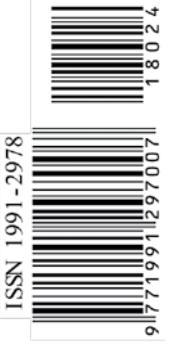


INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times



Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 24 (742) ● THURSDAY, JUNE 28, 2018 ● WWW.SB.BY



Renewed Dinamo Stadium in Minsk today

Arena ready to host bright spectacles, today and in the future

One year before 2nd European Games launches, revamped Dinamo Stadium opens in Minsk, with President taking part in solemn ceremony

EU as neighbour and partner

By Alexey Fedosov

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, meets European Commissioner for European Neighbourhood Policy and Enlargement Negotiations, Johannes Hahn, at Palace of Independence

Mr. Hahn's visit was part of the *Eastern Partnership* countries' 10th session of informal ministerial talks by foreign ministers and ministers for digital technology. It was his second visit to Minsk and his second meeting with the Belarusian Head of State.

Relations between Belarus and the European Union are improving, with top-level contacts resumed, including those with EU agencies and member states.

Under the auspices of the EU, in 2016, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development adopted a four-year strategy on Belarus, until 2019. The EBRD is collaborating with the Belarusian public sector (having only previously financed private business projects). In August 2017, a framework agreement came into force between Belarus and the European Investment Bank. Moreo-



In recent years, we've developed relationships built on trust. This is the only way to achieve anything specific, for public benefit. My vision rests on creating a belt of prosperity within the framework of the European Union and the European partnership."

ver, Belarus and the EU have been discussing the formalisation of partnership priorities, defining goals until 2020, across four key areas: public administration; economic and market opportunities; transport; energy efficiency and climate change. Interpersonal contacts have also been under focus, with financial aid for Belarus until 2020 conditional to the signing of this document.

Belarus and the EU are also discussing the easing of visa regulations and those for readmission.

During the meeting in Minsk, Mr. Lukashenko praised Mr. Hahn, stating that he has helped normalise Belarus-EU relations. In particular, he thanked the European Commissioner for 'participation in the political and economic

development of Belarus'.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised the EU's position as Belarus' closest neighbour. "Neighbours are given by God. Therefore, we should be on friendly terms and promote partnerships. We took our time, not promising anything we couldn't deliver. You watched us closely, while we felt out the European Union, too. Taking into consideration ongoing transformations in Belarus and in the EU, we've come to the conclusion that we should stop looking askance at each other, watching over the fence. We've decided to make advances and restore friendly partnerships."

Speaking about Belarus-EU agreements, Mr. Lukashenko noted that trade-economic rela-

tions are at their core. "Topics like democracy, freedom of speech, political prisoners, and abolition of capital punishment are still on the agenda; we aren't taking them off the table and we make no bones about it. However, the focus should be on trade-economic and financial relations," the Head of State is convinced. "Seeing these in our relations with the EU will encourage us to embark on transformations and to reform our political system. Otherwise, we risk following the path of the Soviet Union, disregarding economic issues and public opinion, breaking the political system. They destroyed the country and left it bankrupt, from which we must learn."

The Head of State touched

upon Belarus' participation in the *Eastern Partnership*, which he views as a good example of Belarus' commitment to economic interaction with the EU. "We strictly adhere to *Eastern Partnership* agreements," noted Mr. Lukashenko. He explained why Belarus has been developing co-operation in this initiative, saying, "We offer specific regional economic projects benefiting the European Union, Belarus and our shared eastern neighbours."

In recent years, Belarus and the EU have managed to build trustworthy relations, noted Mr. Hahn, meeting President Lukashenko. "I agree with you that, in recent years, we've developed relationships built on trust. This is the only way to achieve anything specific, for public benefit. My vision rests on creating a belt of prosperity within the framework of the European Union and the European partnership. This will serve as the best guarantee for our security and stability."

Mr. Hahn underlined that improving the economic situation is essential, saying, "Economic growth brings social advancement and national development."

Ready for bright spectacles, today and in the future

By Maxim Osipov

President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, opens Minsk's Dynamo Stadium, following reconstruction

The legendary stadium once hosted track-and-field events between the USSR and the USA, as well as some games of the 1980 Summer Olympics. It was the first arena in Belarus to host Champions League matches and celebrated its 80th anniversary by being totally modernised.

Last Thursday evening, the crowded stadium was filled with lights, welcoming huge crowds for its relaunch, with the solemn opening attended by the President of Belarus. The International Association of Athletics Federations (IAAF) and the Union of European Football Associations (UEFA) have given the facility the highest praise.

Its advantages are too many to mention. Certainly, it's a 21st century facility, able to cater to the largest events. The huge, multi-functional facility is undoubtedly impressive. In his speech, Mr. Lukashenko gave warm thanks to those who built the stadium, saying, "Relying on traditions and experience, we're launching this great cultural and sports venue. Only Belarusian



During stadium solemn opening

specialists were employed in the restoration and construction, using cutting-edge technologies. They preserved the historical foundations while making the stadium up-to-date and high-tech. Now, we can proudly invite famous athletes from all over the world to come here."

Stroytrest #1 JSC — one of the most famous and powerful construction organisations in

Belarus — was involved in the reconstruction of the stadium. Its portfolio includes several landmark sites, including the Palace of the Republic, the Museum of Great Patriotic War History, Minsk Town Hall, the Belarusian State Philharmonic, and Minsk Hotel.

The Director General of Stroytrest #1, Vladimir Bublik, passed the President a symbolic

cross from Dynamo Stadium. To applause, Mr. Lukashenko gave the 'key' to members of the national track-and-field team and to our national footballers, stating, "The stadium will become home to true fans of sport, hosting the largest and most interesting events."

He added, "In 2019, the stadium will become the heart of the 2nd European Games: a magnificent event for Belarus and the entire international community. The opening ceremony will take place at Diamo Stadium, as will field-and-track competitions." To mark the countdown, he switched on an LED electronic board which re-

ords the passing of time until the Games begin.

The opening ceremony ended with a colourful musical and sporting performance and a track-and-field relay race by young pupils of Belarus' sporting schools. The Head of the International Association of Athletics Federations, Sebastian Coe, joined 2004 Olympic champion, Yulia Nesterenko, in celebrating the opening. The evening also included a football match between the national team of clubs of Belarusian championship and the united team of Minsk Dinamo and Brest Dinamo, followed by fireworks.

WORD-FOR-WORD

President **ALEXANDER LUKASHENKO:**

Sports and the Olympic movement serve a noble cause, uniting countries and nations, bolstering the will and character of athletes, and inspiring dreams among the younger generation. May this renovated stadium become a symbol of these beautiful ideals! Our nation expects athletes to produce great accomplishments. The nation has the right to expect them. I want athletes to be worthy of this great nation!

WORD-FOR-WORD

The Head of the International Association of Athletics Federations, **SEBASTIAN COE:**

Preparing for this ceremony, I read a great deal about the rich history of this stadium. I understand that sport lies in the heart of this city. I'd like to thank Minsk for this concept and the authorities for their decision to preserve the stadium, no matter what. I'd also like to thank President Alexander Lukashenko for his lifelong support of sport. Truly, there's nothing better than the roar of fans over the city!

Meetings and conversation useful in all relations

By Vasily Kharitonov

Minsk hosted the session of the Supreme State Council of the Union State, in a business-like format, with a full quorum of the Supreme State Council. Alexander Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin agreed, even before the presidential elections in Russia, that the event would take place in the Belarusian capital. The agenda was developed in advance, being verified during preliminary working meetings attended by the State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, and heads of state. The whole political leadership of our two states — presidents, heads of governments and speakers of our two countries' parliaments — met to give final consideration to particular issues.

Work began with a tête-à-tête between presidents Lukashenko and Putin, lasting around two hours, behind closed doors. Further work was held in the extended format, according to schedule, with no unsettled issues at top level.

