

## Women take the lead

**37 women in Minsk are over 100 years old**

Women continue to lead among those aged over 70; there are over 97,000 in the Belarusian capital, against just 39,000 men. Women outnumber men in Minsk, accounting for 54 percent (993,000) according to the last Belarusian population census. In fact, the number of women in the capital had risen by 11 percent (1,177 women per 1,000 men) since the previous census. Women are active in many spheres in the life of Minsk, comprising over 54 percent of the total employed in the capital. Despite this, family and motherhood remain their priority, with 16,018 women getting married last year in Minsk.

## TV sets for convenience

**First experimental LCD screen appears on Minsk bus**

We've long known that TV sets are to be installed on Minsk's public transport; recently, the first such screen became operational on a bus route. "At present, one screen has been installed as an experiment," notes Yelena Maximovich, the Head of Minsktrans' Advertising Department. "We're now observing passengers' reactions and haven't received any complaints." Commercial and social advertising will run on the screens, while reminding passengers of the rules of public transportation. If everything goes to plan, 300 Minsk buses, trolley buses and trams will acquire their own TV sets.

# Major construction plans

New deluxe hotel and aqua-park to open in Minsk, with railway station built in suburbs

By Viktor Korbut

Guidebooks on Minsk are soon to include descriptions of the new Kempinski hotel complex: 'Its facades are in the traditional style of the city's central avenues, with special details in natural stone creating a unique and interesting environment. An embankment has been especially made on which city residents can rest, with a wonderful recreation zone nearby, featuring restaurants, shops and a promenade area. There are also paths to the parks on both sides of the river'. The complex will be ready by late 2013, connected to Minsk's first electricity station (built in the late 19th century in neo-Gothic style). The electricity station and 'Kempinski' branch both appeared in the 1890s.

### Hotel inside electricity station

International Kempinski Hotels SA, which manages 45 hotels in 30 countries, was established in 1897, in Germany. The hotel on the bank of the River Svisloch will be the latest addition to the group, which is one of the oldest chains of deluxe hotels in the world.

Minsk's Kempinski Hotel is being designed by Moscow's architectural association — SpeeCH, with European-known architect Sergei Tchoban as its chief partner. The investment costs are being kept secret but each square metre (including the cost of interior decoration, furnishings



New Kempinski hotel complex to appear in Minsk in late 2013

and other expenses) is likely to cost \$5,000. Accordingly, the project should be worth around \$250m. Since 1995, Mr. Tchoban has headed the Berlin Office of NPS Tchoban Voss architectural bureau; his projects include such landmark Berlin buildings as the Cubix Cinema, the AquaDom Complex, the Arndt Gallery, the synagogue in Münstersche Street, and others throughout Germany. One of his most im-

pressive works in Russia is the Federation Tower in Moscow, implemented jointly with Peter Paul Schweger.

Igor Chernyavsky, Head of the Culture Ministry's Department for the Protection of Historical-Cultural Heritage and Restoration, tells us how the electricity station will match the new hotel. "Those parts which were attached to the electricity station in the 1950s are being

dismantled, leaving only the façade and a small building which now houses a transformer substation from the late 19th century. The façade no longer boasts its previously neo-Gothic features, which need to be restored." He explains that the buildings are to be 'moved slightly to the side — to the bridge over the Svisloch'. European and global history has examples of buildings being moved, with a

record set in Moscow in 1939; its Mossovet (Moscow Soviet) building — which now houses the Mayoral Office — was moved 13.6m, in just 41 minutes! Communication lines remained in place as the building was placed on a roller, supported by a steel frame and lifted on jacks. Naturally, the project in Minsk can easily be realised.

### Waterslide on the avenue

Next year, an aqua-park is to be launched in Minsk, on Pobediteley Avenue, constructed in record time. Minsk Mayor Nikolai Ladutko tells us that it is due to cost around \$80m. Sections will be in the open air, with swimmers kept comfortable with warm water and air inside the slides. As a result, the attraction will be open year round.

In summer, 3,500 to 4,400 people are expected to visit, with winter figures slightly lower at 2,700 to 3,400. Market research shows that Minsk needs three aqua-parks.

### Where the railway leads

By 2030, a new railway station will have been built near Minsk. It is likely to appear in the district of Shabany, in the south-east of Minsk, behind the ring-road. A site has been reserved, from where the high-speed railway line is to start, connecting Minsk and Moscow. A metro line is also to be laid to the new railway station.

