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First bell: beautiful, solemn, celebrated with bright flowers

Traditionally, the Day of Knowledge is celebrated in Belarus on September 1st. Since this was a Saturday, only welcome events were held. The usual lessons began on Monday. In the new academic year, over three thousand institutions of general secondary education opened their doors, including three new schools. Around 1.1 million schoolchildren are registered in the country, including 110 thousand first-graders. The first lesson for everyone is always special: it is devoted to our native country. This year, it focused on the Year of the Native Land and was entitled 'I'm Lucky to be Born Here'. Lessons also began for tens of thousands of pupils and students of lyceums, colleges and higher educational establishments. All of them, as well as teachers and scientific and pedagogical workers, were congratulated by the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on Knowledge Day.

On September 1st, Alexander Lukashenko attended the solemn gathering in honour of Knowledge Day at the Alexandria secondary school in the Shklov District where he personally studied many years ago. The President shared his memories and spoke about the value of one's school years.

By Victor Lyubimov

"September 1st is the day that begins with the first bell ringing and remains with us forever. It's very important for me to spend this day with you," said Alexander Lukashenko. He stressed that the Alexandria school occupies a special place in his life. As a pupil, he once attended its gatherings in anticipation of a new school year. Many different impressions and personal experiences relate to those events. "Over time, they have become memories dear to my heart. The same will happen to you," believes Mr. Lukashenko.

In the modern world, everything is changing rapidly; the pace of life has increased significantly. Therefore, the right decisions must be made quickly. Mr. Lukashenko believes schoolchildren should be taught this. He drew attention to the fact that many graduates of the Alexandria school have returned as teachers. Pedagogical dynasties work here. The President — who also received a teaching diploma — also returned to take his first professional steps on native land.

Mr. Lukashenko added that, whatever modern schoolchildren dream of, everything is possible, "The key to a confident future is knowledge; without the latter, nothing is possible. Knowledge should be obtained not for the sake of a mark but for the sake of achieving high goals. This should be not superficial information which is available in any gadget and on the Internet, but in-depth study of subjects. True, we live in the era of information



Knowledge is key to a confident future

technologies and gadgets might provide us with an answer to any question. However, this does not make a person smarter and more educated: logical thinking, the ability to reason and draw the right conclusions, relying on your own intellect and erudition are the key. These should be developed in the school years and teachers and parents are the best assistants along this path."

The President believes that the new school year will be a success for children if they immediately focus on serious work. "However, while plunging into the world of knowledge, never forget that though this is vital, it is not the only thing that might be important in your life. Physical activity is the best rest after mental stress. Communicate more, spend your free time in the fresh air and be sure to do sports: exceptional, unique conditions have been created for you to do this." The Head of State presented the Alexandria secondary school with a set of sports simulators.

Mr. Lukashenko wished pupils success and ease in their studies, and teachers and parents — understanding and wisdom. In general, he wished them all to preserve the festive mood of the first day for the whole of the coming school year.

After the solemn gathering and a festive concert, the President visited the Museum of Local Lore and his classroom in a small village house. The school was based here until 1930 from when it began in 1886. Now it houses a museum. One of the rooms is furnished in the form of a class with an interior from the 1960s; it was here where Alexander Lukashenko studied. The new school building was put into operation in 1996.

The President warmly spoke to first-graders and former teachers. He told the children about his school years and conducted an impromptu lesson, while asking the teachers about their current lives. He also brought presents. Alexander Lukashenko's class teacher — teacher of

mathematics Tatiana Karpechenko — recalls that he was one of the best students: he enjoyed authority among other children, participated in all school activities, often went on various trips and assisted in harvesting. "There were, of course, pranks — like everyone else. However, in the end, he became a President. Well done! There is some small merit for us in this outcome," she said. On January 14th, she will celebrate her 95th birthday and she has already invited Mr. Lukashenko to her party. He said that he would try to come to visit her on this holiday.

On Knowledge Day, the Head of the Presidential Administration — Natalia Kochanova, the Chairman of the Council of the Republic — Mikhail Myasnikovich, the Speaker of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly — Vladimir Andreichenko, the Prime Minister — Sergey Rumas, the First Deputy PM — Alexander Turchin and other high-ranking officials visited their schools.

Details of the conversation arouse big interest

By Vasily Kharitonov

The meeting between the presidents of Belarus and Russia in Sochi aroused great interest in the mass media, with Alexander Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin focusing on Belarusian-Russian relations. A solid block of issues also tackled the international agenda.

In an exclusive interview to Belarus 1 TV Channel, Mr. Lukashenko revealed some details of the conversation with his Russian colleague.

Atmosphere of the meeting

The negotiations have taken place in a very good and friendly atmosphere. Believe me, there

was no conspiracy and nothing secret in these talks. The most important thing is that we've agreed with the Russian President to find an opportunity to meet within the next few days in an expanded format, involving members of the governments.

Personal 'fears'

I was interested in the position of the President of Russia, his views on the problems of international relations, primarily the US-Russian relations. This context also affects us because the development of Belarus also depends on Russia's inter-relations with the external world, the West, and especially the United



States of America. I've read various speculations concerning fears and worries for Lukashenko in the future and so on. Firstly, I don't fear anything now. I'm a man who has lived through many troubles. But there is one fear — if you can call it that — the fear of the economy.

International relations

I asked my colleague in detail about what's happening in the United States from a Russian

point of view. Moreover, I have never hidden and don't hide that I personally strongly supported Donald Trump.

Yes, he is an extraordinary politician. It hasn't happened before that the largest country in the world and its president were using such non-standard methods. I don't support him in everything. Moreover, I probably don't fully understand some things. Of course, some issues are hidden from all of us, including from me. It is certainly not correct to be at war with the whole world, including in trade. However, I underline again: we probably don't know fully what the situation is there. I think that if Donald Trump moves away now from

this strict rhetoric and changes his behaviour, he will win much for the US.

Present to Putin (protective icon of the Guardian Angel)

As Russia is to us, in the same way, Belarus is to Russia like a guardian angel. We are nations from one and the same root. We are close people whether some like it or not. From this comes our angel role. The same way Russia is to us, Belarusians, a kind of guardian angel. We boast such close ties with the Russian Federation and our dependence in the economy, primarily from the Russia, is great. This is our major partner. We sell most of our goods to the Russian Federation and this is an indisputable fact.

Travelling from distant heaven to Earth

By Victor Kuklov

The Association of Space Explorers (ASE) is an international non-profit organisation that unites astronauts of many countries. It was established in 1985 to share experiences in the field of manned spaceflight. The international congress, which ASE annually organises in different countries (the previous one took place in French Toulouse), gathers not only cosmonauts but also representatives of scientific research institutions and national space agencies. Therefore, in addition to those of the ‘high flight’ — those who’ve personally had an opportunity to carry out a space mission in orbit, scientists and specialists who are paving the way to the stars while staying on Earth will come to the Belarusian capital.

In total, up to 500 people are expected to come from almost four dozen countries, including Germany, the Netherlands, Sweden, Austria, and China. The largest delegations are likely from Russia and the United States. National space agencies, including NASA and the European Space Agency, will be widely represented at the Congress — as the Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Vladimir Gusakov, informs us.

Interestingly, Italy, Ukraine and Lithuania claimed to hold the 31st Congress — apart from Belarus. The final decision is made based on many criteria. The event is tra-

ditionally held in countries where cosmonauts were born. Their status is also considered: since 2012, Belarus has been officially known as a space state. Development of new satellites has brought the Belarusian industry to a new level. The components of many modern devices are under the ‘made in Belarus’ brand and over a dozen domestic enterprises work for the space industry. As a result, Minsk — which has extensive experience in organising large-scale forums — was unanimously chosen by the International Executive Committee of ASE as a host city for the 31st Congress.

The Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus — Sergey Kilin — confirmed that Svetlana Savitskaya (the first woman who travelled to open space) will come to Belarus. Among other participants of the Congress are the first Chinese cosmonaut — Yang Liwei, the former record holder for staying in open space — Sergey Krikalev. Legendary Victor

For a whole week, from 9th to 15th September, Minsk will become a ‘cosmodrome’: about 90 cosmonauts from 19 countries will take part in the 31st Planetary Congress of the Association of Space Explorers

Savinykh — who reanimated the Salyut-7 station — will also come. After their flights, many cosmonauts were engaged in political and scientific activities, so among the guests will be a former French minister and former rector of the University in Stuttgart. American astronaut Scott Kelly is also awaited; along with Russian Mikhail Kornienko, he spent almost a year in orbit — investigating how the body reacts to the long absence of gravity.