Starting the session of the Supreme State Council, Mr. Lukashenko stated that last year's fall in mutual trade turnover has been overcome, with some growth now seen. "We must cement positive trends and ensure that trade between our two countries keeps growing, including by means of removing mutual barriers and exemptions, and creating an equal, competitive environment," Mr. Lukashenko underlined.

The President of Belarus warned his colleagues against shifting from one integration format to another, seeing no sense in viewing Union State problems from the point of view of the Eurasian Economic Union. He noted, "If any problems obstruct our relations, we should deal with them here and now. In finding consensus, there's no benefit in discussing issues with uninvolved countries."

Regarding the Union State Standing Commission, he emphasised, "We must ensure systematic and regular co-operation of profile ministries and departments of Belarus and Russia." Mr. Lukashenko, as the Chairman of the Supreme State Council, asked the State Secretary of the Union State 'to maximise analysis of key issues', looking at the 'balance of interests' for issues discussed by the Standing Commission.

Mr. Lukashenko praised foreign political co-operation by our two states, commenting that it is of systematic and multidimensional character.

"Belarus and Russia share similar views on key problems facing the modern world, and support each other via international organisations. The Belarusian and Russian Ministries of Foreign Affairs interact in a productive manner, implementing authorised programmes," underlined the Belarusian Head of State.

Protecting the interests of citizens of both countries is a special part of efforts to build and enhance the Union State of Belarus and Russia. The President of Belarus views this topic as especially important, noting that a proper level of freedoms and rights has already been ensured. He believes that the Union State of Belarus and Russia 'has advanced farther than any other integration project'.

Nevertheless, some issues remain, such as the need to tackle issues of crossing the Belarusian-Russian administrative border: a problem to be solved in the near future. Interregional ties are essential to the success of the integration project, with over eighty



Russia and Belarus to strengthen strategic partnership and further reinforce integration, following session of Union State Supreme State Council

Russian Federation regions maintaining trade-economic relations with Belarus.

The forum bringing together the regions of our two countries has been held regularly since 2014, with the next, fifth, forum hosted by Mogilev in October 2018. Mr. Lukashenko invited Mr. Putin to take part, as is traditional, and the Russian President gave his assent.

The general spirit of co-operation is precisely expressed by the President of Belarus, saying, "Life never stands still, so we should keep moving forward. Only through joint efforts we can overcome the challenges dictated by the international situation. This is the approach which corresponds to the principals of our integration project."

Summing up the results of the session, Mr. Lukashenko stated that the Union State is a stable platform for strengthening Belarusian-Russian relations, while the major goal remains unchanged: accelerated rates of socio-economic development for our two states and improved quality of life for citizens.

The President of Belarus is convinced that, if disputes appear, they can be solved in a spirit of mutual understanding and compromise. He stressed, "This was again confirmed during my meeting with Vladimir Putin and, directly, during the session of the Supreme State Council. We plan to continue constructive dialogue across all areas of co-operation. The potential of the Union State

will be used for sustainable development of our countries and to enhance the level of our nations' well-being."

Vladimir Putin commented that the bilateral meeting was 'very useful, substantial and traditionally friendly and efficient'. He was especially pleased by the attention given to economic collaboration, asserting, "As part of the Union State, we're seeing good results: primarily, dynamic growth in mutual trade and investments. In 2017, Russian-Belarusian trade turnover increased by 23.5 percent, to reach \$32.4 billion. Mutual supplies rose across the whole range: from agrarian produce to goods with high value added. The volume of Russian investments into the Belarusian economy exceeds \$3.9 billion while Belarusian enterprises have invested around \$620 million into Russia."

He added, "Russia and Belarus plan to conduct an agreed macro-economic policy, and monetary-credit, currency and pricing policy. Power engineering remains a reliable area of co-operation. Russia is providing Belarus with energy resources, helping the national programme of modernising the gas and transport system, and helping construct the Belarusian nuclear power station, which will satisfy the growing electricity needs of the Republic."

Mr. Putin spoke about plans to invest around \$2.5 billion by the end of 2020 to renew the Belarusian section of the Yamal-Europe gas pipeline, and more than \$1

billion into the construction of additional underground gas storage. The Russian President explained that other routes of export for Russian hydrocarbons (particularly, gas into Europe) are in unsatisfactory condition, making the Belarusian route 'of great importance'.

The Supreme State Council session saw the approval of priority tasks for continuing development of the Union State of Belarus and Russia, through until 2022. In particular, joint measures are being elaborated to solve existing bilateral problems, as announced at the session by the State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota. He commented, "This document envisages continued efforts to remove barriers and restrictions to mutual trade, implementing our agreed industrial policy, while developing the agro-industrial complex, forming a single fuel and energy complex, and creating a single migration space."

Citizens of the Union State have been keen to see reduced roaming fees for mobile phone calls between Russian operators and those from Belarus. Mr. Rapota emphasised that the communications ministries are discussing the matter with mobile operators in Belarus and Russia but that a solution is yet to be found. He promised that discussion will continue.

Union State co-operation in the agrarian sphere is gaining in efficiency, with the State Secretary of the Union State praising the draft concept to expand production of import-substitution goods, by the Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus and the Agriculture Ministry of Russia. This is being undertaken as part of a project entitled *The Formation of a Competitive Basis for Genetic Resources in the System of Subjects of Livestock Breeding of the Union State*. He added, "We're integrating Belarusian and Russian information systems, to prevent production and circulation of counterfeit food goods within the Union State." He noted that our 'roadmap' of co-operation, between the Agriculture and Food Ministry of Belarus and the Agriculture Ministry of Russia, has been approved, 'aiming to eliminate mutual restrictive measures on supplies of livestock products', although regulations stipulated in this document are yet to be realised.

The Supreme State Council has approved a programme of agreed actions in the sphere of foreign policy for 2018-2019, submitted by the Ministries of Foreign Affairs of Belarus and Russia. It focuses on continuity and the deepening of bilateral interaction with the CIS and CSTO. Co-operation is envisaged in developing coherent positions within the UN, the OSCE and other international organisations, to ensure regional and European security. It will increase the role of Belarus and Russia in combating new challenges and threats, including international terrorism, extremism and illegal migration.

The programme defines interaction in strengthening and developing the Union State, as a vital area of co-operation, with special attention given to the provision of diplomatic support of EAEU activities. The aim is to increase its international authority, fostering interaction, to help align Union State development and the Chinese *Belt and Road* project.

The programme enables our two countries to engage in active dialogue on vital issues of international relations, supporting the co-ordination of efforts in foreign policy.