# Real and imaginary fluctuations

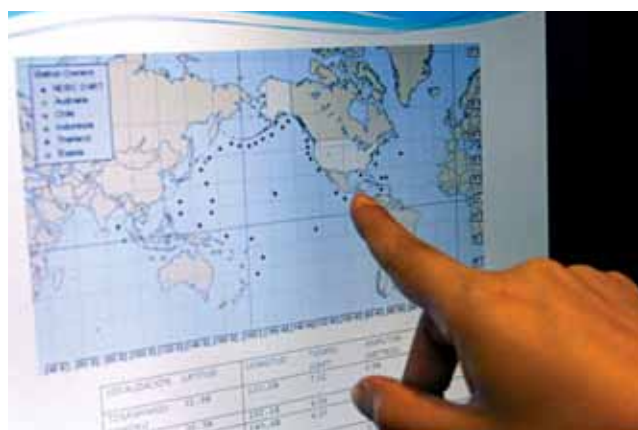
Will Japanese cataclysm make a negative impact on Belarus?

By Yevgenia Levashova

The destructive earthquake and devastating tsunami in Japan have killed thousands of people. The economic damage is also huge, with international experts already assessing it at around \$35bn. Now, possible ecological threats are being discussed, with Italian scientists asserting that the powerful earthquake has shifted the Earth's axis by 10cm. However, according to the Director of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus' Geophysical Monitoring Centre, doctor of physico-mathematical sciences Arkady Aronov,

we shouldn't be afraid of terrible consequences.

"While rotating on its axis, the Earth is constantly vibrating," he notes. "When strong earthquakes happen, such as that in Japan, rocks shift and release energy. This undoubtedly influences the dynamics of the Earth but everything then settles back again." The National Academy of Sciences' Geophysical Monitoring Centre keeps track of tremors worldwide; the event in Japan was no exception. "Seismic waves from the Japanese earthquake can't be felt in Belarus, since the distance is so great, although our devices register these mi-



Seismic waves from earthquake not felt in Belarus

cro-fluctuations. Of course, we can't speak of any destructive influence on us," explains Mr. Aronov.

Earthquakes are rare in Belarus, with only four sensible earthquakes recorded to date. At present, regular seismicity activity of a small level is observed around the Starobin potash salt deposit but such tremors represent no serious danger if we monitor the geodynamical situation and observe safety procedures during mining.

Alla Shaibak, Departmental Head of the Hydrometeorology Department's Republican Centre for Radiation Control and Envi-

ronmental Monitoring at the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, notes that radiation in Belarus is under constant monitoring. So far, the emergency situation at the Japanese Fukushima-1 nuclear power station hasn't brought any consequences for Belarus. "The level of gamma radiation and radioactivity of natural fallout and aerosols in the air are the same as they have been for many years," notes the specialist.

Radiation will only appear in Belarus if a nuclear explosion discharges into the air; at present, there is only a radiation leak in Japan.

# Forest inhabitants feel at home

**Number of aurochs in Belovezhskaya Pushcha reaches 415**

Last year, the number of aurochs in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park increased by 23, and now stands at 415. Numbers are counted each winter, since the animals tend to stay closer to feeding places, making them easier to keep track of. According to calculations, there are 48 young aurochs (under one year old) while 46 aurochs are 'semi-adult' (between 1 and 3.5 years old). The share of female and male animals in this subgroup is almost equal: 22 and 24 respectively. Meanwhile, there are 233 adult aurochs (over 3.5 years), with female aurochs prevailing: 155 against 78. In fact, more aurochs are living in the Pushcha than have been seen since 1946, when restoration of the National Park began.

The auroch is the heaviest and largest land mammal on the European continent. These

magnificent animals once lived in the area covered by modern Lithuania, Belarus, Ukraine and the Greater Caucasus but, today, reside only in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha and in the Caucasus. WWI was a catastrophe for the majestic animals, with the last free ranging auroch in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha killed in 1921 and in the Caucasus in 1926.

Fortunately, several dozen were kept by zoos, allowing five to be bought from Poland in 1946; they were brought to the Belarusian part of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha and their free breeding began in 1953. Today, there are actually more than the optimal number living in the reserve, allowing some to be resettled at other zoos and reserves. In recent years, several aurochs from the Belovezhskaya Pushcha have been taken to Berezinsky Reserve and Pripyatsky National Park. San Sanych and Barynya aurochs are also now permanent 'residents' at Minsk Zoo.