The official opening of the 31st Planetary Congress of the Association of Space Explorers will take place on Monday, September 10th — at the Belexpo National Exhibition Centre. Technical sessions and scientific discussions are planned. In particular, programmes aimed at resuming Moon research and creating a lunar orbital station will be discussed in Minsk. Participants of the Congress will also focus on flights to Mars. Belarusians are invited to participate in the international *SIRIUS* project, which includes research on the psychology and working capacity of a person in isolation conditions during long flights into space. This project is being implemented by the Institute of Biomedical Problems of the Russian Academy of Sciences.

“Space research

is a priority for many countries, including Belarus,” said the Head of the National Academy of Sciences’ Apparatus — Piotr Vityaz. “In addition to the Belarusian spacecraft apparatus (BKA), the Belintersat-1 communications satellite has been created. A student nano-satellite of the Belarusian State University will be launched in the coming months. The tender for its launch was won by China. This satellite is planned to be used for training purposes, its data will be sent to the laboratory for the implementation of various scientific projects at the level of teachers and students.”

Belarus is a member of the UN Committee on the Peaceful Uses of Outer Space. As experience shows, the greatest effect is achieved by combining the efforts of different countries. For example, Belarus and Russia have already carried out five joint space programmes aimed at creating new materials, information technologies, ground infrastructure and devices. Next on the agenda is a new joint programme concerning the targeted use of Earth remote sensing systems. Negotiations on the creation of a joint satellite are now being conducted by Belarus and China. An Alley of Cosmonauts will be laid in memory of the 31st ASE Planetary Congress in the Central Botanical Garden of the National Academy of Sciences.



New government places emphases

At its first session, the new Council of Ministers of Belarus discusses the major economic parameters for next year — salaries, export and inflation

By Alexander Kovalenko

The Government has considered draft socio and economic development forecasts, draft major guidelines of monetary policy of the country, the draft state budget for 2019 and new revision of the Tax Code. Such a competent approach is preconditioned by the norms of the Budgetary Code; the package of forecasting documents has been submitted to the President for approval.

The planned figures were studied just over a month ago, at the session of the Presidium of the Council of Ministers. In total, the tasks were approved, and several have been clarified over this time. For example, GDP growth was fixed at 4 percent, while inflation in 2019 shouldn’t exceed 5 percent. Moreover, changes in oil prices have been considered, alongside the reduction of development rates of the world economy and the unexpected fall of Russian GDP by almost 1 percent. According to the Economy Minister, Dmitry Krutoy,



During the Council of Ministers session

this influenced the structure of growth of GDP next year. It will increase at the expense of internal demand by 75 percent and only by 25 percent due to exports. A task was set before the key services of IT, information and tourist services — to exceed GDP growth rates by 3-fold. The total growth in the service sector is expected to be at the level of around \$700m.

“We’ll first receive total currency earnings from this segment of our economy of \$9.7bn,” promises Mr. Krutoy. “We couldn’t even dream about it some 5-7 years ago. Transport, logistics and IT services are becoming for our country like oil and gas, which we don’t have. Con-

struction services will also show growth, as we have recently won several large contracts for the construction of roads and social facilities in Russia.”

As far as drivers of the GDP internal growth are concerned, the focus is on investments. Their attraction should outstrip two-fold the dynamics of GDP. The Economy Ministry doesn’t hide the fact that it won’t be easy to ‘bring in’ Br28bn, but it’s quite feasible. Today, 671 projects have been already approved which will generate a total of 80 percent of the planned volume of attracted capital.

Prime Minister Sergei Rumas noted that principal requirements are preserved regarding the balance of the budget. The logic is simple: we can’t spend more than we earn. The Head of the Government sets the tasks, “In 2019, we will preserve the approach with two scenarios to forecast the budget. A basic scenario for economic development is envisaged for the budget. If it generates more income, we’ll

submit to the President proposals regarding allocating additional revenues where there’s need. I also ask you to focus attention on major areas of budget expenditure, considering the requirements of the Head of State. I refer to 10-percent reduction of expenditures for state support of the real sector with proportional increase of financing of the social sphere. The Government has set a task for itself for 2019: to bring the level of salaries in the budgetary sphere to at least 80 percent of the average salary in the country. The size of retirement pensions shouldn’t be lower than 40 percent of the average salary. The Finance Ministry was given an instruction to analyse what’s going on in the budgetary sphere. I cannot rule out that we are going to optimise the numbers together.”

Mr. Rumas expressed concern that private businesses are assigned performance targets locally. For example, in Bobruisk this refers to employment for newly created jobs and in Zhlobin this deals with trade turnover in trade and public catering. The First Deputy Prime Minister, Alexander Turchin, who is also the Head of the Council of Entrepreneurship Development, was instructed to take these issues under control.

FOCUS

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Bridge which successfully connects the two countries

In recent times, much has appeared in the news to suggest that Belarus and Uzbekistan are trying to re-activate their relations. We've learnt only recently about visits of delegations and issues of collaboration are being discussed, primarily in the trade-economic sphere. Much has been also spoken about the agreements reached. We should remind readers that an Embassy of Uzbekistan has been established in Minsk recently, and who else but the Ambassador has complete information about the bilateral contacts and visions for prospects at inter-state level.

By Vladimir Mikhailov

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of Uzbekistan to the Republic of Belarus, H.E. Mr. Nasirjan Yusupov, began his mission only a few months ago but this energetic person — who made such an impression during the meeting — already has big plans for his role. He believes that soon mutual ties between the two states will be filled with new ideas and projects. This confidence is clearly seen in Mr. Yusupov's statements during our conversation.

Mr. Ambassador, how would you characterise the modern state of Belarusian-Uzbek relations?

Several examples characterise how the relations between Uzbekistan and Belarus are developing. I arrived late to our meeting because I was speaking with the minister regarding the expected arrival of a delegation led by the head of the region and comprising of entrepreneurs. Businessmen come here intending to sign agreements and contracts with Belarusian enterprises. A delegation from Belarusian Pharmmed has been to Uzbekistan to launch a project between two joint companies in the pharmaceutical sphere. Even these few examples show how intensively our relations are developing. We're currently preparing for the visit of President Lukashenko to Uzbekistan. Relations between the presidents of Uzbekistan and Belarus are very warm and friendly. If the relations between the heads are so good, accordingly, relations between the two countries will be the same. It's the sixth month I have been here. I arrived and began to meet the heads of ministries, departments and labour collectives right away. The phrase 'We were waiting for you' went to my heart. Belarus was waiting for Uzbekistan to open its embassy. This year, we celebrate the 25th anniversary since the establishment of diplomatic relations. In this respect, a whole range of events are being conducted both in Uzbekistan and Belarus. In April, the Days of Belarusian Culture were launched in Tashkent and I was lucky to attend. The year will finish with the Days of Uzbek Culture in Belarus. This also characterises our active collaboration and shows how hard we try to compensate for the deferred actions of the past. I must emphasise that both the Belarusian and Uzbek sides have very serious intentions.

In your opinion, what are the most significant events of recent years that have added dynamism to the bilateral interrelations between Uzbekistan and Belarus?

Of course, the major strategy of any state is determined by its head. In our case, these are the presidents of the two countries — Shavkat Mirziyoyev, the President of Uzbekistan, and Alexander Lukashenko, the President of Belarus. I believe that an embassy is a kind of bridge connecting the two countries. It's a bridge that primarily reflects the interests of Uzbekistan in Belarus while also bringing the interests of Belarus to Uzbek structures. And these interests do exist. Our relations are now actively developing in the spheres of investment, trade and the economy and tourist co-operation. The President of our country determined that these areas should be our priority. The core of the activity of any embassy is the development of political dialogue and the interests of one's own citizens. I refer to the ties with fellow countrymen who live here. It's also important to develop cultural interaction and cultural-humanitarian ties. At the same time, education issues are also vital, alongside those dealing with healthcare. In this respect Belarus is of great interest to us, because your country has preserved



much of what was in the Soviet period and, moreover, it has developed this. This is very interesting to Uzbekistan. I have already had meetings with a range of heads of corresponding ministries and departments. Now we're refining them with concrete areas of work. I think that in the future we'll have results across these areas.

