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We have no other IT

Increasing numbers
of countries are
thinking of ways to
attract young IT
companies
or grow
their own → **5**

Scientists to make bolder discoveries

Belarus has made the first step in building an intellectual economy

By Vladimir Velikhov

This was asserted by Alexander Lukashenko at the ceremony to present diplomas to academicians and corresponding members of the Academy of Sciences of Belarus, diplomas of Doctor of Science and professor certificates to scientific and pedagogical workers. The Head of State reminded those present that the science development programme to 2040 — a long-term strategic document — was adopted at the 2nd Congress of Scientists. “You scientists will have to bring these ideas to life.”

The President emphasised that the state has done a great deal for the development of Belarusian science.



At the diploma awards ceremony

Scientists have also put forward useful proposals. Several legal acts to raise the social status of scientists and create favourable conditions for intellectual work are planned. “I believe that these measures will be a good stimulus for the promotion of scientific work, help reveal new talent and attract young people to this important work,” noted Mr. Lukashenko.

The President compared

science to an unread book. “Every invention, successful experiment or discovery generates new questions and new ideas for further work.” He underlined the fact that recognition comes to those who are not only good specialists in their fields, but are fully committed to education and practical work, create sensational and unique projects for the benefit of the country and people. “We can expect amazing discov-

eries from you. This is the essence of science. Starting from this moment you live in a new professional reality. It means that you will have to work hard to live up to this high standard,” said the President.

Alexander Lukashenko noted the special status of the ceremony since the new knowledge celebrated was gained in the Year of Science, announced in Belarus in 2017.

A solid step made forward

By Ulyana Bushueva

World Bank: Belarus' economy in 2018-2020 expected to grow by more than 2 percent per year

From an economic point of view, this promises to be a stable year, as is outlined in the January report of the World Bank, *Global Economic Prospects*.

This year, the overall rate of economic growth in Europe and in Central Asia will stand at 2.9 percent. According to the report, Russia has adjusted towards the new level of oil prices and, in line with the forecasts, the growth of its economy will continue and will reach 1.7 percent. The same process in Kazakhstan will be moderate — at the level of 2.6 percent. It's expected that, with the reduction of geopolitical intensity, the economy of Ukraine will become more active: growing from 2 percent in 2017 to 3.5 percent.

Last year, rates of economic growth in Europe and in Central Asia exceeded expectations and reached 3.7 percent against 1.7 in the previous year. According to WB experts, these successes have been reached after three years of extremely slow growth caused by a sharp drop in oil prices in 2014.

According to the organisation's assessments, in 2018, world GDP will increase to 3.1 percent, but the potential for further growth arouses concern. It's expected that the existing reserves will be gradually exhausted. Moreover, for the first time since the financial crisis of 2008-2009 the world economy will be working at near full capacity.

Country of wonders

The sincere, though unfamiliar, greeting, ‘Welcome to Belarus’ was heard for three days in the centre of US business — New York, with our country presenting its tourist potential at one of the world's most prestigious exhibitions, *The New York Times Travel Show-2018*



Near the Belarusian stand at the exhibition in New York

By Igor Sizov

Visitors to the national stand, gathered on the banks of the Hudson from a hundred countries around the world, could admire unique picturesque Belarusian nature and learn about the rich cultural heritage of the country comprising a thousand blue lakes. They could see with their own eyes examples of priceless monuments of world importance.

Belarus is known to live by its traditions and for the energy of its sporting spirit. Guests were told about international competitions which will take place in the

country in the near future. These include the 2nd Europe Games in 2019 and within two years — in 2021 — Minsk and Riga will welcome the international stars of the World Ice Hockey Championship.

During the country's promotion at the exhibition, the Sports and Tourism Ministry paid special attention to opportunities given by the five-day visa-free regime for foreigners. Last year, this was used by almost 80,000 people, with the USA being among the top ten countries whose citizens visited Belarus using a visa-free regime. This may explain the enhanced interest taken by American companies in co-operation with the ‘country of wonders’ as Belarus presented itself in the USA.

Foreign diplomats to be able to monitor local elections

The Central Election Commission (CEC) of Belarus has informed us that the term of observation powers for foreign diplomats at the local elections, will last from February 13th to finish on the major election day of February 18th — after the results of the voting are concluded. The CEC has the right to deprive the observer of accreditation in any cases of violation of Belarusian legislation or universally recognised principles and norms of international law.

Earlier, the Chair of the Central Election Commission — Lidia Yermoshina — announced that US diplomats accredited in Belarus had expressed their wish to observe local elections and addressed the Foreign Ministry and the Central Election Commission with the request. To date, nine employees of the American Embassy, including the Charge d'Affaires — are on this list. Diplomats from other countries have also expressed their desire to participate in the short-term observation of the country's election campaign.

Belarus' local elections are scheduled for February 18th, with early voting open from February 13th-17th. Over 18,000 deputies of local councils will be elected in Belarus and 22,713 people have registered as candidates.