Digital revolution in action

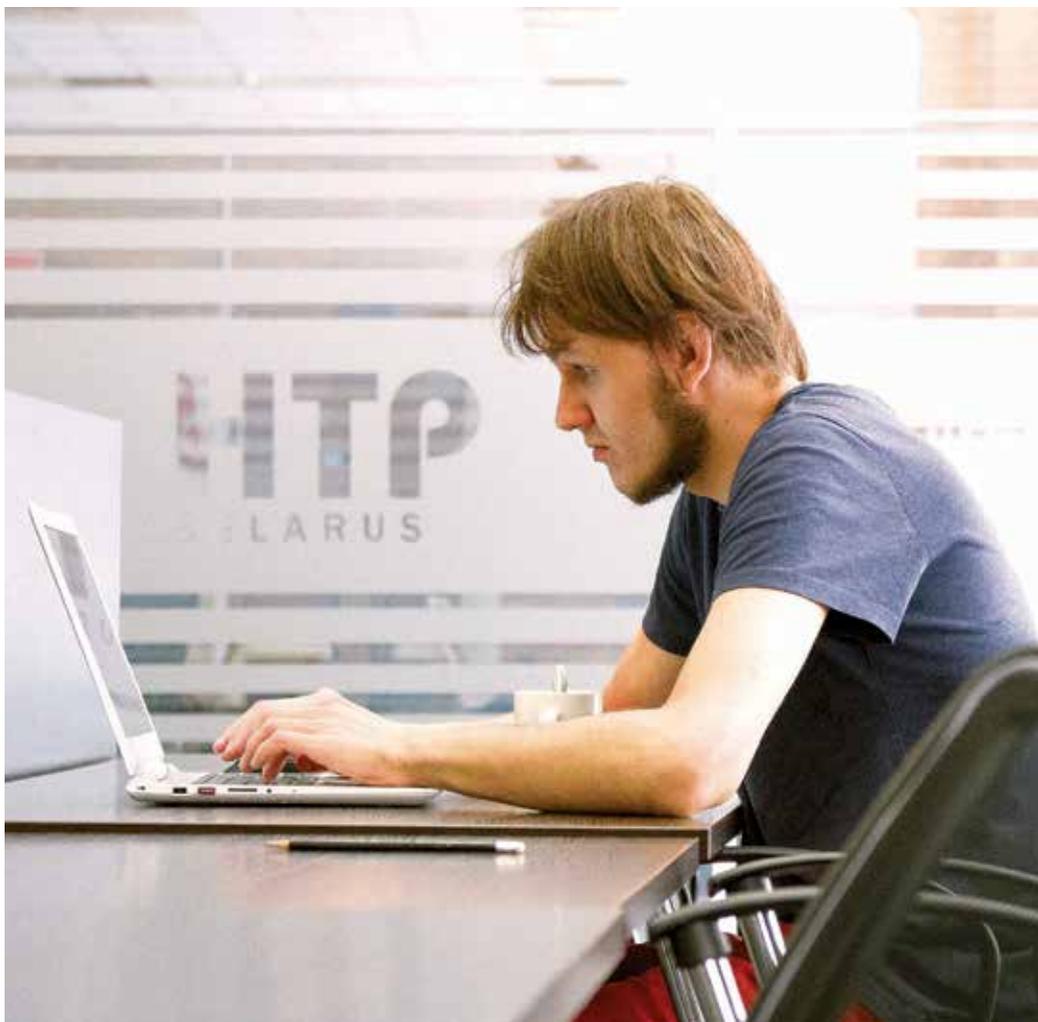
Decree No. 8 ‘On the Development of Digital Economy’ has eventually come into force but, prior to its adoption, the document was called evolutionary. Unprecedented conditions for the IT business are being created in the country and this promises serious competitive advantages for the whole economy. Alexander Kurbatsky — a developer of the decree and the Chairman of the High-Tech Park’s Expert Council — explains.

By Yevgeny Kononov

List of activities of HTP residents to be expanded

“The decree enables HTP residents not only to develop software, but also to create their own high-tech products,” said Mr. Kurbatsky. “The list of new activities includes, for example, unmanned con-

trol systems, aviation and space technologies, e-sports, crypto-currency exchanges and more. Importantly, in the product model of the business (which the decree supports), several specialists of different specialisations account for a single programmer: business analysts, marketing specialists, translators, designers. In



HTP residents acquire new opportunities

this way, additional jobs are created.”

Existing benefits in HTP to be extended

The decree has extended the special tax-legal regime of the HTP until January 1st, 2049. In particular, this refers to a reduced (up to nine percent) rate of the income tax, exemption from profit tax and VAT. In addition, visas for foreign citizens hired by HTP residents, as well as for the founders of these residents, have been cancelled. Permission to recruit labour from abroad is also not required.

Crypto-currencies, ISO and smart contracts will become legal

Belarus is becoming the first country in the world with a comprehensive legal regulation of businesses based on blockbuster technology. According to Mr. Kurbatsky, crypto-exchanges will be able to work in HTP, while citizens and legal entities will have an opportunity to mine, buy, give

and exchange the crypto-currency. Moreover, until 2023, activities related to the creation, acquisition and alienation of tokens are not taxed.

In addition, Belarus is legalising smart contracts at national level. At the heart of the smart contract is the programme code which is created and used on the basis of blocking technologies. In this case, the functions of control over the performance of contracts are taken over by the computer system, practically excluding the subjective human factor.

Work of IT companies significantly simplified

For example, foreign economic transactions can be concluded electronically using the Internet. The permission procedure for opening accounts in non-resident banks is cancelled. In addition, it will become possible to formalise primary accounting documents using global approaches, including unilaterally (without having to obtain a signature from the counter-

part when it is technically impossible).

In general, the de-bureaucratisation of the IT business is an excellent signal not only for large investors but also for small companies and youth start-ups. It is important that entrepreneurs concentrate on their product and not be distracted by bureaucratic delays.

Increasing IT staff

The HTP residents are allowed to engage in educational activities in the field of information and communication technologies. “It is planned to develop professional-qualification standards on the basis of the HTP Administration. Jointly with the Park’s residents, modern training programmes for the training and professional development of IT specialists will be prepared on their basis.

In addition, residents of the HTP can now enjoy simplified provisions for sponsorship to educational institutions — including grants for students and lecturers.

Arsenal of co-operation is likely to expand

Belarusian-Chinese applied science seminar held at Gomel’s State University

By Oleg Bogomazov

Researchers from Gomel, as well as specialists from three Chinese universities — the Nanjing University of Science and Technology, the Jiangnan University (the city of Wuxi), and the Taiyuan University of Technology — presented the results of their scientific work at the forum. The participants of the seminar analysed proposals on commercialising R&D results and their use by Bela-

rusian and Chinese industrial companies. Moreover, specialists also determined topical and most promising avenues for advancing interaction in science.

The scientific programme of the seminar includes reports on fundamental and applied aspects of modern materials sciences, the physical and chemical qualities of nano- and metamaterials, researches on the structure and qualities of nanocomposite coatings, and technologies for working vari-



Practical aspect of the seminar

ous materials.

“Belarusian and Chinese scientists have many areas for collaboration. Researches in

the area of physics and chemistry and the creation of new materials represent serious scientific potential. Belarusian-

Chinese labs are already working in these fields,” underlined the Rector of Gomel’s State University, Sergey Khakhomov. He reminded the press that a Belarusian-Chinese scientific lab on vacuum and plasma technologies was opened at the Nanjing University of Science and Technology in 2013. A similar joint lab had been set up at the Gomel State University the year before. Scientists from Gomel and their Chinese colleagues have already come up with a number of results, which are being converted into commercial products. This includes vacuum technology for coating medical products with antibacterial film.

Foreign business has optimistic prospects

Annual poll by Representation of the German Economy, of foreign companies working in Belarus, uncovers enterprises' own assessments, rather than relying on macroeconomic figures and official statistics

By Vladimir Khromov

This year's survey polled around sixty foreign (primarily German) companies doing business in Belarus. More than 90 percent of participants belong to small and medium-sized businesses, employing fewer than three hundred people. Export supplies account for over 60 percent of enterprises' income in a third of cases, while 16 percent of the surveyed companies rely exclusively on selling beyond Belarus.

Regarding the economic situation, Belarus appears to be enjoying economic revival, with almost 90 percent of respondents giving a positive assessment and noting their belief in an improving climate.

Enterprises' expectations for 2018 are also optimistic, with almost 90 percent of respondents convinced that Belarus' economic growth will either remain steady or will rise. There were more optimists, for the first time, with their number exceeding pessimists 2.5-fold.

Most German companies (94 percent) hope for improved economic development, while 44.8 percent are optimistic, against just 5.9 percent being pessimistic (7.5-fold more).

Enterprises' own assessment of their current economic state is even more optimistic, with 96.3 percent of respondents calling this positive or satisfactory. Only 3.7 percent were displeased: the



At foreign venture Salling Plast Production Orsha

lowest figure recorded in recent years.

Regarding prospects, pessimism continues to fall, with only about 10 percent of re-

spondents expecting business conditions to decline, while optimists has risen to 38.2 percent (matching the pre-crisis level). Nine out of ten

companies hope to see their financial situation improve or remain steady in 2018. Almost 90 percent of German companies note that their turnover in Euros increased or remained steady in 2017 (compared to the previous year). Only one in ten respondents reported a fall in turnover.