Of course, trade-economic activity is a separate topic in inter-state affairs. What is it today between the two states? How is it manifested?

I should say that over the last two years, trade-economic relations began to develop at a higher rate. In 2017, trade turnover between the two states totalled about \$200m, while we expect to see considerable growth this year. If we analyse the results of the first six months of 2018, the figures speak for themselves about the serious growth of both export and import supplies. Though I should say here that imports from Belarus to Uzbekistan considerably exceeds the figures of our exports to your country.

However, as an economist, I always say that to import it's necessary to earn foreign currency and to achieve this it's necessary to export. Belarus understands this and is ready to purchase from Uzbekistan the produce it needs. We in Uzbekistan know agricultural machinery from Belarus well. Minsk Tractor Works is really world famous and each Uzbek agrarian knows that he would be using this machinery with pleasure. Previously, there was a sharp decline in the purchasing of Belarus-made products.

However, in the last two years the issue has been developed. This year alone, we plan to purchase one thousand sets for MTZ tractors — much more compared to that previously purchased. We should not only purchase; we should

collaborate. Uzbekistan has fully-fledged bases where we can jointly manufacture these goods. On the one hand, active localisation of part of these tractors is already happening. Next year, a task is being set to organise co-operation at a more serious level. It's very pleasant to note that the famous Belarusian Amkodor Holdings, together with Uzbek machine builders is opening a joint enterprise and we'll be producing construction machinery there to meet the needs of Uzbekistan. Now, the issue is under discussion regarding textile goods. Uzbekistan is traditionally a cotton-producing country and is famous for it. Belarusian textile workers are positive about Uzbek produce. But now we have the situation that Belarus purchases a considerable amount of cotton not directly from Uzbekistan but via third countries. Unfortunately, the economic mechanism impeded direct supplies. Recently Belarus was visited by a working party of textile workers from Uzbekistan. There was a meeting at Bellegprom Concern, as well as with the Deputy Chairman of the Council of Ministers, Mikhail Rusy, and we have found ways to solve the problem. As a result, this will lead to the produce being delivered to Belarus from Uzbekistan becoming much cheaper. In future, we aim to enter the markets of third countries, particularly Poland or the Baltic States. Now we invite Belarusian companies to jointly take part in cotton production. At present, cotton manufacture is shifted to a cluster system in our country, i.e., leading enterprises of light industry are signing agreements and a cluster of Uzbek farmers producing cotton is being created. As part of the cluster, cotton is processed into yarn or fabric and then the cluster sells them at its sole option. The state doesn't take part in this process. Legal entities settle issues independently. Moreover, the Belarusian-Uzbek enterprise Peshkutex is successfully functioning in Uzbekistan. Its produce — yarns — is supplied to

Belarusian companies. Meanwhile, Belarusian enterprises have big demand for yarn, so we invite the Baranovich Cotton Production Association to take part in the activity of Peshkutex, enabling it to considerably expand its opportunities: to produce cotton there, process it and then supply yarns to other enterprises of light industry in Belarus or to enter the Belarusian market with ready-made goods or the markets of third states. The idea was liked, and now active work is being conducted in this direction. I hope that soon this will be implemented somehow in the form of a contract. Another interesting direction is the development of pharmaceuticals.

Belarusian pharmaceutical enterprises gained a strong foothold and their pharmaceutical goods are competitive. Unfortunately, it's little known in Uzbekistan. Now, we have a work to, firstly, bring this produce to Uzbek consumers, and, most importantly, to open an enterprise in Uzbekistan to jointly manufacture these medications. We have created a special economic zone in pharmacy: where pharmaceutical enterprises are located and favourable conditions for their activity will be created. The Belarusian pharmaceutical industry purchases raw materials in third countries at a high price. Uzbekistan is ready to offer the same at more affordable prices. If we provide work in this direction, accordingly, this will enable us to expand exports of Uzbekistan products to Belarus, while the foreign currency earned can be spent on the purchase of other goods in Belarus, to be delivered to Uzbekistan. I think that it's a promising direction.

(the interview is continued in next issue)

We've heard so many times the mantra of some neo-liberals that the industrial age has come to an end. Say, the world has entered a post-industrial era and it is high time for us to close almost all the factories. Instead, we will begin to develop artificial intelligence, 3D technologies, nanotechnology and other smart chips. We'll then live happily and be rich. The fundamental mistake here is that, without its own production, no country will have a decent future. Another thing is that many of our enterprises today sorely lack new ideas and technologies. There is nothing to do in business without know-how. That's why we need foreign investments urgently, with which new knowledge and innovations are brought to the economy. Is Belarus ready to become a centre of attraction for capital? How can it attract rich, talented and successful people?

Not long ago, the Turkish Government voiced a project to create mega-industrial zones in the country where 100,000 people will be employed. As a basis they decided to take the experience of China, South Korea, Malaysia and Singapore. According to the Turkish Government, these zones will allow the country to make another leap in economic development. All costs for infrastructure will be paid by the state. For investors, tax incentives will be in effect, state lands will be allocated for the period of 49 years and with a minimum rental payment. It is very similar to free economic zones in our country.

Twenty years ago, it was decided to create convenient business clusters in Belarus to stimulate the development of primarily high-tech and import-substituting industries. More decisions followed and, soon after these free economic zones were established, the High-Tech Park was set up in 2005. Currently, the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park is under construction not far from Minsk; it aims to attract high-tech industries. The whole world is progressing along this path.

The first industrial parks were created in Western Europe and the USA in the late 19th century. Fifty years later, that experience was used by the 'Asian tigers'. In 1951, the first Asian industrial park was established in Singapore. At present, tens of thousands of free economic zones and industrial parks operate in the world — offering numerous benefits and preferences. The explanation is simple: on average, up to five million Dollars are invested in one hectare and, for this, it is worth fighting for a place — although the competition here is high. When Poland joined the EU, European officials insistently advised it to abandon the free economic zones, but the Poles managed not only to save them but also to increase their number three-fold. As a result, almost 15 zones now operate in the country. According to calculations by economists, every second about



Capital attraction in the era of innovation

What are the spheres of interest for investors in Belarus

60 Dollars are invested in them. Among the leading investors are General Motors, Volkswagen, Toyota, Opel, Michelin, Shell, UBS, Ericsson, Indesit, IBM, IKEA, Electrolux, Gillette and other brands.

Everyone seems to know about Silicon Valley in the US. After the Second World War, when the number of students in Stanford increased dramatically, the University needed additional finance. It was impossible to sell 32 square kilometres of land because the founder of the University would not allow it. Professor Frederick Terman found another way. He began to lease land for long-term rent for offices and production. The tenants were required only to be a high-tech company. As a result, the Stanford Industrial Park was created — becoming the basis for Silicon Valley. Western Europe also has its own Silicon Valley: this status was granted to the German state of Saxony, which is among the largest centres of microelectronics and information technology.

The industrial park in the Chinese city of Suzhou is the best example; hundreds of the world's largest corporations invest their

capital there. Everything started in 1994. The interests of the two states — China and Singapore — came together in Suzhou. The former then needed advanced technologies and the latter was ready to export them. Thanks to the merging of capitals, the once sparsely populated and semi-wild area around Jinji Lake turned into a unique industrial area with shining skyscrapers that house Siemens, Bosch, Samsung, Phillips,

Johnson & Johnson and other corporations. In general, almost a third of China's economy today is concentrated in free economic zones. They became the main component of the Chinese economic miracle. Is this not a role model for us?

It is no wonder that our country pays so much attention to the Great Stone Industrial Park. The Head of the Park Administration — Alexander Yaroshenko — admits that the interest in it is steadily growing, "We've ensured the arrival of significant companies. There are projects from China, Russia, Germany, Austria, Israel and Lithuania. 35 residents are registered in the Park now and we expect that, by the end of the year, this figure will increase to 40. I hope that 10 enterprises will start to produce products or provide services this year."

The representatives of *Forbes* magazine — Tom Post and Arkady Shteimans — named the Great Stone 'the main jewel of Belarus' economic growth', noting, "It will be able to increase the total export of goods and services under the 'made in Belarus' label by 50 percent. The Great Stone is a strategic ticket for your country. It will help rebuild the main industrial enterprises, give them innovation and efficiency without losing jobs and thereby make an unprecedented economic breakthrough."

