus. Naturally, we have several advantages, being close to EU states and offering very good value for money compared to the cost of such services in Moscow for example. According to the National Statistical Committee, even people from India and Sri Lanka arrive in our country for treatment.

Dmitry Zakharchuk, the First Secretary of the Chief Consular Department for Foreigners' Arrival Issues, at the Belarusian Foreign Ministry, tells us more about foreigners arriving in Belarus for health treatments and resort stays, including which visas are needed. "There's no



High level of medical services attracts foreign patients to Belarus

such notion as a 'medical tour' in Belarusian legislation. Foreigners can come to our country for treatment and recuperation upon the petition of a Belarusian medical institution, applying for a visa for a business trip. Of course, there are no obstacles to gaining entry to our clinics if you do arrive on a tourist visa."

Western European journalist Mauder says that he 'has fallen in love' with Belarus. He views us as 'a medical paradise'; on the eve of an influenza epidemic, he began to buy Belarusian medicines, which are 'cheaper than those in the Russian capital'. Then, he completely surprised me by asking me to help him

in finding a 'health tour' to a Belarusian sanatorium.

Later, I realised that such requests aren't uncommon; according to the National Statistical Committee, last year, around 130,000 foreign citizens bought tours to our sanatoriums, resorts and health institutions.

Improving educational processes

By Semen Krikunov

Programming for mobile devices could be a promising and interesting area for co-operation between Belarusian and Indian IT specialists

This opinion was expressed by Apoorva Kohli, a member of the Technical Council from the Centre of

Development of Advanced Computing (CDAC), who recently visited a branch of the Belarusian-Indian IT Training Centre in Vitebsk. He stressed that collaboration with Indian specialists enables Belarusian partners to receive access to the latest IT achievements. Programming of mobile devices using the Android platform is especially promising, as is pro-

gramming within the Linux operating system. CDAC is able to organise training for Belarusian students in India in these areas.

The regional branch of the Belarusian-Indian IT Training Centre was established at Vitebsk's State University as part of a project implemented by the High-Tech Park jointly with Indian CDAC. A specially equipped room offers

video- and Internet conferencing, allowing the latest IT developments and trends to be shared.

The project is unique, since the established infrastructure enables Belarusian and foreign qualified teachers to take part in training and education, with lectures available in all four regional branches of the Belarusian-Indian IT Training Centre.



Students need more practical experience

Students trained for changing labour market

By Yulia Vaneeva

Recently signed co-operative agreement between Belarusian State University and BPS-Bank tackles lack of highly qualified staff

The Chairman of the bank, Vasily Matyushevsky, says that, as the country joins the open market, many new jobs are being created in the business sphere, with vacancies in investment business, retail and corporate IT. Mr. Matyushevsky believes that the banking sector and higher educational establishments need to work together to ensure that young people are offered appropriate courses and training to fit them for the changing job market, with practical work undertaken from their third year of study. Student internships will motivate would-be specialists, enabling them to receive professional knowl-

edge and employment.

The co-operative agreement between the Belarusian State University and BPS-Bank plans more focused training in the banking and financial spheres, with joint symposiums, seminars and conferences planned. The bank is also planning to participate in the development and release of textbooks, monographies and scientific papers by University lecturers. BPS-Bank has chosen the BSU as a partner for various reasons. Not long ago, its students came second at the International *Battle of Bankers Olympiad* — organised by Sberbank of Russia. Russia's Financial Academy took first place in the event, which gathered over 2,000 participants. This is not the first success for the BSU's Banking Department; several years ago, its students came third on California University's virtual stock exchange.

Metro system gains voice

By Lidia Tabolina

Minsk's underground system carries about a million passengers daily, being the most popular form of transport in the capital

Radio-speakers are soon to be installed at the entrance and exit of each tube station, informing passengers of how to enter safely and where steps are situated. Moreover, contrasting coloured tiles are being laid along each platform, with a raised relief surface, to help safely identify the edge. The move aims to help those with limited eyesight. Yellow strips have been painted on the first and last stairs located at the entrance and exit of the tube to further aid those with impaired vision. Such lines are also painted near escalators and by pedestrian crossings.

Researching the hidden side of Minsk's metro, I joined a train safety inspector, Alex-



Minsk's metro is the most popular form of city transport

ander Saley, walking from one station to another by foot. We spent no more than an hour underground in the tunnels, with me holding onto my mobile phone the whole time! In fact, I never lost my connection. "It's almost impossible to become lost in Minsk's metro tunnels. If you go straight, you reach the surface sooner or

later," he explains. He was far calmer than me of course.

Minsk has 65,937 metres of tunnels, with an average of five thousand metres changed annually, regardless of wear. All work is conducted at night of course, when the high electrical voltage is switched off (as a dispatcher informs us by radio). In the daytime, the dispatcher

can also call for an ambulance where needed or scold noisy youngsters.

People who enter the tube after 1.00am are registered in a journal. If someone fails to exit, staff can search for them, but Mr. Saley stresses that nothing of the kind has occurred to date. Sometimes, a train might fail to stop at a station, if unattended bags or boxes create a security alert. Again, such instances have never resulted in true danger — with boxes usually found to be empty or containing rubbish. Not long ago, a suitcase was left on a platform, having been left behind inadvertently by its owner. The train passed through without stopping, as is always the case when this happens. The finding was later returned to its owner.

At night, cleaners sweep through each station with their machines, ensuring that new passengers are met by gleaming corridors, stairs and platforms each morning.