Half of all companies plan to expand their number of employees, while those intending to reduce their personnel has fallen from 13.8 percent (last year) to 9 percent.

Most companies plan to increase expenditure on salaries in 2018 (87 percent), with two thirds planning an increase of up to 10 percent. The others plan rises of between 10 and 30 percent.

Gross profit is expected to grow in almost 60 percent of enterprises, while 14 percent of respondents expect this figure to fall. However, 86 percent of German companies expect the figure to either remain steady or rise somewhat.

In assessing the business climate in the Republic of Belarus, political stability claimed first place in importance, followed by infrastructure and personnel training. Sadly, payment discipline and quality of financial services continue to be named as challenges, due to an insufficiently developed financial market. Growth of receivables and payables of enterprises and the share of problematic assets in the aggregate credit portfolio of the country's banking sector are also named as problems.

Opportunity to place bonds on China's financial market

By Denis Kopylov

Belarus' Finance Ministry and Chinese Rating Agency — China Chengxin International Credit Rating (CCXI) — sign agreement on assigning Belarus a credit rating

The document was signed during a meeting between Belarus' Finance Minister Vladimir Amarin and CCXI Chairman Yan Yan. In line with the agreement, CCXI will conduct the assessment of Belarus and assign and maintain the credit rating according to the Chinese national rating scale. With the signing of the document, Belarus will be able to float its bonds on the financial market of China.



Agreement signed

During the meeting, the parties shared their experience in assigning international ratings, discussed promising areas for co-operation, and the possibility of assigning credit ratings to Belarusian residents.

Vladimir Amarin also held talks with the Deputy Chairman of the People's Bank of China, Pan Gongsheng. The two sides agreed on the joint action algorithm to float Belarus' state securities in the Chinese market. The Belarusian side was granted corresponding permission from the People's Bank.

Plans being implemented

By Vladimir Velikhov

Eastern Partnership countries to sign agreement on harmonising roaming tariffs in 2020

The agreement on roaming tariffs has been reached during another round of the *Eastern Partnership* informal ministerial meeting.

"We'll create our roadmap for the *Eastern Partnership* Initiative by the end of the year, signing an agreement on harmonising roaming rates in our countries by late 2020," emphasises Belarus' Minister of Communications and Informatisation, Sergey Popkov.



He underlines that the European Union has taken ten years to resolve the problem. "We're not saying it will happen tomorrow, or that everything will be cheaper right away. We're saying that roaming rates will gradually reduce, falling to match the level

of domestic rates where possible."

It's necessary to strike a balance between the interests of mobile carriers, who want to invest in the development of new technologies, and the interests of regular citizens, believes Mr. Popkov.

Alexander Zhivotovsky, Chairman of the National Commission for the State Regulation of Communications and Informatisation of Ukraine, explains that *Eastern Partnership* Initiative countries will be keen to sign a similar agreement with the European Union.

Business-like attitude

By Oleg Bogomazov

Belarusian-Swiss Trade Committee relaunches after three-year break

Bern hosted the tenth session of the Committee (the last having taken place in Minsk in 2015). The Belarusian delegation was led by Deputy Foreign Minister Yevgeny Shestakov, while the Swiss delegation was headed by Erwin Bollinger, the Head of the Bilateral Economic Relations Division of the State Secretariat for Economic Affairs (SECO) and a delegate of the Federal Council for Trade Agreements.

The meeting enabled exchange of information on national economic development,

featuring discussion of Belarus-Switzerland co-operation in finance and insurance, science and technology, air transportation, the banking industry and tourism. Delegates tackled ideas on how to improve the effectiveness of bilateral co-operation in trade, as well as in the sphere of credit and investment.

Brest free economic zone (FEZ) signed a memorandum of co-operation with the Joint Chamber of Commerce Switzerland-CIS/Georgia (JCC) and a memorandum of co-operation is planned between the Belarusian Sports and Tourism Ministry and the Swiss National Tourism Marketing Agency, Switzerland Tourism.



At Minsk National Airport

Bilateral ties are to reinforce across all areas

By Alexey Fedosov

Chairman of the Council of the Republic, Mikhail Myasnikov, suggested opening direct air flights between the two countries during the meeting with the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of India to Belarus, Sangeeta Bahadur

According to Mr. Myasnikov, direct air services could contribute to more vigorous business co-operation between Belarus and India. "It would be a good incentive for expanding our interaction when coupled with visa measures," said Mr. Myasnikov. He remarked that not only the Belarusian air carrier, but also Indian air carriers could enable direct air service.

The meeting touched upon the trade-economic partnership with India, including shipments of Belarusian mining machines and electric buses. The two sides discussed opportunities for collaboration in the oil and textile industries. Close attention was paid to co-operation in pharmaceuticals. Mr. Myasnikov believes that the multimodal logistics hub in Orsha District's Bolbasovo could become the largest Belarusian-Indian project. It could act as a gateway to the Eurasian Economic Union for the Indian private sector. The site can also be used for trading comfortably with Western Europe.

Ways to improve visa formalities for Indian businessmen were also considered during the meeting. "We will work

towards enabling comfortable conditions for Indian business," stressed the Chairman of the Council of the Republic. In turn, the Ambassador remarked that the logistics hub near Orsha is of great interest to the Indian private sector, particularly taking into account the preferences that investors will be offered there.

Mikhail Myasnikov and Sangeeta Bahadur discussed the results of the recent visit of the Indian parliament delegation to Minsk. The delegation was led by Sumitra Mahajan, Speaker of the Lok Sabha, the lower chamber of the Indian Parliament. The two sides expressed their confidence that the visit would contribute to stronger Belarusian-Indian co-operation across all areas.

Vivid interest in interaction

Supreme Court keen to receive expert assistance from Europe Council on the issues of judicial reforms. This information is placed on the court's website after the meeting between First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court, Valery Kalinkovich, and Council of Europe delegation.

Mr. Kalinkovich confirmed interest in deepening collaboration with international organisations on the issues, dealing with justice and judicial administration. "The Supreme Court remains interested in co-operation with the Council of Europe, including in the project, entitled *Providing Assistance in Implementing Court Reform in Belarus*, a part of the joint programme of the Council of

Europe and the European Union — *Partnership for the Sake of Qualitative Management*," he noted.

According to the First Deputy Chairman of the Supreme Court, co-operation on studying the experience in the sphere of judicial administration, personnel management and legal information is of particular interest, alongside expert aid during the development of a concept of a single procedural code and introduction of a 'criminal infraction' notion into the criminal law.

The Council of Europe representatives accentuated attention on the project's major mission which envisages constructive mutual collaboration and experience sharing between the participating states.

Years of our Native Land

By Yekaterina Sikorskaya

2018-2020 are to be Years of our Native Land, by Presidential decree

The document is designed to stimulate socio-economic development across the regions, while encouraging active citizenship, to preserve Belarus' historical, cultural and spiritual legacy.

The Council of Ministers has been instructed to meet with regional administrations and with Minsk City Executive Committee, to plan a national action programme until 2020. This will coordinate the work of government agencies, and other organisations, in fulfilling the programme.

During a national clean-up day, in April 2018, President Lu-

kashenko spoke about the possibility of extending the Year of our Native Land. "This [declaring the Year of our Native Land] was my idea. There were a lot of proposals. I realised that drawing attention to the matter has been worthwhile. We're extending beyond one year, to three, because it's tricky to build anything within a single year. More time is needed to change attitudes, and for people to become accustomed, making up their minds, and sketching out plans. Some may need to earn money in order to invest in their home towns," noted the Head of State. "I suggested declaring 2018 as the Year of Native Land and extending it, because it's only the beginning."

Timely help is always crucial

World Blood Donor Day is celebrated in June all over the globe

Over the past decade, catastrophes have claimed the lives of more than one million people. Each year, they affect more than 250 million people worldwide: earthquakes, floods and hurricanes. These bring significant emergency medical aid needs, while healthcare infrastructure is often destroyed. Man-made disasters, road traffic incidents and military conflicts also create such needs.