Prospects for the High-Tech Park are no less favourable. In less than six months, it attracted more than 100 new companies. This is an historical record. New residents of the Park are companies that work in the fields of artificial intelligence, machine learning, robotics, and analysis of large data — in brief, it concentrates the most advanced representatives of modern IT. What is fundamentally important, is that the conditions for entering the HTP have been greatly simplified, everything is as transparent and fast as possible.

Tom Post also said, "Imagine if the HTP could expand its presence outside IT and together with the leadership of the Great Stone, launch start-ups in the field of engineering, the Internet of things and so on. By 'marrying' the industrial economy with innovations, Belarusian companies will be able to attract the hottest investments in the technological world."

EXPERT COMMENT

BORIS PANSHIN,

Professor at the Faculty of Economics, BSU:

All these free economic zones, industrial hubs, techno parks are centres of capital attraction. A free zone makes it possible not to bother with administrative barriers and conduct business with minimal tax and other costs. This is important for any investor. In addition, the free economic zones of Belarus have very significant trump cards. Firstly, this is the entry point to the markets of the EAEU and the EU, as well as the inclusion in the railway, transport arteries of the Chinese Belt and Road initiative. The lower costs of transportation, the more competitive the product is. Secondly, Belarus is a country with rich experience of intercultural interaction where comfortable and safe conditions for honest and responsible business have been created. This is

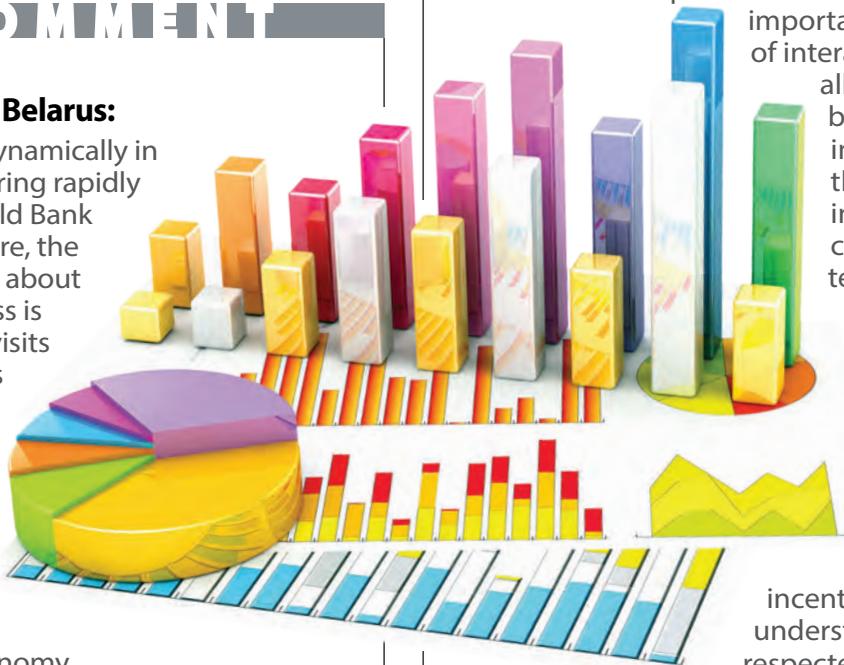
important for understanding the model of interaction with other states. After all, no matter what sanctions, barriers and restrictions are imposed, everyone understands that we must work together in the region. In addition, our country has great potential in terms of recreational tourism. We see what an influx of tourists come every year to Western Europe. Why do not we create for tourists from Spain, Italy and other southern countries tourist destinations with clean air, organic food, health spas and medical services? Finally, the main

incentive for investment is clear and understandable rules and laws that are respected by all.

ALEX KREMER,

Head of the World Bank Office in Belarus:

Belarus has been developing very dynamically in recent years. The economy is recovering rapidly after two years of recession and World Bank experts predict that, in the near future, the growth of the economy will average about three percent per year. Local business is very optimistic, and the number of visits by foreign investors and delegations has increased significantly. I do not even have time to meet with foreign guests and must delegate often to my colleagues. The country has recently done a lot to improve the business environment and the investment climate. In my opinion, the best time has come for investment in the Belarusian economy.



Returning home after four centuries

Presentation of the facsimile edition of the first Slavic Primer takes place in Minsk

By Lyudmila Kovaleva

The word 'bookvar' (primer) is now used in dozens of languages: Russian, Ukrainian, Bulgarian, Bosnian, Dagestan, Khakass, Khanty, Chukchi, Evenk and others. However, few know that it was Belarusians who invented it and, 400 years ago, published the first book with this title. This is no surprise, as modern Belarusians only learned about this relatively recently. The topic is much discussed as the Primer of 1618 has become publicly available since, on the initiative of the National Library of Belarus, its facsimile has been published.

Accidental acquaintance

A facsimile edition is a small book, half the size of modern analogues — with smooth pages, a neat cover and the fresh smell of ink. This is not the original, but it has taken much effort to ensure it is released. When the book is in your hands, it's hard to believe that this rare Primer could have been hidden from public eyes for another century. An unusual coincidence helped to change the situation.

For a long time, the year 1631 was viewed as the first date of the Belarusian Primer by Spiridon Sobol, who published the book in Orsha. Belarusian researchers however, recently learnt that another book — printed 13 years earlier by the printing house of the Vilno Holy Spirit Orthodox Brotherhood in Euye — existed. The discovery was made when they came across descriptions of it by foreign bibliographers. In Belarus, not a single copy of that ancient Primer has been preserved: all educational publications were simply obsolete. However, two books were lucky.

One of them, incomplete, is kept at the Royal Library of Denmark in Copenhagen. Another book — fully preserved — is owned by the Library of the Middle Temple in London. It was the London copy that formed the basis for the facsimile. It is known that, as early as the beginning of the 17th century, it was acquired by the collector Robert Ashley. He collected interesting and unusual publications in different languages, trying to study and popularise the wisdom of different peoples among his fellow Englishmen. After his death, his collection was bequeathed to the Middle Temple Library. The Primer was preserved but for many years, no one has seen it because the library is not public and is a private institution. Only in 2015, after years of correspondence and negotiations, was it visited by a Belarusian cultural expert, the Deputy Director of the National Library — Alexander Susha.

"I managed to get to the Library of the Middle Temple in large part thanks to the assistance of the British Belarusians and, first, Professor Jim Dingley. I

eventually got an opportunity to hold the edition in my hands, look at it and make a digital copy. I was enraptured by the very fact that this book exists, and it is not a myth! I received a proof of the existence of the ancient Primer — the very first book with this title. It was a real cultural shock," the researcher recalls.

Learning from prayers

Other Belarusians now experience the same cultural shock. The presentation of the facsimile copy at the National Library was full of guests. The visitors could not hide their admiration and desire to touch and look through the publication. Many were curious about

to add whole words and then sentences," explains Mr. Susha. "It resembles the modern style of teaching. However, modern editions don't have the alphabet both in usual and in the reverse order: this was done for better memorisation of the letters."

Interestingly, the ancient Primer taught not only literacy but also spirituality. Important texts for reading included numerous prayers, religious hymns, the symbol of faith, God's commandments, sermons, a list of good qualities of a person and their sins, as well as other numerous moral-



OPINION

IRINA DRIGA,
First Deputy Culture Minister of Belarus:

The Primer is a book with the largest circulation and the happiest reader's outcome. No pupil, even if they have learned how to read before going to school, cannot but study it. This is an eternal book which will exist as long as there are schools, enlightenment and science.



how the Primer of 400 years ago differs from modern analogues and how our ancestors studied.

"Initially, pupils were taught the letters of the Slavic alphabet ('az', 'buki', 'vedi', etc.) and then learned to compose simple syllables from letters and tried

educational texts that occupied almost two thirds of the book.

The content and artistic design of the edition amazes viewers. "Different variants of Cyrillic fonts are used in the Primer; these facilitate the perception of texts and create a good visual impres-



Alexander Susha

sion. The title page features some decorative elements that create a solemn feeling. Two beautiful large engravings decorate the book: on the back of the title page (the coat of arms of Belarusian magnate Bogdan Oginsky, the owner of the town of Euye and the trustee of the printing house in which the Primer was published) and at the end of the book (a cross with a spear and staff). The text of the Primer also includes artistically engraved pictures, endings and initials," notes Mr. Susha.

