

# Visual acquaintance more useful than correspondence

Three-day visit to Belarus by Lithuania media ends in Ostrovets District



Lithuanian journalists visit power plant construction site

The Ostrovets District was selected for obvious reasons, being the northernmost point of the Grodno Region, while bordering Lithuania in the north and west. Meanwhile, it has a unique Lithuanian diaspora. Naturally, the journalists were interested in the

'Lithuanian' theme foremost. Among them were members of the First Baltic Channel, the *Lithuanian Courier* weekly, Baltios TV,

and the BNS and ELTA news agencies.

The guests visited the unique Lithuanian Centre of Education, Culture and

Information, in the agrotown of Rimdyuny, which boasts two schools under one roof: teaching via the medium of Lithuanian and Belarusian, with a Lithuanian kindergarten. The folk group *Zilvitis* entertained the press, showing their creativity, distinctive traditions, old songs and dances, each carefully passed from generation to generation. For over 30 years, they've preserved our national cultural heritage.

The Lithuanian journalists were impressed to see that their countrymen haven't forgotten their native language — used for the service at Holy Trinity Catholic Church, in the agrotown of Gervyaty (alongside Polish and Belorussian). A concert of organ music was then given in a magnificent arboretum surrounding the church, following a short report on local history, given by priest Leonid Nestyuk.

The other topic which most caught the attention of the Lithuanian media was the construction of a nuclear power plant in this

area. During a discussion on prospects for partnership with neighbouring countries in various spheres, the Chairman of the Ostrovets District Executive Committee, Adam Kovalko, noted that the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant has noticeably stirred interest among Lithuanian investors in the region. A car wash and service stations have been suggested, alongside the production of fuel briquettes, small retail sites and catering points. "We're working with four investors from Lithuania, while a fifth is still negotiating with us," Mr. Kovalko explains.

To allow the media delegation to learn as much as possible, they were invited to view the site of the future power plant and were then able to interview representatives from Rosatom, from the Board of Directors for the construction of the nuclear power station, from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection.

## Reaching destination under one's own steam along Pripyat

By Olga Kobayakova

### Tourist steamboat for Mogilev constructed in Pinsk

The new steamboat has been tailored to suit tourist sailing, accommodating 80 passengers across two decks.

The upper deck is equipped as a café, with a bar counter and TV set, while both decks have

air conditioning. The steamboat boasts a principally new design, making it more comfortable than its predecessors. At around 6m wide and 25m long, it is designed for use on rivers and lakes, and features a Volvo engine (almost noiseless).

According to Victor Brutsky, the Director of Pinsk's Shipyard, the steamboat will be launched

in late July-early August. After dockside and running tests, it will set off to Mogilev. All tourist vessels previously built in Pinsk have been delivered to their registration port by road but, this time, the steamboat will sail along the River Pripyat, through Kiev water reservoir (twice crossing the Belarusian-Ukrainian border) before reaching the Dnieper.

## Many aspects yet to be agreed

By Olga Belova

### New version of Red Book of Belarus to be released within three years

Preparations for the new edition are underway, explains Natalia Minchenko, the Head of the Ministry for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection's Department for Biological and Landscape Diversity. "In 2013-2014, scientists will be studying rare species, to make proposals for alteration. By late 2014, we should have a new edition of the Red Book."

Experts will be assessing developmental trends and existing threats to rare plants and animals, while monitoring changes in

population and contributory factors.

Ms. Minchenko believes that



some species could be removed from the Red Book, noting, "Vendace fish, for example, are currently registered in our Red Book, yet are common in Lithuania, caught on their side of Lake Drisvyaty. Aspects such as these require discussion."

She continues, "The list of rare and endangered plants and animals is constantly being updated, with nine new species of plants and ten new mushrooms added in early 2012."

Some have been discovered in Belarus for the first time while others, previously thought to have vanished, have been rediscovered. Many are subject to protection, in line with international conventions."

## Passion for hot forging



By Veronika Pavlova

Blacksmith Andrey Sharak consciously chose his profession, working hard to grasp the secrets of blacksmithing at a rapid pace. He not only rivals those who have spent their lives forging but has earned their respect.

### Crafted by hand

Andrey became interested in blacksmithing long ago, working at a nearby smithy, which captured his imagination. So great was his fascination, that he was soon spending all his available time there. He laughs, "I had to learn everything from scratch and ask a lot of questions. Sometimes, I so irritated my colleague with questions that he, being confused, would chase after me with a hammer. Little by little, I began to make my own pieces — not for order, but for myself. Then, the

Germans looked at my work and offered me a job in Germany."

### Destroying stereotypes

On returning to Belarus, he opened his own business. It was a time when stainless steel was popular, but the blacksmith did not betray his true craft. He began to promote metal framed ladders, breaking the stereotypes of Soviet times to prove that such ladders can be refined and fashionable. He implemented knowledge gained in Germany.

### Not weight, but appearance

"The architecture of a building plays a great role in its design," Mr. Sharak tells us. "For example, if the facade, roof, window and door openings are straight, the canopy shouldn't be arched or double-sloped. Meanwhile, in decorating a small wooden house, you need to ensure that the entrance, balconies, planters and so on don't look too bulky. You need to harmonise them with the house. We often make products appear artificially aged, using metallic paint effects to create a patina. For a black metal item, we spatter green onto the black before, finally, adding silver. It looks as if the metal has oxidised naturally, being about 50 years old."