Blood transfusion is an indispensable component in providing emergency medical aid, with the need for blood transfusion growing. However, its fulfilment is becoming more complex. It's no easy task to create sufficient reserves of donor blood; well-organised services are essential, including a population of voluntarily

donors, willing to give blood free of charge, year-round.

In emergency situations, we tend to ask how we can help. World Blood Donor Day reminds us of the opportunity to do so. Marked in various countries around the world, it's a time to thank donors and raise awareness of the necessity of regular donorship: to ensure quality, security and availability.

Blood transfusion helps save millions of lives and prolongs life under dangerous conditions. Blood services are a key component of an efficient healthcare system, requiring regular, voluntary and free blood donorship. However, many countries continue to lack supplies of qualitative, safe blood. Naturally, blood donors are preferred from 'low risk' groups.

Sixty-two countries, in



Blood donorship saves lives

2011, only kept national blood stocks from voluntary and free blood donations. In forty countries, under 25 percent of national blood reserves were received from voluntary donors, given free of charge. The World Health Organisation has a goal of all countries receiving voluntary, free donorship by 2020. Its recommendation is significant

for Belarus, where only 25 percent of those donating blood do so freely, although numbers are growing.

Donations of blood can be given by citizens of the Republic of Belarus, as well as by foreign citizens and those without citizenship, permanently living in our country. Donors must be aged between 18 and 60, being

legally capable and not suffering from illness or conditions making blood donation inadvisable. In exceptional cases (determined by the Health Ministry of the Republic of Belarus), a medical consultation commission of the blood transfusion organisation may permit those aged over sixty years to give blood.

Annually around 169,000 patients receive donor blood in Belarus. Moreover, we have 19,500 honorary donors, of whom we are proud.

Blood donation in Belarus should be without payment by 2020, in line with the WHO initiative, as is being successfully realised in many countries. Belarus wholeheartedly supports the motion.

By Tatiana Zhukova, doctor of highest category, Candidate of Medical Sciences

Zhodino is impossible to miss

This town in the Minsk Region is home to the legendary Belarusian Automobile Works, which has turned a small village into a large industrial and cultural centre within fifty years



By Anna Kurak

Eating BelAZ

The factory is the major landmark in the town, visited by tourists from all over the globe. The gigantic yellow heavy-duty dumper trucks are easily recognisable and operate worldwide: extracting diamonds, coal and other mineral resources in Africa, Siberia, Australia and South Africa. The ground shakes with the roar of engines from these gigantic vehicles and even Nikolay Valuev [a former world champion boxer who stands 210.8cm

tall] doesn't look so big against them. One of the first heavy-duty dump trucks, produced in Zhodino, stands on a plinth near the entrance. It's load capacity was 25 tonnes and it was manufactured sixty years ago.

The factory workshops also assemble 'small' vehicles with a load capacity of 30 tonnes, as well as Guinness Book record breakers, able to carry 450 (!) tonnes of rock. However, the most important thing for tourists is that all those who wish can be in the driver's seat of these monsters and also take a driving test

Playing billiards with a 'Monarch'

'The Grey Duke', 'Marquis', 'Baron' and 'Richard' — these are not the names of wine brands but of exclusive billiard tables which have been produced in the town for more than two decades. The enterprise's workshops are real artistic studios, while separate exhibits are delicate works of art, showing carving, decorative ironwork and leather embossing. In a



word, luxury fit for a king. It's no

surprise that masters from Zhodino were entrusted to restore the rare billiard table 'Monarch' which once belonged to the Radziwills. It took two years to restore the precious artefact and the result can now be seen in one of the halls of the castle in Nesvizh.

with the wind in one's hair on the testing facility. There's also a special offer for those in love — a wedding at BelAZ. Moreover, the business boasts a luxurious museum and tourists are offered a taste of BelAZ itself in branded fancy cakes.

named after Boguslav Pole. Almost four centuries ago, Duke Boguslav Pole ordered a water mill to be built here and organised a guesthouse at the same location. The settlement was named Zhodin. Today, a small memorial complex is situated here — a Water Mill with a traditional peasant's hut, a shed and a sweep well.

Feeding super-goats

Not far from Zhodino, unique animals have been bred as part of the Union State programmes at the farm of the Scientific and Practical Centre for Animal Breeding at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. A whole herd of super-goats live here. Milk from Zhodino goats is unusual, being enriched with lactoferrin — a protein which is present only in women's breast

milk. Products and medicines of the new generation are being developed based on it, able to enhance immunity and help humanity cope with diseases from intestinal infections to oncology.

The local international star is goat Lak-1. More than a decade ago, it was transplanted with a human gene. The forefather of the unique herd peacefully poses for tourists, eats sweets and isn't afraid of camera flashes.



Walking along the Radziwill field

Zhodino is a young town, but the history of these places is ancient. The first people came to the banks of the River Zhodinka in the 11th century, with traces of their ancient settlements being preserved.

Local residents carefully preserve their history. One of the town's streets is

Keeping silent in the Museum of Mother

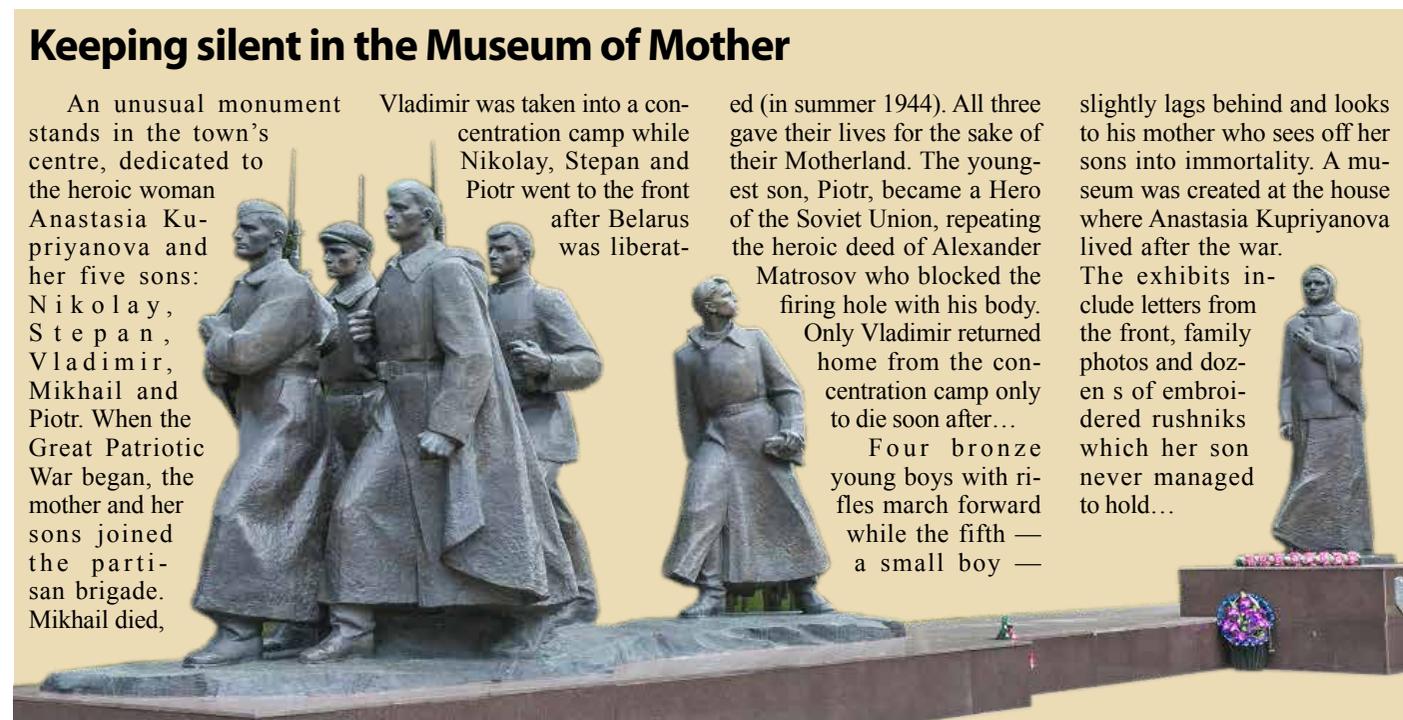
An unusual monument stands in the town's centre, dedicated to the heroic woman Anastasia Kupriyanova and her five sons: Nikolay, Stepan, Vladimir, Mikhail and Piotr. When the Great Patriotic War began, the mother and her sons joined the partisan brigade. Mikhail died,

Vladimir was taken into a concentration camp while Nikolay, Stepan and Piotr went to the front after Belarus was liberat-

ed (in summer 1944). All three gave their lives for the sake of their Motherland. The youngest son, Piotr, became a Hero of the Soviet Union, repeating the heroic deed of Alexander Matrosov who blocked the firing hole with his body. Only Vladimir returned home from the concentration camp only to die soon after...

