

Great art to create happiness

President gives traditional reception on the occasion of the Old New Year

By Vladimir Khromov

Distinguished state and public figures, workers of art and sport, as well as journalists were invited to the solemn reception where Alexander Lukashenko addressed the gathering, "Our happiness is not a gift from above, but a great art which people create daily with their own hands. It is in our power to choose how happier we will be in the New Year. All of us want our country to be successful, but how does this success manifest itself? Behind figures and indicators we often do not notice more important things. This country, which has Olympic champions, Academy of Sciences and national opera art, is successful."

The President noted that maybe it is an unusual view, but at the same time art is spirituality, science is intelligence, while sports victories are an alloy of the strength of mind and the physical abilities of the people. "Any success in these spheres represents the state in the world better than any diplomacy. And if the country has the conditions to develop these talents, it means that it is a rather successful country. At least, it can attempt such rank," stressed Mr. Lukashenko.

Alexander Lukashenko noted that victories in large international competitions, or decisive goals in a match, are not just sporting episodes, but the limit of human forces, the surpass-

ing of which seems sometimes impossible, "But each time it is overcome by an improbable effort and pressure of will. During such moments everyone feels unbelievable elation and pride for this victorious moment, for our country," noted the Head of State.

The President is convinced that it the same for creativity. For example, when a performer appears on the stage of such contests as *Eurovision*, he or she is listened to by all Europe, and people judge a whole country by this one song "Such a situation is difficult even for an adult performer, we hardly need to mention the children. But our children annually glorify Belarus in this prestigious contest. It is time

for the adults to follow the example set by the children," stressed Mr. Lukashenko.

The President noted that similar achievements are worthy of the highest state recognition.

Alexander Lukashenko also presented state awards and Presidential commendations to distinguished people of the country. "Today we congratulate those who became successful in creativity, sports and in public service thanks to huge diligence, love for their own job and self-confidence. They reached the top because were really passionate about their job and did not shrink before any obstacles set before them. This is true patriotism."

One award for two countries

By Andrey Smirnov

Award of the Union State in Literature and Art 2013-2014 will be presented to the People's Artiste of Belarus, Ivan Misko, the People's Artiste of the USSR, Vladimir Zeldin and Russian art historian, Inessa Slyunkova

Ivan Misko has received a prestigious award for a series of sculptural works devoted to subjugators of space, and also for his creation of the monument to the Russian writer, Sergey Aksakov. Vladimir Zeldin becomes a laureate of the award for the role of Don Quixote in the musical *Man from La Mancha*, which the actor played on the stage at the Central Academic Theatre of the Russian Army. Inessa Slyunkova is honoured for a series of books devoted to the monuments of architecture of Belarus and Russia.

The solemn award ceremony is traditionally held in the summer at the International Festival of Arts *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk*.

The Award of the Union State in Literature and Art was created in 2001, and it was first presented in 2002. At that time its recipients were Belarusian playwright, Alexey Dudarev, the People's Writer of Belarus, Ivan Shamyakin, and Russian actor Alexey Petrenko. Later laureates of the award have included Mikhail Savitsky, Leonid Shchemelev, Georgy Poplavsky and Valentin Sidorov, actors Alexander Kalyagin, Rostislav Yankovsky and Vladimir Gostyukhin, composer Alexandra Pakhmutova, conductor Mikhail Finberg and other well-known masters of Belarusian and Russian culture.

Since its inception, 21 people have become laureates of the award.

Pilgrims touch the Gifts of the Magi



Gifts of the Magi

A Christian relic, the Gifts of the Magi, have arrived in Minsk. According to the Bible, they were presented to the Christ child. These relics are constantly registered in Saint Paul's Monastery on Mount Athos in Greece and have left these borders for the first time.

Their journey to Belarus, to the Church of St. Job the Long-Suffering at the Minsk Charity House, ran through Moscow and St. Petersburg. Hundreds of thousands of people touched the Gifts. A lot of pilgrims from all corners of our country, as well as from other states, came to Minsk during these days.

Time has come for nominations

By Alexey Alexandrov

The next stage of the local council election campaign, the nomination of candidates for deputies, has started. This period, which in many respects determines the course of the whole election campaign, will last until 10th February. Those who want to fight for seats in the local administration have certainly decided this for themselves. As it is said, they only have to complete the documents.

Let's look at the Electoral Code. There are three ways of being nominated. The first one — being a candidate of a political party. Their structural subdivisions can nominate candidates for deputies into corresponding councils: regional organisation — into regional council, district organisation — into district council and city organisation — into city council. According to the Secretary of the Central Election Commission, Nikolai Lozovik, it is the simplest way of nomination.

However, there are special requirements for workers' associations. In order to nominate a candidate to the regional, Minsk city council, the collective should have no less than 150 working people. Offering a candidate to regional or city council, the collective should total no less than 75 people. While nominating candidates to councils of primary level, the electoral qualification is lower, just 20 employees. Though, labour collectives can nominate only one candidate to council of corresponding level.

The third, most labour-consuming way of nomination, is the collection of signatures. Those who wish to run for seats in Minsk city or regional councils have to collect no less than 150 signatures of voters. No less than 75 for city councils and 20 for village councils. Before collecting signatures, it is also necessary to register a group of initiators.

Medal will find its heroes

By Alexey Yaroshevich

The President will present medals. The management of state bodies, commanders of different branches of troops, commanders of military units and military commissioners also have such honour. The heads of diplomatic representations of Belarus will present awards to foreign citizens.

The first samples of the brass medal are ready. The founder of the Sensgeraldika enterprise, which specialises in the issue of awards and orders, Vladimir Trofimenko is obviously happy with the result, "Our enterprise has prepared the sample of the medal which we represent to the Heraldic Council under the President, and more



ALEXANDER RUZHECHKA



likely, we will issue the whole edition. We already know the quantity of medals that need to be produced — 75,000. It is a very responsible task, as we have not much time. But we made awards for previous anniversaries; therefore, I am sure that we will cope with it this time."

The face of the medal will depict the image of a Soviet soldier holding a submachine gun, a partisan and underground worker against a background of a blown up railroad bed. To the left of them will be a laurel branch intertwined

with a ribbon of the Order of Glory. On the top of medal there will be two dates: 1944 and 2014. On the back will be an inscription '70 years of liberation of the Republic of Belarus from fascist aggressors'.

The chief specialist of the Department for State Social Support to Population of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, Tatiana Maximova is certain that the medals will reach everyone who has deserved it. Local executive committees specify lists of those who deserve the award. It is rather laborious work. According to recent data, more than 23,000 veterans and more than 30,000 former prisoners of concentration camps currently live in Belarus. We wish them good health and a joyful celebration of the liberation anniversary!

Specific winning formula

By Sergey Smirnov

Belarusian State University takes first place in country's university ratings

As the new year begins, it's the perfect time to reflect on the achievements of the passing year. The Ministry of Education's rating of 48 domestic universities, following the results of the 2013 entrance campaign, has placed the Belarusian State University first, followed by the



Belarusian National Technical University. The Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radionics is

ranked third, while the Belarusian State Economic University and Minsk State Linguistic University complete the top five.

The criteria used included the number of students entering university in 2013, the number studying free of charge, the number paying fees and the number of foreign enrollees. 'Pass' grades for certain specialties also influenced the rating, as did the number of students enrolled without the need for entrance tests.