

# With age, it gets only younger

National Library of Belarus among premier IT-rich libraries in Europe

By Larisa Minakova

The country's main library was established 90 years ago but, of course, now occupies a modern new building. "We're getting younger every year!" jokes library director Roman Motulsky. "To remain relevant, we have to move with the times, rather than relying on technologies from past centuries." According to foreign experts, the Belarusian 'diamond' is one of the most innovative and information-rich libraries in Europe today.

## Electronic catalogue

It used to take librarians some time to find particular editions, rummaging through card files. Now, everything is listed on a computer database, searchable by title, author or theme. The electronic catalogue of the National Library of Belarus includes not just books and periodicals but dissertations, documents from international organisations, music books, audio and video materials, visual arts documents, maps and atlases.

## Virtual enquiry service

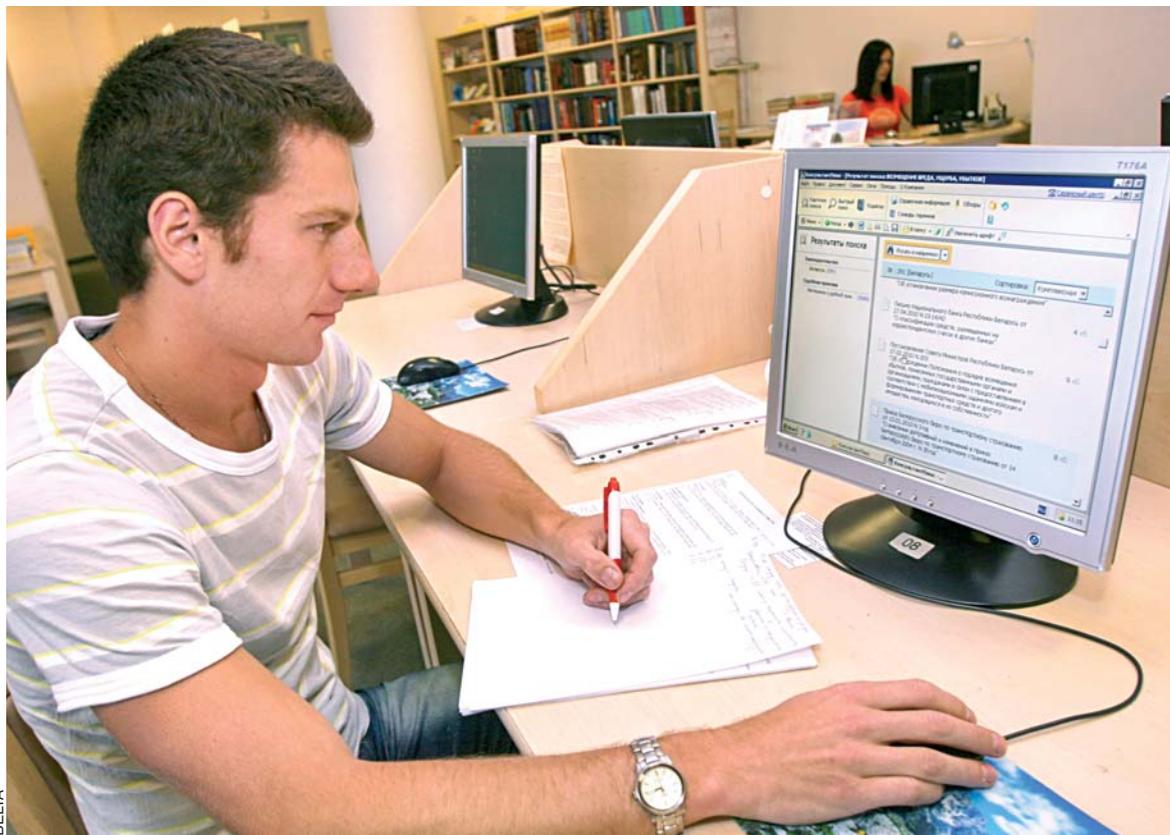
The library's online facility also allows readers to locate the books they need without leaving home. Librarians can even conduct specific research, with requests received daily in Russian, Belarusian and English; these tend to take two working days to complete.

