

# Hard path to Olympic pedestal

Creating effective system of selecting and training talented athletes in various sports

By Lilia Semenova

Many elements are important in raising successful athletes, with natural talent and determination supported by efficient training and wise coaching. Such athletes as Max Mirnyi and Victoria Azarenko appear rarely, although Belarus has experienced success in other sports also. However, the question does arise as to how we can train more tennis players in the same vein, as the President mused on visiting Minsk's Tennis Centre recently.

The establishment has seriously updated its facilities of late, with 12 new outside courts joining the existing four indoors, built 7 years ago. There's also a small football field, a universal ground and a special training area. The conditions exist to raise tennis stars but a strict regime is needed. Mr. Lukashenko emphasises, "The system is the most important thing. We should choose fifty promising athletes, hoping that at least two or three will rise to the highest world ratings. We can do this but we need to create ideal condi-

tions for athletes and their trainers."

The idea applies not just to tennis but to swimming, track and field athletics and wrestling: all sports in which we want to achieve good results. An effective system of selection and training is necessary, with the President believing that selection must be fair — based on true sports potential.

The state will help those whose parents cannot pay for professional sports training. If necessary, support can be directed at infrastructure for tennis players; one of the most

popular sports in the world, Belarus has many who are keen to play. Our courts are never empty. The President has suggested using the courts in Drozdy for training, saying, "Take the best and let them train there, especially in winter. The country has enough infrastructure for training. Use all reserves."

Mr. Lukashenko emphasises that not only state-run centres but private should become involved in training athletes. He also notes that the state will assist businessmen developing sports infrastructure.

## No strangers when trouble at hand

**Belarus to send another batch of humanitarian aid to Amur Region's flood affected areas**

Last weekend, a Belarusian plane dispatched 43 tonnes of children's food to the Amur Region's affected territories. The cargo was accompanied by Belarusian Emergency Ministry staff and the Deputy Minister, Alexander Goncharov. He notes, "Nobody is immune to catastrophe. Only joint efforts can help us cope in times of such trouble." He added that, in a telephone call, the Russian Emergency Minister thanked Belarusians for their assistance to the Amur Region. Mr. Goncharov stresses that his Russian colleagues are coping well but food — especially for children — is still needed. With this in mind, our country sent children's food to the region. "Belarus would never stand aside and there is no doubt that the aid will be dispatched to those who need it," the Deputy Minister notes.

Among those accompanying the cargo was the Chairman of the House of Representatives' Standing Committee for Construction, Local Self-Government and Regulation, Alexander Zozulya. He told us, "Our mission is to support our friends: fraternal Russians. When trouble comes, no distance exists."

The humanitarian aid was sent under the order of the Belarusian President, Alexander Lukashenko. The Government plans to send another batch soon: 50 tonnes of canned meat and potatoes.

Nikolay Saveliev, from the Council of Federation Committee for Defence and Security, represents the executive authorities of the Amur Region. He thanked Belarus for its humanitarian aid, noting, "We appreciate the fact that fraternal Belarus is not standing aside but is assisting Amur Region citizens, who have suffered the most severe flooding the area has ever experienced."

## New look for old fortress

**Brest Hero Fortress suspension bridge and pier to be restored**

Terespul Bridge, connecting Brest citadel with the Terespul fortification, was the first cable structure in the Russian empire. For a long time, engineers could not decide which materials to use for reconstruction but, eventually, those used in 1941 were chosen. At that time, the bridge was 92m long and 9m wide. Terespul Gate is built in such a way as to be hugely load-bearing, thanks to its strong ropes.

Restoration of the cable bridge will certainly attract tourists but the move is also practical, since it will be a border entry point between Belarus and Poland for those on foot. Of course, the city authorities hope to see more European tourists pay a visit to Brest Fortress.

The engineer combat embankment, which existed during the Polish period, is to be reopened at the Gate, being a once favourite place for promenading.

# Festive extravaganza with capital scope

City Day in Minsk marked by wealth of couples marrying, trips on English-audio tour bus, and display of capital chronicles in 3D-format on walls of National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre

By Yuri Butrimovich

Last Saturday, Minsk celebrated its 946th anniversary of first mention in the *Tale of Bygone Years*. Celebrations began in the morning, on 14th September, with a crowd gathering by 10am at the Sports Palace. Meanwhile, the Svisloch River hosted competitions in kayaking and canoeing. Additionally, the 'Minsk Citizens of the Year' was announced.

Those interested in history could visit reconstructions on Pobediteley Avenue, where bygone Minsk was recreated by knights and nobles from various times past.

At noon, music filled the Upper Town, with guests entertained through until the evening. The new English-audio guide city tour bus was busy and Belarusian writers gathered for the *My City, I Devote to You* book exhibition, signing copies of their latest editions. The Upper Town concert hall hosted the wedding of nine couples: one from each of Minsk's districts.

Karl Marx Street was closed to traffic, allowing performances by street theatres. Sadly, it was the last Saturday of 2013 on which the street will be used in this way but the summer arrangement will be revived



Historical Calendar of Minsk presented on City Day near Town Hall

joined in organising celebratory events. Minsk's museums prepared an eventful programme, featuring not only new exhibitions but ticket discounts.

The National Academic Bolshoi

Opera and Ballet Theatre building displayed a 3D-installation telling of Minsk's historical milestones at 9.30pm, causing a real stir and making a worthy finale to the Belarusian capital's birthday celebrations.

## Flights in accordance with international standards

**Belavia sets several records in transporting passengers in August**

The Belavia National airline set a personal record for transporting 9,571 passengers in a 24 hour period on 23rd August. Igor Cherginets, the Deputy Director General for Marketing and Foreign Trade at Belavia tells us, "Besides, by the end of August we transported over 200,000 people." He adds that Belavia checked-in its one millionth passenger this year, on 16th

August.

Importantly, the International Air Transport Association (IATA) has confirmed that Belavia is meeting international standards, extending its IOSA certification until 16th November, 2015. From January to August 2013, over 1,118,700 passengers travelled with Belavia: up 26.4 percent on the same period of 2012. The volume of cargo and mail transported also rose, by 19.5 percent, to reach 1,287.1 tonnes.

## Always arriving on time

By Andrey Smirnov

**Each region of the country receives 10 Minsk Automobile Works school buses, funded by Development Bank, for start of school year**

Sergei Rumas, the Chairman of the Development Bank's Board, tells us that two-thirds of Belarusian children using bus transport have access to designated school buses; the remainder use buses not designed for children. In line with the current five year pro-

gramme, the Bank is committed to addressing the issue. "We plan to buy at least 300 buses within the next five years and perhaps more," Mr. Rumas emphasises.

This year, the Bank allocated about Br32 billion for the purchase of 60 buses and, in 2014, plans to increase their number, with expanded sponsorship support. The *School Bus* project also envisages the training of all female drivers, with the Bank helping organise lessons in every region.