

Landmark and historical event

By Konstantin Borovsky

On May 8th, the State Flag Square of the Republic of Belarus hosted formal flag-raising ceremony of participating countries of the 78th IIHF World Championship

Belarus' Prime Minister, Mikhail Myasnikovich, who heads the tournament's organising committee, welcomed all the hockey delegations, who attended the event. He thanked the leadership of the International Ice Hockey Federation (IIHF) and its President, René Fasel, personally for the opportunity of holding the world championship and promised its participants and guests the most hospitable acceptance. The PM also noted that, for the host country, this tournament wasn't merely a sporting event, but also a landmark and historical event,

which would be able to bring a greater number of people towards a more sporting and healthier lifestyle. Mr. Myasnikovich wished victories for all the teams and medals in a fair and beautiful struggle.

IIHF President, René Fasel also wished the national squads — the entrants of the world forum — brilliant victories and wished spectators and the mass media an interesting and spectacular event.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation and Head of the Directorate for 2014 IIHF World Championship, Yevgeny Vorsin, drew a line under the solemn ceremony. He expressed his confidence that the strongest hockey teams of the world will give their fans a fantastic sporting holiday. Moreover, he was convinced that the world tournament in Belarus would become a landmark event in the history of world



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hockey. Then, anthems of the participating countries of the tournament were performed and all hockey delegations were present

ed with gifts from the organisers. In the end, a song-anthem was performed by the Litesound band, dedicated to this landmark hockey event.

May. Victory. Hockey...

The Ice Hockey World Championship is a mega event: both a grandiose sporting festival and an opportunity to show the whole world our country, our people, history, culture and traditions

The fact that Belarus has secured the right to hold such a championship says many things about us: about our contribution to the development of this sport, about the existence of world level ice arenas, about our star players and our big army of fans.

And it is very symbolic that the opening of the championship took place when one of the most solemn and life-asserting holidays — Victory Day — was also commemorated.

The World Championship-2014 has begun, but the best is yet ahead. The hockey matches on Minsk's ice promise to be hot. And let the battles be obstinate, uncompromising and honest! And may the best team win!

Everything is hockey for fans!

Fans from different countries started to arrive at the sports arenas before the first matches of the Ice Hockey World Championship. They were ready to queue for hours in order to have enough time to fill their places and to fully feel the atmosphere of the hockey holiday.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

At the fan-zone near the Minsk-Arena, three hours remained to the starting whistle of the Russia-Switzerland match the fans shared their first impressions about Minsk. A group of Swiss tourists who were wrapped up in national flags, discussed the quality of the hotels and the hearty welcome of the hosts of the championship, "We are staying in Yubileynaya Hotel which is located in the very centre of the city. We have a beautiful view from our windows! It is convenient to reach the arena. At a restaurant we were offered ethnic cuisine dishes. It was very tasty. We will stay in Belarus until almost the end of the championship, therefore we have enough time to learn and try everything that we have been told by people who have already visited your country."

Perhaps there are more Russian fans in Minsk than any others, and they come from the most different corners of that country. Some were happy to travel thousands of kilometres to support their national team at the world tournament. One fan is Nikita Dezhnev, who flew to Minsk



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from Surgut, "There are more than 4 thousand kilometres between our cities, but I did not have to spend money for accommodation as I am staying with my relatives. I immediately bought the whole package

of tickets for all Russian national team matches. I have arrived several days ago, but, to tell the truth, I have not had any time to look around the city. My relatives have arranged an excursion across the Nieman River. The main thing for me is to support the national team. Certainly, I also support Belarusians. I know that Minsk Dinamo plays in the KHL and that you have strong players. And I also know that your national team is capable of creating a miracle, having beaten even the recognised favourite before. Remember, how your Kopot scored against the Swedes?"

Many fans, planning a trip to



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they are able to play table hockey, to eat or simply to relax to the music. They can also stock up on souvenirs. I noted that fans were happily buying many products with Belarusian images - flags, signs and T-shirts. The prices are quite acceptable. I asked about the price of a plushie championship mascot Volat the bison. As the first minutes of trading showed, it is in great demand. I think I will have to buy one!

In the spotlight

Fans from 115 countries can follow the World Championship in Minsk in on TV and from any spot of the globe through the Internet. 20 cameras

will be installed around the hockey platform at each match, and among them is an ultrahigh-speed camera, an in-goal camera one over the central circle. The HDTV-signal is provided, edited and transferred by means of two broadcast-minibuses, with the support of an additional eight trucks filled with equipment, located near both Minsk arenas. For the first time in the history of the World Championships, the signal from the tournament will be received in Moldova, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan and Georgia. In 2013, the aggregate television audience of the World Championship reached 975,150,000 people.

the championship in Minsk, have thought about their own excursion routes.

"We have arrived by car, therefore we can travel across the country," says Konstantin Frolov from the Rostov Region. "We understand that it is impossible to go round the whole of Belarus during these few days, but nevertheless, we would like to see cities and places which have special value for our general history, for example, the Brest Fortress, Khatyn, and probably, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha."

In the zone of expectation

Fans can spend their hours waiting in the fan-zones in comfort: