

Experts to discuss prospects for agro-ecotourism

In early June, Belagroprombank to organise 3rd International Agro-ecotourism — Current Situation and Perspectives conference

The event aims to promote rural tourism in Belarus. It will bring together experts from Belarus, Lithuania, Russia, Ukraine, Italy, Poland, Israel and Kazakhstan, alongside representatives of state run public authorities and foreign embassies. They will be joined by Belarusian and foreign owners of rural guesthouses, who are currently implementing agro-ecotourism projects.

The conference will include reports and a presentation of the electronic version of the *Catalogue of Farmsteads of Belarus*: the most informative list of Belarusian guesthouses. Moreover, the Republican *Best Farmstead-2011* contest winners will be announced and awarded.

Smuggling rather than genuine coin collecting

By Yevgeny Alexeyev

Border officers detect over a hundred ancient coins and banknotes in Polish car

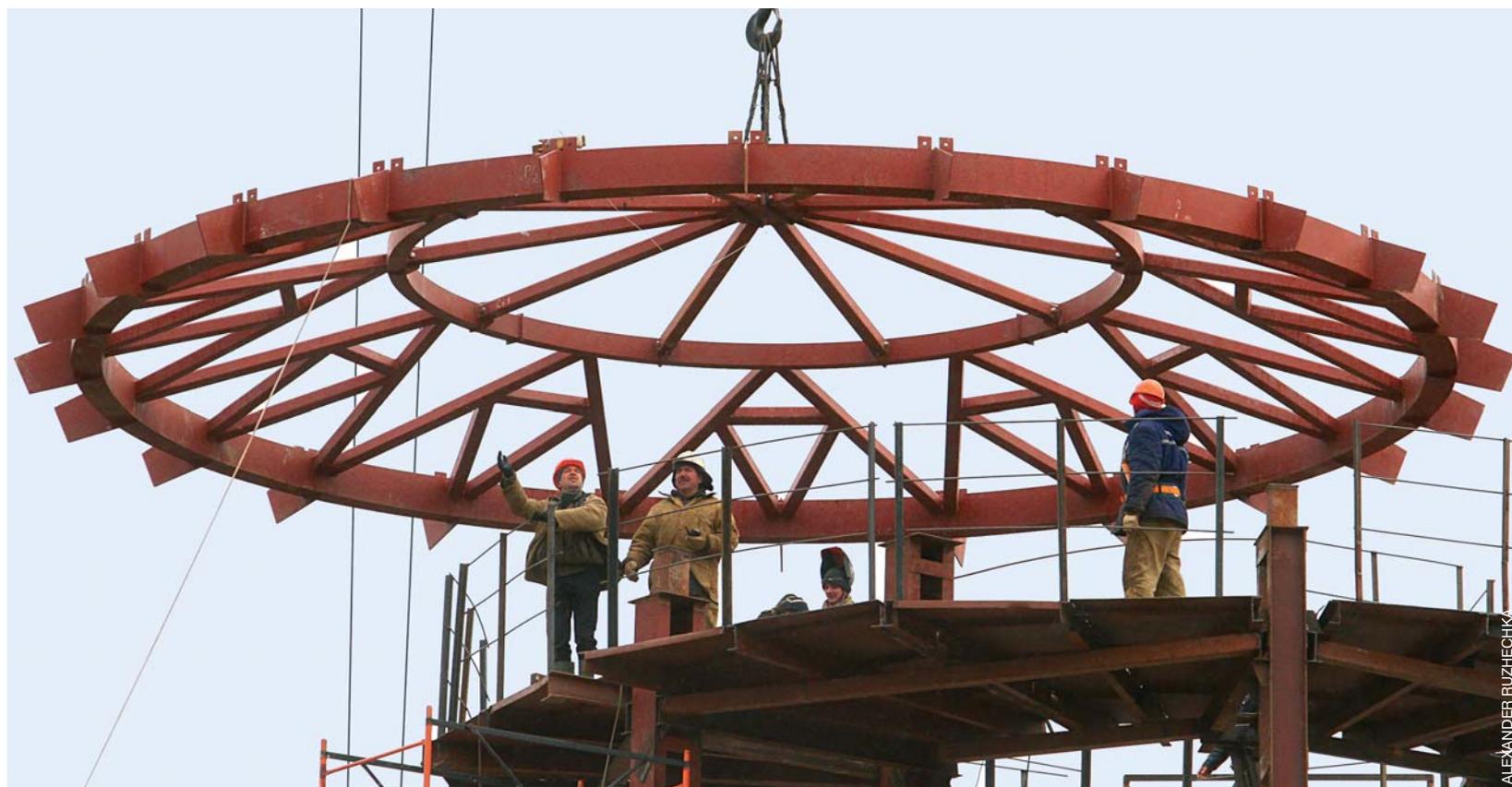
A Polish citizen has been caught trying to smuggle rare coins and notes out of Belarus. Polotsk and customers border officers searching his Scania van at the Urbany checkpoint found over a hundred ancient coins and banknotes — all undeclared.