IFC ready to help

The International Finance Corporation is ready to help develop an action plan for preparing a programme of competition development in Belarus

The relevant protocol of intent was signed during the meeting of Belarus' Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade Minister, Vladimir Koltovich, and Rolf Behrnt, the IFC Global Practice Manager for Finance, Competitiveness and Innovation in Europe and Central Asia. Plans include analysing the legislation on competition and antimonopoly regulation. Indicators for regulating the markets of commodities and services in Belarus are to be calculated. The work will be done as part of efforts to fulfil the Government's instructions to prepare a national competition development programme.

Visa-free regime between Belarus and Hong Kong to take effect on February 13th

The agreement between the Government of Belarus and the Government of the Special Administrative Region of the People's Republic of China — Hong Kong — on abolition of the visa regime, comes into force on February 13th. The Head of the Department of Information and Digital Diplomacy, the Press Secretary of Belarus' Foreign Ministry, Dmitry Mironchik, announced. In line with the agreement, citizens of Belarus and Chinese citizens who live in Hong Kong will get the right to enter, leave, stay and travel in transit without visas for 14 days.

Meetings that may bring good practical benefits

Alexander Lukashenko meets the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Johannes Hahn

By Vasily Kharitonov

In recent years, relations with the EU have been developing positively. The European Union is the second most important market for Belarusian exports. In January-November 2017, Belarusian exports to the EU totalled almost \$7bn — a third more compared with the same period in 2016. The trade balance was also positive, reaching \$1bn. Co-operation with international bank structures is also developing. In September 2016, with EU support, a new strategy of the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Belarus was approved, covering 2016-2019. The EBRD began to be fully involved with the Belarusian state sector, where previously it had financed only private projects. In August 2017, the framework agreement between Belarus and the European Investment Bank came into force. Furthermore, a range of large projects dealing with the modernisation of transport, customs and water purification infrastructure, and the banking sphere, are being currently planned with financial assistance from the EIB and EBRD.

The EU abolished quotas for the import of Belarusian textiles. Since 2016, negotiations with the EU regarding Belarus' joining the WTO have been resumed. The two sides also signed the Joint Declaration on the Mobility Partnership and a range of joint projects is being currently agreed. Negotiations are also underway with the EU to sign an agreement on the simplification of visa procedures and re-admission.

The significant increase in collaboration between Belarus and the EU was also emphasised by Johannes Hahn on the eve of his visit to Minsk. "Co-operation in the spheres which are of common interest was begun. The EU increased measures aimed at developing the regions and the



Alexander Lukashenko and Johannes Hahn during their meeting

private sector, to support civil society, as well as assistance in the sphere of energy efficiency," noted the European Commissioner.

Belarus is an ardent supporter of a strong EU as one of the most important foundations of a multi-polar world. This position was voiced by Mr. Lukashenko as he met Johannes Hahn. "We are ardent supporters of a strong EU. We are totally against centrifugal forces in the EU that are weakening it," emphasised the Belarusian leader. According to the President, the EU is one of the strongest pillars in the world, and the destruction of this will lead to the destruction of the systems of security, economy and other spheres of life.

The Head of State assured Mr. Hahn that Belarus is ready to make any contribution to the security of the European continent. "You can count on us. We'll always be committed to good-

neighbourly relations and are ready to make any contribution to the security of the European continent."

The President also stressed the country's interest in expanding trade-economic ties with the EU. The EU is the second largest foreign trading partner

We are ardent supporters of a strong EU. We are totally against centrifugal forces in the EU that are weakening it

of Belarus. In recent times, the two sides have seen progress in negotiations on Belarus joining the WTO, for which the Head of State expressed thanks to the European Commissioner.

Mr. Lukashenko also tackled Belarus' interaction within the *Eastern Partnership* initiative.

"It's inadmissible to turn the *Eastern Partnership* into a totally political organisation. It should have a more practical character, while facilitating the solution of tasks which affect both our region and Europe as a whole," he stressed.

"We place great importance on our co-operation within the framework of this organisation. You can count on us in this regard," noted Mr. Lukashenko. According to him, the *Eastern Partnership* should address the issues that are topical for Europe and promote projects of vital importance in the energy sector, transport and logistics. The overlap of external and internal challenges makes the EU stronger and more sustainable, noted Mr. Hahn during the meeting.

"I'm very grateful for your words and your vision of Europe. I must admit that in the last few years, the EU has faced a range of challenges. However, such

a structure, uniting 28 member states, will always have some problems. Sometimes they are caused by internal processes and sometimes by external events. Of course, we have been seriously affected by the international financial and economic crisis, alongside the wave of migration," noted Mr. Hahn.

The EU is attempting to reinforce ties with Belarus, the European Commissioner for Enlargement and European Neighbourhood Policy, Johannes Hahn, told journalists, and a range of discussions has been launched in various areas.

Issues of trade-economic co-operation were discussed by Mr. Hahn in the Belarusian Government. The European Commissioner noted that he welcomes measures adopted in Belarus on the creation of a more favourable climate for small and medium-sized businesses. "This will attract investors and new foreign companies to Belarus," Mr. Hahn believes.

