

# No one wants a 'hand out'

More than half of the Belarusian population aim to solve their financial difficulties independently

At present, most citizens occupy economically active life position, as seen from the *Public Opinion* survey conducted by the National Academy of Sciences' Sociology Institute. The annual poll is one of the most authoritative sources of empiric sociological data.

Being asked 'What will you do if your material condition significantly worsens in the near future?' more than half of the respondents said they would search for new opportunities to improve their situation, searching for a way out of their difficulty. These can be called 'active economists'. In addition, 21 percent of those polled are 'passive economists', saying they would 'wait and see' what might happen. Almost the same number (23 percent) could not decide on a course of action and these

can be defined as 'doubting economists'.

As far as the financial and economic crisis is concerned, many Belarusians state that they are feeling their budget pinched. The survey highlighted major concerns during the crisis year of 2009. The first group of problems, conventionally called 'Dobrobyt' (Welfare), embraced housing problems and salaries. The second group included worries about health, while the third dealt with the 'consumer minimum', since people with low incomes find that their welfare is most dependant on the cost of utilities, food and essential goods.

The first of the three least important problems is the issue of 'self-preservation'. Those people who adhere to the principle 'I'm responsible for myself, my

family and my country' usually have positive attitudes regarding the quality and availability of medical services, as well as provision of personal security and ecological stability. The next concern is linked to finances: the payment of salaries and pensions on time and concerns over job loss.

Under crisis conditions, Belarusians were most worried about housing issues, utility tariffs, the quality and availability of medical services, payment of salaries and pensions on time and inflation. These problems have remained acute for the last few years but the world financial crisis has affected Belarus less from a social aspect, as the state has created a buffer for those who might otherwise have suffered.

By Irina Andros, a candidate of sociological sciences



Good spirits are vital

## Technology aids knowledge transfer

By Olga Belova

### Belarusian-Indian training centre launched at High-Tech Park

A Belarusian-Indian training centre has opened at the High-Tech Park. "We've completed infrastructure development, with the centre now operational," notes the Deputy Director of the HTP Administration, Alexander Martinkevich. The centre has already hosted its first seminars for staff of Belarus' technical universities.

Mr. Martinkevich explains that India provided about \$250,000 of technical aid to set up the centre, with equipment supplied not only to Minsk, but also to regional offices in Brest, Grodno, Vitebsk and Gomel.

The centre will provide advanced training to IT specialists of HTP resident companies, university lecturers and managers of IT companies. The major advantage of the centre is its ability to host video-conferences.

## Comfortable homes for birds



Participants of 'Settle Joy in Your House!'

By Sergey Rodnyansky

### Birds assisted in finding nests during International Bird Week

Bird Week, traditionally held in early April, originated more than a hundred years ago, in 1906. Belarus is now an active member, hanging thousands of new bird boxes country-wide, with dozens of events scheduled.

Minsk's Central Children's Park has hosted a promotional campaign, entitled 'Settle Joy in Your House!' — organised by the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. Pupils from Stankovo children's orphanage arrived with nesting boxes, made under

the guidance of their teachers, which were available for sale and for fixing to trees. Pupils from Minsk's Ecological Gymnasium and cadets from Minsk's Suvorov Military School also joined in, alongside ecologists, artists and journalists. A military brass band helped create the necessary atmosphere.

"More people should be attracted to similar events," believes Anatoly Lis, Belarus' Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection. "This is one of the oldest nature protection holidays. Previously, it was believed that we should build homes not only for ourselves but for birds and animals. I'm glad this tradition is returning."

## 'Velogeymik' resembles bicycle

### Belarusian doctors invent computer simulator for children with disordered motor functions

The device resembles an ordinary bicycle, so has been named 'velogeymik'. It helps children to develop their motor activity, in addition to their mental functions and memory. Marina Devyaltovskaya,

who heads the Republican Scientific-Practical Mother and Child Centre's laboratory overseeing the health of children and teenagers, says the country needs about 300 such simulators.

Meanwhile, foreign colleagues are showing great interest in the novelty. "A similar device exists abroad but is

aimed at adults. The cheapest costs four times more than ours," explains Ms. Devyaltovskaya.

The level of child disability has fallen in the Republic, much owing to medical innovations of Belarusian scientists and doctors, with modern therapies used for babies in intensive care. "We're now caring

for babies weighing just 500 grams, so this figure is hugely significant," notes Ms. Devyaltovskaya. Children with an extremely low weight face the risk of disability, due to having less developed nervous systems, respiratory organs and eyesight. "Reducing disability allows children a better quality of life," she adds.

## Navigation opens every river

By Dmitry Pimenov

### The Berezina, Sozh and Dnieper rivers were the last to be thrown open. What do river transport workers expect from 2011?

There are several promising areas of work for river transport, with cargo and tourist transportation likely to bring in major revenue. "This year, we plan to transport 7m tonnes of cargo — up 1m tonnes on 2010," notes Bronislav Govorovsky, the Head of the Transport and Communications Ministry's Sea and River Transport Department. "According to our calculations, cargo traffic may rise due to crushed stone supplies from Mikashevichi pit by river. Moreover, international transportation to Ukraine via the Dnieper River is being considered, with Kiev and Dnepropetrovsk as major destination points."

Last year, river transport workers insisted that excursion



Weather conditions allow launch of navigation early this year

sion and pleasure boats should be more actively developed. According to forecasts, the volume of tourist services will rise 2.5-fold, with new routes opening in Bobruisk, Mogilev and Loev this season, in addition to those already existing. The extension of the tourist network is possible due to the fleet being expanded. According to Mr. Govorovsky, another new steamboat should soon

appear in Vitebsk, while one more will be delivered to Lake Komsomolskoe in Minsk.

In the near future, social passenger transportation on rivers is to be restored, connecting remote villages such as those in the Pinsk and Loev districts and summer cottage settlements in the Gomel District; steamboats are almost the only type of transport viable in these areas, being cheap and

comfortable.

"Unfortunately, we can't launch these transportations immediately," explains Mr. Govorovsky. "There are some small quays as yet unable to accept passenger steamboats. Moreover, ice is still visible near the banks. This isn't an obstacle to cargo vessels, which travel from one port to another, with river waterways completely cleared of ice."