Invaluable gift

Naturally, all elements of the artistic design are preserved in the facsimile edition of the Primer. The three-volume edition includes a facsimile, its translation into modern Belarusian and scientific researches in Russian, Belarusian and English. To date, a thousand of the books have been published and a large circulation is being negotiated. The project participants — the National Library, the Foreign Ministry, the Ministries of Culture and Education, the Embassy of Belarus in the UK and Latvia, the International Association of Belarusians, the Middle Temple Library, the Belarusian State University and sponsors in Belarus and the UK — aim to make the ancient Primer accessible. Within a year, the edition will be sent free of charge to libraries, museums, educational and scientific institutions both in Belarus and abroad. So far, some books have already been presented as part of Minsk's presentation. Several copies of the Primer were donated to children who will go to school this year.

"The National Library has implemented a number of projects on facsimile restoration of iconic books: religious works (Turov Gospel, Polotsk Gospel), chronicles (Barkulabovo Chronicle), editions by the first printer Francysk Skaryna, and many others. Such projects demonstrate, primarily, to Belarusians that they have a rich culture and exceptional world achievements: the first Primer was invented by our ancestors! We really have something to be proud of. If you are proud of yourself, then respect comes to you from outside," Mr. Susha believes. "I see how much delight our book projects bring to foreigners. In fact, through such books we present ourselves to the world, show that our culture and people have existed for more than a century. This works much better than abstract words. Therefore, among the planned activities to popularise the Primer are many initiatives that we are going to organise abroad: in Vilnius, London, Moscow, Paris..."

For the festival, the town has made a visible effort: the social and cultural facilities have been renewed, a pedestrian street has appeared and the park where the main activities take place has been modified. The activities occupied more than two dozen sites.

The festival began with a celebratory assembly at secondary school No. 4 — a quarter-century old, it is the youngest school in the Ivanovo District. It is the only urban school in the Brest Region where the education is conducted fully in the Belarusian language. Information Minister Alexander Karlyukevich came to congratulate the schoolchildren on the new academic year, “Knowledge will help you open a broad road to life. And the Year of our Native Land is a reminder to all of us not to forget where we are from. We should respect what is our own, Belarusian: first, our family, parents, home; be attentive to national literature and the native word. Go out into the big world with this concept!”

On the same day, a special bookstore was opened in Ivanovo. There had been nothing of this kind in the town before. Now, one can find classical literature and works by contemporary authors for adults and children, teaching aids and stationary.

In the main square of the town, tents for the book and press festival were arranged, where the best publications in the country were presented. The district centre of culture and folk traditions hosted exhibitions dedicated to the 400th anniversary of the world first Primer, as well as an exhibition by Oleg Karpovich, a popular graphic artist, an exhibition of holograms found on the first printed books by Francysk Skaryna and other displays.

The activities were not limited to Ivanovo. In the museum complex named after Napoleon Orda, in the village of Vorotseviichi, Ivanovo District, an international round table was held, bringing together authors from more than 10 countries.

The finals of the young reader competition ‘Live Classics’, attracted great interest. This year, more than 15,000 schoolchildren from all over Belarus took part in the readings. 12 readers headed into the home stretch to compete in four age categories. For works written in 2017, winners of the Republican contest ‘National Literary Prize’ were also recognised in Ivanovo.

The official opening ceremony of Belarusian Written Language Day occurred on the main stage of the district centre’s city park. Symbolic bell ring-



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

Life-giving source of wisdom and knowledge



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

The 25th Belarusian Written Language Day was hosted by Brest Region’s Ivanovo — the large-scale event was attended by authors and readers alike. The event is officially celebrated on the first Sunday of September; but it is preceded by several diverse activities.



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK



VITALY PIVOVARCHIK

ing and a release of white doves served as an overture. Congratulations from the President of the Republic of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, were read before the participants and guests of the festival by Igor Petrishenko, Deputy Prime Minister, “This is a landmark event in the cultural life of the country, evidence of the beauty and power of the Belarusian language and spiritual traditions of our nation. For many centuries, the written word has passed through generations the eternal ideals of beauty, goodness and justice as a vital source of wisdom and knowledge and a reliable companion for every person along his or her path of life. By celebrating Belarusian Written Language Day, we pay tribute to those who created our culture, promoted education and raised the Belarusian literary word to a high level. Our ancestors have left us an invaluable treasure, the native language, fine examples of which are works by Frantishkek Bogushevich, Maxim Bogdanovich, Yanka Kupala, Yakub

Kolas, Vladimir Korotkevich and Ivan Melezh. By preserving their heritage, today’s generation of Belarusians will strengthen the sovereignty and independence of the Motherland with its fruitful creative work.”

The official ceremony was followed by the dramatised show ‘Bowing to the Native Land’. On the 25th Belarusian Written Language Day, the memorial

plaque, ‘Yan’s Word’, was solemnly opened in Ivanovo: a sundial where the main element is a quill pen fixed in a marble inkwell. The memorial symbolises the power of the native language uniting Belarusians.

Another solemn ceremony was dedicated to the memorable franking of a special postal envelope issued by the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation with the circulation of 20 thousand copies. Vladimir Matusevich, Director General of Belpochta RUE, noted that special postal projects and commemoration stamps are becoming a tradition of Belarusian Written Language Day.

Throughout the holiday, the guests could familiarise themselves with the work

of folk craftsmen, participate in master classes and buy unique items. A feast of Belarusian cuisine and products was organised. Street musicians and folk groups performed at their best. In addition, during the event, the 22nd regional competition of brass music ‘Fanfare-2018’ was held in Ivanovo. In the evening, the ceremony of passing the baton of celebration of Belarusian Written Language Day to Slonim, Grodno Region, took place. And the concert ‘Singing over Polesie’ was the finishing highlight of the festival activities.

Oleg Karpovich, a popular graphical artist

Visiting with least number of obstacles

More than twelve thousand people used the opportunity of 30-day visa-free entry to Belarus

By Alexander Kovalenko

A world without borders is a yearned-for dream of any traveler. However, it's now difficult to imagine the globe not covered with a 'patchwork quilt' of numerous countries. There's nothing wrong in this historically formed bright geographical mosaic, as each nation has its own national culture, traditions and authentic features — peculiar only to it. Another good thing is the opportunity to cross the border with the least number of obstacles.

In the modern world, a visa regime is perceived as an anachronism and increasing number of states are trying to dismantle this 'rusty locking mechanism' at least for a certain period. Belarus has also made significant visa simplifications, primarily on a unilateral basis.

At present, citizens of almost 75 countries can come to Belarus without a visa and spend up to thirty days — unlike the previous five-day limit. This is long enough to get to know the historical and cultural, as well as the natural sights of the country, to rest and recuperate in one of the numerous contemporary sanatoriums and to conduct substantial business negotiations.



This voluntary gesture of hospitality hasn't gone unnoticed, proven by unbiased statistics. The State Border Committee summed up the first set of results: from July 27th through to August 26th, more than 12,000 people used the visa-free regime at Minsk National Airport. Last year, the same period saw almost a third fewer, while the previous month — 25 percent less.

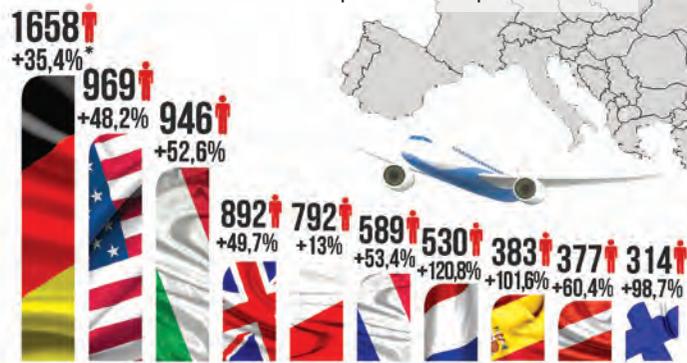
The biggest number of guests arrived from Germany (1,658), the USA (969) and Italy (946). The number of Germans was 35.4 percent more, those from the USA — up 48.2 percent, British — an increase of 49.7 percent, Italians — 52.6 percent and the French — 53.4 percent more. Some countries showed an even greater power of attraction towards Belarus: the number of

those from Finland has increased by 98.7 percent, from Spain — by 101.6 percent and from the Netherlands — by 120.8 percent. The dynamics of growth tends to increase.