Four bronze young boys with rifles march forward while the fifth — a small boy —

slightly lags behind and looks to his mother who sees off her sons into immortality. A museum was created at the house where Anastasia Kupriyanova lived after the war. The exhibits include letters from the front, family photos and dozens of embroidered rushniks which her son never managed to hold...



INFORMATION for TOURISTS

660 km

separate Moscow from Zhodino, approximately

7.5 hours by car, while the trip from

Minsk takes just

30 minutes.

It takes nine hours to get from Moscow by train and the tickets cost from **Br80**, while those

travelling from Minsk on a suburban train will spend only

Br1.60.

Accommodation in hotels nearby cost from **Br50** per day.



EU citizens must pay 74 Euros to stay in UK after Brexit

European Union citizens will have to pay up to 74 Euros to stay in the UK as part of its settlement scheme after Brexit, the government announced

Here are the main things to know about the scheme:

EU citizens will be asked to prove their identity, that they have no criminal convictions and that they currently live in the UK;

The application process will open later in the year, no set date has been given yet;

Applications are to be made online or through an Android app and will cost 74 Euros for adults and 37 Euros for children;

The government's 'default' position will be to grant, and not refuse, settled status, said

Britain's Home Secretary Sajid Javid;

Decisions on applications will take 'a matter of days' instead of the current six-month delay for residency permits.

What is 'settled status'?

Under UK plans outlined last year, EU residents who have been continuously and lawfully living in the UK for five years by December 31st, 2020 — when the Brexit transition period expires — will be able to apply to stay indefinitely by getting settled status.

Those who arrive before

the end of the transition period but who have not resided in the UK for the required five-year threshold will be able to apply to stay until they have reached it and apply for settled status.

Settled status or temporary permission to stay will grant EU citizens the same access as they currently do to healthcare, pensions and other benefits in the UK.

Family members who are living with, or join, EU citizens in the UK by December 31st, 2020, will also be able to apply for settled status, usually after

5 years in the UK, while close family members (spouses, civil and unmarried partners, dependent children and grandchildren, and dependent parents and grandparents) will be able to join EU citizens after exit, where the relationship existed on 31 December 2020.

EU 'taking far too long'

Ahead of the settlement scheme announcement, Britain's Home Secretary Sajid Javid criticised EU countries for 'taking far too long' to outline their plans for Britons living on the continent after Brexit.

Erdogan pre-emptively declares victory

Defying critics, including the opposition, who said the ballots were still being counted before the winner can be announced — Erdogan held a press conference to declare outright victory in the presidential race. The incumbent said the electorate had given him a 'strong mandate' to enact executive reforms and fulfil his campaign promises.

"I hope nobody will try to cast a shadow on the results and harm democracy in order to hide their own failure," he added, a nod to the opposition candidates who had so far refused to concede defeat amid claims of electoral fraud.

But despite Erdogan's success, the ruling AKP party failed to secure the 300 seats necessary to maintain their majority in parliament, meaning their alliance with the nationalist MHP, who would bring their tally from 293 to 343, must hold so their power is assured.

EU leaders meet in Brussels to discuss migrant crisis

European Union leaders met in Brussels to try and bridge their divisions over migration

The German Chancellor Angela Merkel asked EU leaders to stop asylum seekers moving freely around the block. It comes amid pressure back home, which is threatening Merkel's ruling coalition.

On arriving at the summit, she said, "One large part of today's discussions will be protecting the outside borders and how we reduce illegal migration to Europe."

Adding that 'there will also be a discussion about secondary migration, how do we treat each other fairly inside Schengen, how can we find a reasonable balance'.

The number of refugees arriving in the EU has dropped in the last three years, but a recent opinion poll showed that migration was the top concern for EU citizens.

Out of the 28 EU member states, 16 are participating in the talks. Many of the leaders of those countries are on the frontline of the crisis, such as Italy and Greece. However, the summit was boycotted by other leaders from Hungary, Poland, Slovakia and the Czech Republic.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

1,000 migrants stranded in the sea as Italian ports 'remain closed'

Italy's hardline interior minister said 1,000 migrants hoping for rescue off the coast of Libya should be picked up by the Libyan coast guard rather than European NGOs, as the standoff in the Mediterranean intensified

Matteo Salvini said the asylum seekers should be sent straight back to Libya, despite humanitarian organisations saying they face rape, torture, beatings and forced labour.

"Another 1,000 migrants in rubber dinghies? It's right that the Libyan authorities intervene, without having NGO boats interrupt and bother them," he wrote on Twitter.

Humanitarian organisations should know, he added, that 'Italian ports are and will remain closed', to NGO vessels that rescue asylum seekers at sea.

A Spanish NGO, Proactiva Open Arms, said Italy had declined its help despite the fact that there were seven boats in need of rescue off the coast of Libya.

Mr. Salvini has declared that Italy will no longer be 'Europe's refugee camp' and wants



the number of migrants rescued at sea and brought to Italy drastically reduced.

The policy was condemned last Sunday by Ada Colao, the Mayor of Barcelona, who last week offered to take in 630 migrants on board an NGO ship, the Aquarius, that was

turned away from Italy.

The aid organisation Medecins Sans Frontieres on Sunday tweeted that the Aquarius was on its way to help, but stressed it would be many hours before it would be able to reach the migrants.

Time when we still were children

Exhibition at National Art Museum presents two sections united under common theme of childhood, as explored via photographic shots, paintings and graphic works



On the Bench by Kharitonenko (1963)

By Veniamin Mikheev

The first section, of portraits and genre compositions, is the work of photographers Nadezhda Degtyareva, Natalia Dorosh, Vadim Kachan, Anatoly Kle-shchuk, Yekaterina Kuzmicheva, Lesya Pchelka and Maxim Shumilin. The second includes works by Belarusian masters from the archives of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus.

When We Were Children explores life from birth to adulthood, with its endless joy, love, hope, trust, grace, playfulness and dreams.

“The idea of childhood is a wonderful and inexhaustible theme in art. Each era has its own canon for child portraiture. For example, in the 18th century, children’s portraits were relatively rare, being for the wealthier class. Aristocratic offspring were burdened with regalia and titles from birth, making them look older — like ‘adult’ children,” explains Anastasia Karneiko, a senior research officer of the Modern Belarusian Art Department of the National Art Museum and curator of the *When We Were Children* exhibition. “Portraits by sentimentalists at the turn of the 18th-19th century, drew children’s faces as static, even when a smile played on their lips. It isn’t always possible to determine whether the child is a boy or a girl, since both sexes wore dresses. In the 19th century, Romantic artists begin to portray the unique nature of childhood. However, despite the smiles and emotional expressions they attempted, their images are somewhat idealised. Many paintings of the second half of the 19th century portrayed the insecurity and frailty of peasant children, and those of the urban poor and intelligentsia. At the turn of the 19th and 20th century, we began to see children portrayed more individually, recognising them as ‘people’.”

Belarusian 20th century masters reflect their personal childhood experiences in their works, demonstrating the childhood of their own youth, filled with its objects, sounds, names and events, as shaped several generations.