“The Polish citizen was passing through customs clearance at the checkpoint, travelling to Latvia,” explains the State Border Committee’s Press Service. “He was transiting from Russia, via Belarus, with the coins and banknotes hidden in the sleeping chamber of the driver’s cabin, under a blanket.”

The true value of the haul is yet to be assessed but, according to border officers, many museums will be pleased to receive them. “Among the coins and banknotes are Polish and Chinese currency from the 17th-early 20th century,” explains the PR Assistant to the Head of Polotsk’s border unit, Denis Glebko. The car may be confiscated from its owner following the results of the investigation.

# Story of heroic deed rings with impressive power

Dome installation begins in new building of Museum of Great Patriotic War



Dome being installed inside new building of Museum of Great Patriotic War in Minsk’s Pobediteley Avenue

By Boris Yeremeyev

Huge construction works have begun in Pobediteley Avenue, behind the Minsk — Hero-City Memorial. For the past two years, the Great Patriotic War Museum has been preparing its move to the new site, which should open in May 2013. The building is designed to resemble a fiery and victorious salute — unrivalled within the CIS. Meanwhile, the new space will be sufficient to allow some previously stored items to go on show — including large-sized military machinery from the 1940s. Of course, the museum remains currently surrounded by cranes and trucks loaded with bricks and other materials.

“Planes won’t simply be mounted on pedestals; they’ll hang from the upper storey. Moreover, a T-34 tank will be on show, as will a ‘Katyusha’ rocket (the first such self-propelled artillery weapon to be mass-produced by the Soviet Union). It was a symbol of victory. Guns, mortars and a one-and-a-half-tonne truck will also be on display — primarily from our own collections. Items will be delivered via the main gates, then installed inside.”

I’m standing beside the museum’s Deputy Director, Vitaly Suprun, directly on the site where the ‘Road of War’ will run: a gallery connecting the first and the second floors of the museum. It will start with a

display on 1941, going on to explain each year of the war separately.

“A suspended bridge is to hang across the ‘Road of War,’” notes Mr. Suprun, indicating a metal construction above our heads. “Its sides and floor will be made from glass, so that no views are impeded. Moreover, you’ll be able to enter a

through the centre of the museum (a huge vacuum cleaner will operate from the basement to remove dust daily).

We make our way towards the main entrance, where the ticket offices and turnstiles will be situated. Visitors will be able to borrow audio-guides in various languages, explains Mr. Su-

prun. He adds, “Tickets will be electronic, requiring a mere touch at the turnstile, and will be available online or by phone. Beyond the turnstiles will be three exhibition halls and the main hall, which will begin with philosophical contemplation of the nature of good and evil, followed by a prologue about the events

which preceded the war.” Standing ‘in the prologue’, I see a small hole in the floor; a capsule is to be placed inside containing a message for our descendants. From here, you can enter the ‘Road of War’, which has 57 columns, each weighing around 3 tonnes and standing 10.5m tall.

“As you see, the columns

can view documents such as copies of *Partizanskaya Dubinka* newspaper, letters from the front and German attack orders. Meanwhile, 40,000 unique photos are to form a slideshow on huge LED screens, mounted on the walls.

“Weaponry is to be kept on the second floor, so the walls have been especially reinforced,” explains Mr. Malkovich.

From further inside the Victory Hall, you can enjoy a wonderful view over the River Svisloch and the park. The dome is currently being installed: to be the ‘crowning point’ of the whole building.

The carpenters’ foreman, Nikolay Finsky, shows us how the facades are being made frost resistant. Nikolay is actually rather famous, having worked upon the Palace of the Republic and the National Academy of Sciences, as well as the previous Museum of Great Patriotic War and the Minsk — Hero-City Memorial.

“I’m a post-war child, being born in 1947, so have always felt the echoes of war. My father fought and was captured, then taken to Germany with my mother,” he recollects. “I’ll soon be a grandfather for the eighth time. It gives me pleasure to think of my grandchildren playing in Pobediteley Avenue. Their great grandfather helped bring victory closer (as declared on May 9th, 1945) while their grandfather has constructed this museum.”



Builders discuss project in detail

plane cabin as you cross.”

It’s difficult to speak, as loud construction sounds are heard from each of the building’s four floors. Welders work alongside those with hammers, and plasterers. The museum’s administrative offices are almost ready, with insulation and plasterwork complete and a dust channel passing

support the ramps for those who are less mobile, allowing them to reach the third floor from the second,” notes the superintendent, Dmitry Malkovich. There’s also a transparent lift offering a panoramic view of the whole museum and of the Memorial itself.

All floors are to have info-kiosks, from where you

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