The visa-free term for foreigners in Belarus has been increased to 30 days, including the days of arrival and departure, if these are made through Minsk National Airport. A correspond-

Who uses visa-free regime most often

A month has passed since the decree on the extension of visa-free stays in Belarus for foreign citizens up to 30 days entered into force. The State Border Committee has calculated the number of citizens of which countries arrived in Belarus via Minsk National Airport over the period.



Pass of citizens on a visa-free regime from July 27th through until August 26th, 2018

ing decree No.295 was signed by the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, on July 24th, 2018. One needs to have a valid passport or a substitutive document for travelling abroad, money (for each day of stay the sum in foreign currency or Belarusian Roubles — equivalent to at least two base units, or if staying 30 days then the sum equivalent to 50 base units), and medical insurance for at least 10,000 Euros — valid in Belarus.

The visa-free regime doesn't cover holders of diplomatic, service, special or other similar passports. Trips should be made for private, business, tourist and other purposes, not connected with employment, commercial activity or education, whose term exceeds 30 days.

If a foreigner stays in Belarus more than five working days, they need to register with the citizenship and migration subdivisions of territorial authorities of interior affairs. When living in hotels, hostels, spas and other collective accommodation facilities, registration of foreign citizens is conducted by administration of such institutions automatically during check-in.

The visa-free stay can't be prolonged beyond the established thirty days.



Where brides are green, and grooms have tails

Most 'crunchy' festival celebrated in Shklov with the 'marriage' of a huge barrel of pickles

On the Empress' table

Fresh and salty cucumbers, in salad, pizza, cakes, lemonades... Like Tosya from *The Girls* film — who told us all about potatoes, residents of Belarusian Shklov can list all the meals that you can make from cucumbers.

"What a delicacy is this cucumber jam!" say the tourists, prising the efforts of local hostesses. In early August, hundreds of people come to the town for a festival dedicated to the local pimply pride. This year, the 'green' fair was held for the twelfth time but Shklov — a small town in the Mogilev Re-

gion — won the fame of cucumber capital much earlier.

Local people began cultivating cucumbers in the 16th century. Since the town is situated on a large river — the Dnieper, the vegetables have a special taste. The 'lightly salted' variety quickly became a local delicacy and even got onto the menu of Yekaterina II. At present, every self-respecting family has a greenhouse, growing small and large, light and dark, fat and quite thin, straight and even curly cucumbers. Therefore, cucumber festivals are held every year on an unprecedented scale.

Through the bottle neck

This year, local theatre lovers staged *The Marriage of a Cucumber* and held a costume parade. All brides were like pickles: but one was greener than the other!

Unusual cucumbers with honey are recognised repeatedly as the most popular Shklov dish. This authentic delicacy attracts people from all over Belarus.

Men gravitate more towards the cucumber potions. In one wonder: inside the bottle there is a whole cucumber! How was it put there, through a narrow neck? Local people won't disclose their secrets but generously offer the drink to taste. Delicious cucumbers 'From the

evil eye' and 'For love' are written on the labels.

The town park also offers much entertainment. Here, guests decide who is worthy of the title of 'cucumber glutton', who this year has grown the largest cucumber and who is fiercer than others at dancing 'salted dances'. Beginners in the vegetable business are offered master classes on artistic carving and canning vegetables in line with 'grandmother's' recipes.

The 'Friendly Salting' is the culmination of the holiday: guests and hosts of the party jointly salt a 25-liter barrel of green cucumbers which will be taken out in autumn — during the *Dozhinki* fair.

REFERENCE

Two more places have long been fighting for the right to be called the cucumber capital of Belarus: Olshany and Pinsk. There, these vegetables are also grown on an industrial scale; however, no festivals are yet dedicated to cucumbers. However, the vegetable is praised in Russian Suzdal. Back in the 18th century, chroniclers wrote, "In the city of Suzdal, the air is full of smell of onion and garlic and cucumbers are abundant." If you visit the city, you should buy a souvenir: an ancient amulet of Aquila-cucumber. From ancient times it's believed in Russia that a doll made of natural cloth helps preserve salted cucumbers. The secret lies in mustard seeds that do not allow mould to appear. Seeds were stuffed inside the doll's head which was then put in the brine.

Dreaming to the *Crystal Swan* accompaniment

By Victoria Popova

On August 30th, *Crystal Swan* by Darya Zhuk went on 'swimming' along to Belarusian cinemas. The premiere was unusual from all aspects. Firstly, the film's authors confirm the fact that Belarus has nominated *Crystal Swan* for the Oscars. Accordingly, thanks to this film, many have learned that there is an Oscar Committee in Belarus which includes Igor Sukmanov — the Director of the International Programme for Feature Films at Minsk's *Listapad* Film Festival. Secondly, *Crystal Swan* will be screened in 36 cinemas for a period of two months: in 20 cities. This is truly 'generous' coverage for a Belarusian film.

The history of the festival success of *Crystal Swan* is also impressive. It was premiered in June in Karlovy Vary and, in July, was awarded the Grand Prix of the Odessa International Film Festival. Recently, Darya Zhuk took the main prize at the *Co-production: Window to the World* competition at the *Window to Europe* Festival in Vyborg (Russia).

For a film to be able to take part in the Oscars race (according to the rules), it must be screened to the wider public in its country no later than September 30th and have a certain audience success. If the first condition is met (the film is in the box office from August 30th), then the second part — the audience success — is unpredictable. That's why director Darya Zhuk, 38, at the pre-premiere show barely restrained her tears of excitement: this is her debut full-length feature film. It's taken four long years for the director to realise her idea.

"I do not want you to go to the cinema feeling 'pressure' caused by the media hype. On the contrary, I want you to take the film at face value. I shot it initially for the Belarusian audience; to be more correct, this film has been developing me. I wish you a pleasant viewing," Darya told her first viewers. The hype for the film has slightly 'outshone the bride'. Most of all, in *Crystal Swan* I wanted to see 'our 90s' — the time of my youth when one

In late August, a film — nominated by Belarus for an Oscars Award — premiered for the wider public



large country was being destroyed and we were not discouraged: we spent time at rave parties and studied at universities. Minsk at the time was bubbling, the club culture was at its best and, as I remember, the director herself was a fashionable DJ at rave venues. One of the first episodes of the film — a party in the Azgur Museum — is imbued with warm feelings towards its generation: daring and acidic. These feelings are probably so painful that they turned Velya (Alina Nasibullina) inside out and she wanted to go to Chicago. It is not possible to sympathise with Velya: a wild girl in a red coat taking money from her mother — a museum employee. When she is reproached by her mother she behaves like a capricious teenager. She runs away to the backwoods and rushes to strangers, aesthetically she does not coincide with the surrounding reality and the latter respond to her with mutual dislike. As a result, violence, tears and collapse follow. However, hope remains. The finale of the teenage drama is quite optimistic.

We should admit that, in recent years, films of Belarusian directors have not greatly pleased audiences. Even from the point of view of professionalism — a clearly told story, master installation and sound — Darya Zhuk's movie is pleasantly distinguished against the general background. Let *Crystal Swan* become a bifurcation point for the Belarusian studio: from now on, we will shoot only good and strong movies, show them at international festivals, look for foreign partners for co-production — in other words, conduct an adult film business. I think this is a promising story.

COMPETENT OPINION

Irina Driga,
First Deputy Culture Minister of Belarus:

Crystal Swan is a co-production of several countries but, since our studio has taken part in the filming, the Culture Ministry petitioned our distributors to view the film with due attention. If we are nominating a film for the Oscar from Belarus, it should have a viewer; this is the first condition of the Oscar Committee. I've personally watched *Crystal Swan* but would rather refrain from sharing my impressions: let critics, journalists and spectators express their opinions.

We are really on the same wave!