“Our thematic exhibition covers from the early 20th century (Yury Pen and Mikhail Filipovich) to the early



At the exhibition entitled, *When We Were Children*

1980s (Nikolay Kazakevich), showing Soviet children from the 1950s and 1970s (Valeriana Zholtok, Anatoly Volkov, Natan Voronov, Yevgeny Kharitonenko and Nikolay Kondratiev),” continues Ms. Karneiko.

An ‘orientation of happiness’ and sense of involvement were characteristic of the generation involved in the war and those who were too young but dreamed of going to the Front. Hence, the world of Soviet childhood was a re-



Sashok. Portrait of the Son by Kudrevich (1960)

flection not only of real life but of ideology: filled with pilots, border guards, pioneers and nurses.

“In the 1950s, a new generation grew up beyond the Great Dream era (1935-1940), with its naive hopes and enthusiasm. These children witnessed the echoes of the war and the fight against everything foreign, as well as the emergence of exciting technical innovations,” adds Ms. Karneiko.

The children’s world of these years revolved around family, school and playing. The concept, of a ‘reserved territory’, included not only the courtyard of the home (Yevgeny Kharitonenko’s *In Our Courtyard*), but the way to school (Valeriana Zholtok’s *To School*), with its adjacent lanes and double-exit courtyards, as well as the schoolyard. It was inhabited by defining figures: friends (Natan Voronov’s *To the Spring. Friends*), the most beautiful girl, the bravest boy, or the order bearer with an accordion...

Socially, teenagers were encouraged into joint activities, with schoolmates and young lovers sharing similar interests and aspirations. In winter, youngsters met at ice rinks; in summer, they moved to the countryside and pioneer camps. An announcer’s voice orchestrated life, calling them for morning exercises (orienting towards training and a healthy way of life from a young age (as seen in Anatoly Volkov’s *Young Athletes* series). We see the metronomic strike against the asphalt as girls skip in Anatoly Volkov’s *Young Minsk Residents* series. Other paintings show the game of ‘gorodki’, and football... Everyday routine had clear outlines, making life steady and comfortable.

The Belarusian Soviet school of painting was based on the best achievements of fine art in the second half of the 19th century and early 20th. Children’s images are touching and ingenuous, permeated with love for life, a sense of happiness and optimism. Continuing the traditions of the realistic school, artists had great mastery over drawing, skilfully reproducing form and colour. They portrayed the enthusiasm and joy of childhood, as we never recapture as adults.





At last year's Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk Festival of Arts

Walking through the bazaar, seeing all the delights

What new is Vitebsk preparing for the festival

By Sergey Golesnik

Each year, the organisers of the *Slavianski Bazaar* try to make the programme as exciting and diverse as possible. The theme of the 27th festival, taking place in Vitebsk from July 7th-18th, will be orchestras, and the musicians of Emir Kusturica and Goran Bregović will perform at one of the events

As far as the number of projects goes, the 27th International Festival of Arts *Slavianski Bazaar* is setting a record. The major arena, the Summer Amphitheatre, will host 19 large concerts. The exhibition programme promises to be no less interesting and extensive. An exhibition of Vologda lace will take place in the art museum which will be also showcasing picturesque canvases and drawings of Ilya Repin's Zdravnevo period, alongside his *Moon Night*, from the collection of the National Art Museum of Belarus.

Another unique exhibition space recently appeared in the festival's capital: The Museum of History of Vitebsk Art College, where early 20th century landmark painters of the Russian avant-garde worked. Andrey Dukhovnikov, Director of the Vitebsk Centre of Contemporary Art, states that during the *Slavianski Bazaar* it will host unmissable exhibitions that.

"With the assistance of the Culture Ministry of Belarus and Belgazprombank, an exhibition of the Vitebsk-born representative of the Paris School



RECORDS OF THE FESTIVAL

The *Slavianski Bazaar* has its own Record Book. For example, a **lengthy marathon of verses**, dedicated to Vitebsk, is recognised among the festival's achievements, in addition to a **6-metre-long** wooden spoon, created by Belarusian and Lithuanian craftsmen. It's expected that in 2018 a new festival record will be established with the help of circus artistes.

and outstanding sculptor, Ossip Zadkine, will be unveiled. His *Return of the Prodigal Son* is to be installed on one of Vitebsk's streets. It will also be exhibited in our museum. Additionally, we'll organise an exhibition of a photo taken by El Lissitzky in 1926 — *Runner in the City*. We also plan to display the originals of the documents that are kept in the Vitebsk Regional Archives connected with Kazimir Malevich and Marc Chagall."

As in previous years, the Summer Amphitheatre will be

the major festival venue. On July 12th, it will host the solemn opening concert. There will be other festival grounds such as the Vitebsk concert hall, which will host a jubilee concert by the composer Igor Luchenok, as well as that of the Gzhel Moscow State Academical Dance Theatre. The stage of the Vitebsk Regional Philharmonic will see a Russian trio of pianists — *Bel Suono* — that will present a unique piano show.

They will be playing the music of Beethoven, Mus-

sorgsky, Strauss and Bach in a modern arrangement. Spectators will also see exciting battles in festival competitions for pop song performers. The geography is constantly expanding. For example, this year, young performers from the UK, Canada and Columbia will take part in the children's competition, while applications to take part in the *Vitebsk-2018* international contest of pop song performers have been received for the first time from Guinea and Egypt.

Parade of premieres

By Lyudmila Minkevich

Belarusfilm making film about Yanka Kupala

Next year, the national film studio will be proudly celebrating its 95th anniversary, with a fantastic inventory of old films, and new premieres to share.

This year has seen the release of *Not a Game*, about a programmer joining the army, and *Game's Rules* — an action-adventure featuring teenagers hunting for Radziwill traces. There's also a joint Russian-Belarusian eight-episode drama, entitled *Holding on Clouds*, about a brigade constructing electric transmission lines. Political thriller *The Black Dog*, based on Mikhail Cherginets' book, is also newly released.

War: Remaining Human is in production, while the film *Life After Life*, by famous Russian director Dmitry Astrakhan, is in post-production.

Belarusfilm is also shooting *Yanka Kupala* — a biographical film based on the series of novels by Lyudmila Rublevskaya, *Ventures of Prantsish Vyrvich*. Shooting begins in August and September.

Belarusfilm is even planning a major cinema festival countrywide, notes Belarusfilm's Director General Vladimir Karachevsky.

Play, harmonica

By Yekaterina Sikorskaya

Holiday in Postavy brings together musicians from six countries

Each year, at the beginning of summer, artistes from across Belarus and further abroad arrive in the musical heart of Belarusian Poozerie, to share traditions and the joy of making music. This year's international festival of folk music, *Cembalos and Harmonicas are Playing*, held in the Postavy District from June 8th-10th, under the slogan 'Duda — a Call of Time', was attended by guests from neighbouring Russia, Latvia, Lithuania and Estonia, and even from India.

The busy programme included contests, concerts, theatrical performances, exhibitions of folk arts and crafts, and other musical, entertainment and cultural events.

Remarkably, festival events covered not only the district centre but also local villages, enabling guests to see life in the provinces and become acquainted with the homelands of famous people born in the Postavy area. There are plenty of them, with a memorial sign being installed in the village of Ogorodniki to honour Belarusian poet, prose writer and linguist Vladimir Dubovka on the eve of the festival. People of Postavy remember their countrymen and honour traditions, breathing new life into the culture of their grandparents.

Dinamo players have won match at Dinamo

Minsk and Brest Dinamo teams defeat national squad of Belarusian clubs (4:3) in first football match at revamped Dinamo Stadium



Moment of game at renewed Dinamo Stadium

By Yegor Vetrov

The newly laid pitch welcomed an exciting match, with Minsk club player Alexander Noiok scoring first, thanks to a pass from Pavel Savitsky. For the first 45 minutes, Dinamo played confidently, leading 3:1 by half-

time. The national squad of clubs equalised once play resumed, leading to a great match in which the final goal was scored by famous Dinamo forward Roman Vasilyuk (taking the score to 4:3).