## Electronic document delivery

From the comfort of your own home, you can request electronic copies of documents from the library. Required chapters from books, magazines pages and snippets of audio documents can be sent to your email address for a fee: Br700 for a black and white copy of a single page up to Br7000 for a digitised page from a 16th century manuscript.

## National electronic library

The electronic library of the National Library currently includes about 300,000 digitised items — all outside of copyright. The idea of



National Library halls always full of readers

digitising every book in circulation is still a distant dream. "We're doing everything legally possible to ensure that every citizen has access to information, including in electronic form," says Mr. Motulsky. "Creating an electronic library for Belarus will take many years and will be the work of more than just our National Library. Our task is to create a roof under which a variety of projects

initiated by libraries and other institutions across the country can be implemented."

## Virtual reading room

How convenient would it be to sit at your home computer, sipping hot tea, while reading documents remotely, from the National Library of Belarus? The 'International Resources' category is accessible

from within registered libraries and other organisations but 'Resources of the National Library of Belarus' and 'Resources of Partner-organisations' are both available online from your own home.

From within the National Library, you can read texts being used, for example, by students and professors from Oxford or Cambridge universities. The National Library provides access to approximately 150 databases worldwide.

President of Belarus Alexander Lukashenko has congratulated National Library staff on the 90th anniversary of its foundation, saying, "Today, the library is the repository of a unique collection of books and other ancient documents electronically; it is the largest information and social and cultural centre in the country, leading research and policy in the field of librarianship and bibliography."

Mr. Lukashenko has also wished staff and readers of the National Library good health, success in their work, happiness and prosperity.



Exhibition enjoys interest among foreign guests

# High time to register felt-making with UNESCO

By Ivan Demianov

**This November, the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage will consider Belarus' application to include traditional hand-made production of felt boots on the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage**

The seventh session of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage is being hosted in November by Grenada — an island state in the Caribbean. At present, 232 sites across 70 countries are listed.

The tradition of felt-making is widespread in the Mogilev Region's Dribin District, with skills passed through the generations. Felt boots are made by hand and there is even



Dribin always known for its felt masters

a workshop at the Dribin History and Folk Museum, where felt-making is learnt from childhood.

The 'Tsars' Belarusian Kolyady custom joined the UNESCO List of Intangible Cultural Heritage a few years ago and 'Tereshka's Wedding'

Kolyady game has also applied to join. Of course, Belarus has its own list of intangible cultural heritage which includes over 30 such, with information to be placed online for easy access and to promote our country as a tourist destination.

# Romantic route for love and happiness created

By Yelena Simonova

**Avenue of Love opens in Gomel, which celebrates 870th anniversary**

The idea of creating an avenue dedicated to love came from students at Gomel State Technical University (named after Pavel Sukhoy). They applied to the local authorities with the suggestion of opening a romantic avenue in Festivalny Park, which prompted an open competition for designs.

Ten compositions were chosen out of 80 received: among them *Lights in Love*, *Lonely Benches* and *The Boat*. The solemn opening saw newly-weds being the first to walk through, passing *Lonely Benches*, islands of meetings and partings, and finishing near the Tree of Love, where couples can hang 'locks of happiness' bearing their names. The celebration was accompanied by an exhibition of designs for *The City Ideal for You*, a presentation by wedding clothes shops and shows by performance art groups.

# Exotic land of calling deer

By Natalia Zlotnikova

**Pripyatsky National Park offers tourists unusual excursions to hear call of red deer**

The deer watching excursions are organised in late August-early September, lasting only a few weeks each year. "The evening 'In the Land of Calling Deer' trip runs until early October, including over weekends,"

explains Yelena Andyk, the Head of the Park's Tourism Department.

Early in the mating period, male deer begin to call, building in power until they are heard for several kilometres. This attracts female deer and the males lock horns to fight for their attentions. Tourists view the amazing ritual from the safety of an observation tower, via binoculars.