By Victor Lyubimov

This is a line from the song *Time* with which 14-year-old Daniel Yastremsky won the finals of the national selection round for *Junior Eurovision-2018* and he will be representing Belarus at the prestigious contest

The Belarusian representative at the *Junior Eurovision-2018* was announced at a time when most children are in bed, on the cusp of autumn, the night of September 1st, but many stayed up to watch the announcements on the Friday evening. The finals of the national selection round for *Junior Eurovision-2018* was broadcast live by Belarus 1 and Belarus 24 TV channels. Such excitement is easily explained as this year, Minsk is hosting the event, featuring representatives of twenty countries — a record number of entrants in the history of *Junior Eurovision*.

The show was bright and spectacular, with the finals of the national selection round being a true vocal battle, bringing together ten hopefuls. Eight are from

Minsk: *Myata* band, Daniel Yastremsky, Angelina Yaroshchuk, *Monkey Tops* vocal band, Maria Zhilina, Yaroslav Sokolikov, Nikita Belko and Maria Gulevich, as well as Yelizaveta Meya of Zhodino (in the Minsk Region) and Artem Skorol of the Grodno Region's Oshmyany. One of the hosts of the finals was Teo, who represented Belarus at adult *Eurovision-2014*. He was assisted by Olga Ryzhikova, with whom they create both a marital and a creative pairing. Both are also hosts of the morning TV programme at Belarus 1 Channel. The event was opened by the representative of Belarus at last year's *Junior Eurovision*, Helena Meraai, who performed *I Am the One*, which was also performed at the competition in Tbilisi.

The performance of each of the ten entrants was preceded by video presentations, while the winner was determined



Daniel Yastremsky

using the results of the TV voting and that of the professional jury. Though the jury didn't give Daniel the highest score, he immediately charmed the spectators who gave all twelve points to the young artiste. As a result, Daniel won in the total standings, taking the hearts of more than 9,000 people, as well as a crystal heart of the national selection round and a ticket to the prestigious musical forum.

Daniel-Alex (his second name) was born in the USA, in the city of Cincinnati, but now lives and studies in Minsk. The young boy finished musical school in piano and is now a pupil of the 9th grade at school. In his 14 years he can already boast a starry status as an entrant of musical TV shows and contests, such as *Ukraine Got Talent* and *New Wave Junior*. He also took part in *The Voice. Kids* (Russia) show and stud-

ied at the Igor Krutoy Academy. Before the finals of the selection round for the *Junior Eurovision-2018*, he had a promotional tour through Belarus: he has visited twelve cities of the country to support his *Time* composition.

"I have long dreamt of taking part in *Eurovision*," admitted Daniel. "I immediately fell in love with the song which I will perform at the contest. I haven't yet fully realised that I will have to represent Belarus as my emotions are still running high. Much work lies ahead. However, it will be easier for me to perform compared to other entrants because I will be singing in my native land and I will be supported by millions of Belarusians."

Fifteen thousand spectators is the number of people that Minsk-Arena complex — the largest in the country — can seat. On November 25th, it will become the venue for the song battles of *Junior Eurovision-2018*. The Belarusian capital will be the host country of the event for the second time (the first was in 2010) and we have no doubt that it will light new stars under the motto 'Light up'.

Emotional ‘theatre’ of form, images and colour

By Veniamin Mikheev

Alexander Konovalov has named his exhibition at the National Art Museum — planned to coincide with his 70th birthday — in a manner no less original than the content of his paintings, and even more intriguing: It is called *Marginalia, or Sidenotes*. The exhibition presents over 40 works of painting and graphics from the collection of the artist created over the past twenty years. In addition, the *Author’s Master Class* short film — screened during the exhibition — describes the fascinating process of turning a ‘blank sheet’ into a finished work.

After visiting the exhibition at the country’s main museum, anyone would think that the master represents a complex, versatile and sensitive personality. In his desire to examine and reflect the world, he — as a talented person and successful artist — is rarely satisfied with the results of his own creative work. The name of the anniversary exhibition reveals the specifics of the artist’s creativity in recent decades. The term ‘marginalia’ (from the Latin ‘on the periphery’) means drawings and notes in the margins of books, manu-



A personal exhibition of works by an original artist from Polotsk, opened at the main museum of the country, intrigues Minskians tempted by their knowledge of fine arts

ning. He ‘splashes’ emotions on the canvas, ‘sharing’ experiences and his own sense of self.

At present, Mr. Konovalov acts in different roles: as an architect, a colourist and a director. While reflecting on the unity of spiritual and earthly things which tie in different parts of the world, Mr. Konovalov resorts to universal signs, symbols and feelings. It is thanks to them that communication and connection between people of different cultures are possible. A symbol is not only a recognisable silhouette: it’s also a colour, a texture, a smell and a sound...

While familiarising ourselves with the exhibition, we can understand that it also focuses on the aesthetics of the collage. This technique has an ancient history: it’s old and young at the same time — being no older than 100. It’s impossible not to mention the author’s understanding of painting as the greatest and inescapable invention, his understanding of painting which is hidden in a line, a spot, a space and emotions... His painting — as an element of colour — can speak, act, change our outlook.

Alexander Konovalov is a painter who uses various modern materials in his works. With their help, he achieves the aesthetic and speculative effect of touch, wanting, through the texture of fragments of fabric, mesh, the metal shine of foil, the glow of gold, the interspersing of objects of everyday use (coins, labels, etc.) to supplement the pictorial basis of the picture.

It’s only at first glance that Alexander Konovalov’s works are perceived as spontaneous compositions. All of them have specific names which help in the recognition of the author’s design.

They refer viewers to the experience, immersing them in the psychological state which arouses associative emotions. From here comes the comprehension of the theme, the idea of the picture. The artist creates an aesthetic object, a new aesthetic form. This aesthetic form in most cases has an abstract conditioning, but it is

dominated by the author’s theme.

In many cases, such a painting can be called ‘silent poetry’ because people, objects, landscapes and events appear in the form of a line, a colour, a rhythm or a shape. Pictures are silent, but through the colour we hear sounds, through the lines — objects, through forms — our invisible presence in the composition created by the artist. This is how Alexander Konovalov’s collages bring another facet of knowledge.

CULTURE



scripts, letters that contain comments, interpretations, opinions on fragments of text or thought. In the history of Belarusian art, Mr. Konovalov leaves his artistic ‘notes’ that stand out from the general thinking.

In his work, the artist moves to a painting that does not ‘reflect’ the object depicting the external, but rather expresses the internal. He notes for himself that ‘art is not just a game, it’s that elusive subconscious that can help you to approach the illusory nature of the universe if you study it and trust it’. Used as the main principle of form building, the collage/assemblage method with all its consistency is highly variable, and the artist skillfully and freely overcomes possible moments of monotony. His paintings and graphic works reveal an attractive force that makes the audience peer closely at these compound compositions — filled with colour, line

and texture.

Mr. Konovalov’s collages unite painting and substance and act as fragments of the real world; they are bringing information to the viewer. His art is an interesting, refined and elegant form of comprehending reality, filled with timeless values. He creates his own emotional ‘theatre’ of form, images and colours that go beyond the ordinary. The artistic structure of his works executed on paper and canvas with use of different textured materials — such

as mesh, foil, thread, labels, along with picturesque colour spots made with oil, acrylic or gouache — reveals the interconnection of the social and spiritual spheres, leading to the artist’s awareness of his ‘self’.

Although Alexander’s worldview was formed in Soviet times and the epoch of socialist realism, the ideas of existentialism had a special impact on his artistic vision. Mr. Konovalov is an artist with a special emotional, acute-personal begin-

REFERENCE

In painting, collage elements were first introduced by J. Braque and P. Picasso in 1910-1912; they also invented the term ‘collage’. J. Braque pasted on the canvas painted sheets of paper, clippings from newspapers, wallpapers, added packets of cigarettes, playing cards and matchboxes. The artists created new avant-garde works, introducing in them a fragment of everyday life, directly transferred to the picture.

Javelin has flown to Doha

Tatiana Kholodovich of Belarus wins javelin event in Diamond League finals, held in Zurich

By Igor Grishin

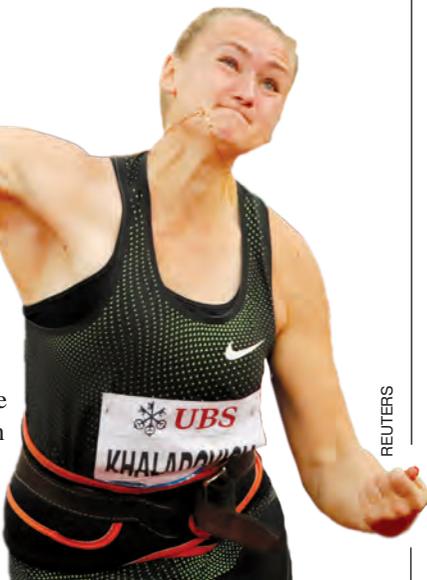
In her best attempt, Tatiana Kholodovich posted a result of 66m 99cm. The second place went to Liu Shiying, while bronze was claimed by Kara Winger of the US.