The match was the first following reconstruction at the

arena, featuring some famous players from the current Dinamo Minsk and Dinamo Brest teams, and from the national squad of Belarusian clubs. The national team was headed by coach Igor Kriushenko, while the united Dinamo team was headed by Sergey Gurenko and Sergey Koval-

chuk. The arena will be hosting UEFA fourth category European Cup matches later this year.

The last time that Minsk's Dinamo Stadium hosted a football match was November 20th, 2012, when BATE faced French Lille, during the Champions League Group Stage.

The sky is the limit

Belarusian track-and-field athlete and record breaker Dmitry Nabokov taking on the world

By Dmitry Komashko

Belarus' high jump record remained unbroken for twenty-five years, until Dmitry Nabokov's 2.36m jump in May. The 22-year-old Belarusian is a leader of the season and is set to claim medals at the forthcoming European Championship.

How do you feel about your 2.36m jump?

I wanted to go for more but my coach forbade any attempt over 2.40m. It was my day and, now, I need to hold onto that feeling, calling upon it when needed. At the Diamond League, I only managed a jump of 2.20m, despite my 2.36m jump in Norway. I failed to even come close, which is hard to explain.

Why?

There were problems with the organisation in Oslo from the very beginning. The Diamond League is serious but we weren't allowed to make trial attempts, because the women were already pole jumping. Everyone set the initial height of 2.15m (except for Mutaz Barshim who set 2.20m). When I took my height, the 3,000m hurdles began and we were asked to wait. Then, it suddenly turned out that we were all jumping at 2.20m, rather than 2.15m, which quickly went to 2.25m. Barshim hardly had time to take off his clothes. I've never seen such a thing before. As a result, I failed my attempts and even injured my leg. Now, I've missed the starts and am undergoing treatment, to be fit for the event at Dinamo Stadium.

Is it hard to keep concentration?

Usually, it's difficult to throw me off my stride. If I jump well from the very be-



Dmitry Nabokov already flying with world stars

ginning, I can't be distracted from anything else. However, if something aches, my jump may fail. It doesn't matter where I perform: at home or abroad. Only sponsors care about that. If I do well abroad then I'm usually offered higher-paid contracts for commercial tournaments. Having broken the national record at the Republican Universiade, I was immediately invited to the Diamond League.

Of course, it shouldn't matter where I broke the record. For example, in winter, when I jumped 2.32m, I was almost alone, without competition, while no one else was jumping more than 2.15m. During the Universiade, Maxim Nedosekov and I were competing, and both jumped really well, although it wasn't an international event.

It's possible to blame poor performance on long flights, especially if fly-

ing overnight, and jumping the next day. Even a three-hour flight can affect you, although it's only like driving from Mogilev to Minsk!

The Belarusian record remained unbeaten for a quarter of a century. Did beating it give you confidence?

I don't dwell on that. Lots of people might have achieved the same: our Andrey Churilo has been jumping 2.32m — just slightly missing out. Maxim Nedosekov has also been close... as have Seliverstov and Skobeiko. Since 2012, the situation in high jumping has begun to change. This year, Churilo became junior world champion. In 2013, Skobeiko brought back a medal from the European Championship. Then, I became junior world champion, while Skobeiko led the season... Everything is at a very serious level.

Before new starts

By Svetlana Savelieva

Six awards claimed by Belarusian athletes at Modern Pentathlon U19 and U17 Junior European Championships, in Polish Drzonków

First place in the mixed relay for under 17s has gone to Belarusian Yekaterina Etina and Maxim Fedotko, with a total of 899 points, ahead of their German rivals Esther Fernandes Donda and Moritz Klinkert. In the same discipline, for under 19s, Yekaterina Sukora and Maxim Maruk claimed silver for Belarus, behind Yulia Sergeeva and Yegor Gromadsky of Russia.

In the women's relay (U17) Belarus' Yelizaveta Yezheleva and Yelena Gavronskaya took bronze, while bronze medals went to Maxim Maruk and Yekaterina Etina (U19) in individual races.



M. Fedotko and Y. Etina

The Belarusian men's team of Maxim Maruk, Vladislav Berezovik and Vladislav Ostrovsky came third overall.

The 2018 Modern Pentathlon Junior European Championships in Barcelona will be the next major event for our Belarusian pentathletes.

World Cup in three countries

By Oleg Samsonov

2026 World Football Championship to be hosted by USA, Canada and Mexico — as decided at the FIFA Congress in Moscow

134 votes (67 percent) were given to the application of these three countries. Another contender — Morocco — received votes from 65 representatives of the national federations (33 percent).

The 2026 World Football Championship will be the first in history to bring together 48 teams. Previously, the United States hosted the event in 1994, while Mexico has hosted twice: in 1970 and 1986.

Since June 14th, 11 Russian cities have been hosting the World Championship matches. In 2022, the tournament will be held in Qatar.

Photo of the week



Minsk – Hero-City Memorial on the eve of the holiday (July 3rd) dedicated to liberation of Minsk in the Great Patriotic War

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 3rd July. *Aivazovsky and Marine Painters*
Until 26th August. *Equos. Kon. Horse*

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 K. Marx Street
Until 8th July. *Multi-Colour of Tatar National Culture*
Until 11th July. *Thieves' Money, or History of Counterfeiting*

EXHIBITION HALL OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY MUSEUM

9A Bogdanovich Street
Until 3rd July. *Song Birds and Pigeons*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 13th August. *Piotr Masherov: His Heart Beats for People*

CAT MUSEUM

23 Internatsionalnaya Street
Until 31st August. *Summer Season at Cat Museum*

HIGH PLACE

2A Gertsen Street
Until 26th August. *Hello from Minsk*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 1st July. *My Homeland — Tale of Times project* Until 14th July. *Clothes of Our Ancestors. 18th-19th Century Graphics*
Until 31st August. *Enlightenment. Experience. Progress* Until 15th September. *ABCs from Around the Globe*
Until 31st January. *Small Trostenets: exhibition-chronicle of a large-scale crime*

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 30th July. *Scenography by Mstislav Dobuzhinsky*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 8th July. *Exhibition of Antanas Sutkus' photos: People of Lithuania*

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

84 / 1 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th June. *Legacy of Belarus: Dedicated to Minsk's 950th Anniversary*

ARCHAEOLOGICAL MUSEUM

6 Kirill and Mefody Street
Until 1st July. *MotoVeloMinsk: Two-Wheeled History*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
28.06. *The Little Prince*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
28 and 29.06. *Life and Death of Yanka Kupala* 05.07. *Retro Style Wedding*

YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street
28.06. *Wolf and Seven Goats*
05.07. *My Little Enchantress*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
28.06. *Red Hot Mamas* 29.06. *Pygmalion*
30.06. *He and She* 04.07. *A Husband Leaves His Wife; Bridegrooms* 05.07. *Love Circle*

CONCERTS

BELARUSIAN STATE PHILHARMONICS

50 Nezavisimosti Avenue
28.06. *Chamber music concert: Piotr Likhten (violin) and Yuri Gildyuk (piano)*

SVOBODY SQUARE

01.07. *Jazz Evenings with Bank BelVEB*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
29.06. and 02.07. *Inspector* 01.07. *Pinsk Gentry* 04.07. *Tolerance* (original title is *Le Dieu du carnage*)
05.07. *The Black Lady of Nesvizh*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
28.06. *Abduction of Yelena* 29 and 30.06. *Wolves and Sheep*
01, 04 and 05.07. #13

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
28.06. *Adam's Jokes* 02.07. *A Star Boy*
04.07. *Concrete*

PALACE OF REPUBLIC

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
05.07. *Days of Ukrainian Culture: national folk dance ensemble named after Virsky, Tina Karol and Oleg Vinnik*

MINSK-ARENA

111 Pobediteley Avenue
30.06. *Land of Ice Cream Fest*