It should be mentioned that in early June, during the Diamond League stage in Oslo, Tatiana also celebrated victory while setting a national record of 67m 47cm. Furthermore, in early August, at the European

Championship, one of the leaders of the world season — Tatiana Kholodovich — finished only fifth.

In the Diamond League finals in Zurich, the javelin throwers were competing for \$50,000. The winner was also given a special prize with a diamond and an invitation to the IAAF World Championships that is to take place in Doha in 2019.

In the Diamond League total standings Kholodovich



Tatiana Kholodovich

was ranked third (earning 24 points across four stages). The best result was shown by Lü Huihui of China (earning 28 points), followed by Nikola Ogrodnikova of the Czech Republic (25).



Maxim Nedosekov

Clearing the height

Belarusian high jumper Maxim Nedosekov wins ISTAF international tournament in Berlin

By Alexey Svitov

The suspense remained until the third attempt. During his second try, Maxim attempted 2m 34cm but failed. Before the third final attempt, when Maxim Nedosekov claimed the height of 2m 30cm, the gap between the rivals was minimum. As a result, after showing brilliant technique, the Belarusian high jumper cleared the bar and entered the highest step of the medals podium, being ahead of many of his famous opponents. The current champion of Europe, Mateusz

Przybylko of Germany, finished second (2.28m).

In the women's long jump, Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova of Belarus jumped 6.65m to clinch silver. Brooke Stratton of Australia took gold with 6.71m.

Representatives of the Belarusian team have also done well at the Atletica Mondiale EA Classic in Padua (Italy), with Alena Dubitskaya claiming gold in shotput with her best attempt of 18.91m. Irina Zhuk was second in the women's pole vault with 4.50m, while gold went to Russia's Anzhelika Sidorova (4.75m).



During the session in the National Olympic Committee

Much has been done for the 2nd European Games but there is still a long way to go

The opinion was expressed by the Prime Minister, Sergei Rumas, at the National Olympic Committee during the offsite session of the Republican committee in charge of organising the 2nd European Games in Minsk in 2019

By Igor Grishin

“Judging from the reports on the preparations for the 2nd European Games in Minsk, a lot has been done already. Yet analysis of the work that's been done indicates that more has yet

to be done and there are a number of important issues which have yet to be addressed,” noted Mr. Rumas.

Getting the sport venues ready for the Games is the main issue. The 2nd European Games will take place at twelve sporting facilities. The readiness of each of them was discussed during the session of the organising committee. Participants of the session discussed what has been done, what has yet to be done, whether repairs are necessary, whether additional equipment is necessary, what remarks and proposals international experts have made after inspecting the facilities, and how government agencies interact with each other to fulfil these proposals.

The Organising Committee also studied the preparation of the temporary infrastructure, landscaping and the organisation of catering for participants of the Games. Mr. Rumas wondered whether a contract with the intended catering services provider had been drafted and asked about the price. The European Games Directorate had

been previously instructed to contact the agencies concerned and refine the action plan on organising the catering aspect of the Games.

Participants of the session were also presented with proposals on mascots for event and examined samples of uniforms for participants of the competitions. The Belarusian Light Industry Concern Bellegprom and fashion designers have worked together to prepare samples of the clothing that athletes and officials involved in organising the games will wear.

After perusing the paperwork ahead of the organising committee session, I can see that the European Games Directorate needs to answer some questions. At this stage it's no longer necessary to be a link between subcommittees and government agencies. It is the Directorate that should handle the bulk of the preparations for the Games while the subcommittees should help deal with interagency issues.



Champion lesson

Domracheva, Kushnir and the Bogdanovich brothers conducted an Olympic lesson, organised by NOC of Belarus on September 1st



Selfie made after the lesson

By Alex Soliterkin

The four-time Olympic champion, biathlete Darya Domracheva, Sochi 2014 Olympic champion in freestyle, Anton Kushnir and 2008 Beijing Olympic champions, rowers Alexander and Andrey Bogdanovich ran the lesson for more than forty young athletes, pupils of 4th-11th grades. The programme also included a trip to the building of the NOC headquarters, during which schoolchildren learnt about the history of the Olympic Games

and the principles of the modern Olympic movement. For the new academic year, the NOC of Belarus has developed a colourful information graphics with general information about its activity, performances of Belarusians at various Games and data about the Olympic movement.

Moreover, the European Games Ambassador Anastasia Lesik, also told youngsters about the forthcoming big event in October — the 3rd Youth Olympic Games — that will take place in Buenos Aires.

Festival of the week



4th Festival of Georgian Culture — *Tbilisoba* — in Minsk's Upper Town was dedicated to one hundredth anniversary of Georgia's independence

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 16th September. Exhibition of Israel Basov's works: *Wisdom Has Built Her House* Until 23rd September. Alexander Konovalov: *Marginalia, or the Sidenotes* Until 30th December. *Universe of Yazep Drozdovich*

ZAIR AZGUR ART GALLERY

8 Zair Azgur Street
Until 6th October. *Body Archive*

PRESIDENTIAL LIBRARY

11 Sovetskaya Street
Until 30th November. *Belarusian Lawyers of 19th Century*

MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 25th September. *Apple Paradise*

YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 29th September. *Krivichi Mecca*

CENTRE OF SWEDISH RESEARCH

11a Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 30th September. *Swedish Language in Belarus* photo exhibition

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezaoisimosti Avenue
Until 15th September. *ABCs from Around the Globe* Until 1st October. *Coloured Days* Until 31st October. Project: *Small Homeland — Novel of Times* Until 31st January. Maly Trostenets: exhibition-chronicles of large-scale horror

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 9th September. *Small Homeland. Places Dear to Heart*

NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 14th October. *Life with Cold Blood* Until 14th October. *Insects and More*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 9th September. *Minsk: Real and Virtual* Until 18th September. *Colours of Cultural Diplomacy*

LEONID SHCHEMELEV ART GALLERY

10 Revolyutsionnaya Street
Until 16th September. *Minsk. Photo.*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
09 and 10.09. *Salome* 11.09. *Petrushka*. *Scheherazade* 12.09. *Tosca* 13.09. *Corsair*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Strete
06.09. *How to Become Rich* 07.09. *A Lady for a Day* 08.09. *Taming of the Shrew* 09.09. *Zoika's Flat* 11.09. *Red Hot Mamas* 12 and 13.09. *Passing Goose*

EVENTS

BELARUSIAN STATE PHILHARMONICS

50 Nezavisimosti Avenue
06.09. *Con Anima* piano duet: Yulia Arkhangel'skaya and Alexander Polyakov 11.09. *Spanish Colours: Flamenco Theatre and Jazz-Band* visit Camerata

RE:PUBLIC

62 Pritytsky Street
09.09. *Makulatura*

UPPER TOWN

23A Svobody Square
08.09. *Peshekhodka* 09.09. *Jazz for Children: Along Countries and Continents*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
06.09. #13 07.09. *Night of A. Chekhov's Miniatures* 08.09. *Robbery at Midnight* 10.09. *Two Arrows* 11.09. *Nobody Ever Said Life Would be Easy* 12.09. *Pygmalion* 13.09. *Abduction of Yelena*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
07.09. *Passing Nature* 08.09. *Rich Brides* 09.09. *Double Double* 11.09. *Love Lesson. Kosciuszko's Story* 12.09. *The Fool* 13.09. *Caught by Love*

12.09. *Guitar Breathe* 13.09. *Everything Which Happened: Natalia Gaida*

BACK DRAFT

18 Oktyabrskaya Street
08.09. *An Agency band in concert* 13.09. *Concert of young Belarusian bands*

JAMAICA

10 Olshevsky Street
09.09. *Georgy Koldun*

ZHURAVLI

2 Glebki Street
12.09. *Golden Collection: Dmitry Zhishevich*