Tradition to live in peace and good neighbourliness

By Alexander Pimenov

Belarus occupies a principled and consistent position in the struggle against anti-Semitism, noted Deputy Foreign Minister Oleg Kravchenko at the Rome International Conference on the Responsibility of States, Institutions and Individuals in the Fight against Anti-Semitism in the OSCE Area

In his speech at the plenary session of the conference, Oleg Kravchenko confirmed Belarus' position in the fight against anti-Semitism in the context of the global efforts of the international community to combat racism, xenophobia, intolerance and discrimination in all forms and manifestations.

The participants of the conference were provided with information on the Holocaust

tragedy in Belarus. The Deputy Foreign Minister drew the attention of those present to a long tradition of peaceful co-existence of representatives of different nationalities and religions in Belarus, and the absence of any conflicts in the country on national, religious, and cultural grounds.

Attending the event was also OSCE Chairperson-in-Office, Italian Foreign Minister, Angeli-



On Holocaust Remembrance Day in the village of Porechie in Pukhovichi District

no Alfano, and OSCE Secretary, General Thomas Greminger, alongside representatives of

government bodies of twenty countries, NGOs, national and religious communities.

Who steers the market

The number of new vehicles seen on the busy city highways has increased. This is an advantage from the point of view of ecology, safety and comfort, as well as having a beneficial effect on well-being.

By Vladimir Yakovlev

According to the Belarusian Automobile Association, last year alone, 34,255 passenger and light commercial cars were replaced, with 30 percent growth registered. This figure is also supplemented by vehicles sold by dealers which are not members of the Association and imported by citizens and organisations from abroad: adding another 10 percent. This is a record for the last five years.

Other achievements in this area are also worth mentioning. Most importantly, the first Belarusian facility has opened on an equal footing with its Chinese partners to produce modern BelGee passenger cars. Another importer of the famous Lada brand has been registered in the country and some other well-known makes are likely to join as confidence in Belarusian market prospects grows.

The Chairman of the Belarusian Automobile Association's Board — Sergey Mikhnevich — comments on the figures. "We are observing an unprecedented growth in sales. Our customers believe in the stable future of the Belarusian economy. Monetary and financial stability has resulted in falling interest rates on lending and leasing. A wide range of favourable financing conditions are now available and as a result, up to 70 percent of sales to individuals are realised. This indicates that the previ-



Visitors to BelGee's new automobile salon

ously deferred demand for new cars is now being met. In addition, illegal imports of new cars from Russia has fallen almost 2.5 times against 2016."

Renault, Volkswagen and Lada remain the market leaders. Owing to the relatively low cost of Russian production, they ensure the best value for money and advanced technical solutions. As regards consumer preferences, the increase in sales was mainly due to relatively inexpensive off-road cars in the

small and middle class: these are the so-called SUVs. According to Mr. Mikhnevich, this is a global trend. For example, Renault crossovers — such as Sandero Stepway, Duster and Kaptur can satisfy almost any requirement.

The issue of what comes next is not so simple, as it involves many different issues — such as the continuation of positive trends in the economy, fuel prices and the situation regarding the so-called toll. Nevertheless,

Mr. Mikhnevich looks to the future with cautious optimism. "We hope, in 2018, sales of new cars will rise by 5-10 percent," he said. The basis of such predictions is the planned growth of the Belarusian economy: in 2018, it is expected to improve by 3.5 percent (against 2 percent in 2017). At the same time, plans need to be weighed against European trends. So far, according to the Russian Autostat Agency, neighbouring countries (except for Ukraine) outstrip Belarus

in terms of sales of new cars per capita. The BelGee Plant is expecting to solve this problem and the figures are already optimistic: nearly two hundred vehicles of the first commercial batch were quickly sold out. Another unsolved problem is that we lack sales of electric vehicles; this is an issue of ecology and orders for the future nuclear power station. We now need to wait for the National Academy of Sciences' experts, who are developing a domestic electric car.

EBRD confirms reputation of active investor

The privatisation of the Moscow-Minsk Bank will finish in 2018

By Oleg Bogomazov

This was recently told to journalists by Alexander Pivovarsky, Head of EBRD Office in Belarus. "The Bank has started the privatisation process and they have already hired a privatisation adviser who will present results during the year. We hope that the privatisation of the bank will happen before the end of the year," explained Mr. Pivovarsky.

It should be mentioned that a memorandum of understanding between the National Bank of Belarus and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development on the privatisation of the Moscow-Minsk Bank was signed in September 2016.

The Head of the EBRD Office in Belarus said that work continues the purchase by the EBRD of the state's stake in Priorbank. "Consolidation of

shares is underway. Technical issues are being solved. I think the whole process will take some time — a quarter or two," he said, stressing that the purchase of the state's stake will enable the EBRD to return to participation in the management of the bank.

Mr. Pivovarsky explained that the decision to begin talks with the Belarusian government on the issue was mutual.

The Head of the EBRD Office in Belarus also said that the Bank plans several interesting projects in the municipal sector. "We're now discussing interesting projects dealing with Minsk. There's a significant project with Minskvodokanal that we'd like to realise jointly with the European Investment Bank. Moreover, within approximately six months we plan to finish preparation of the project dealing with the energy efficiency of



During the signing of the document

residential houses in the Belarusian capital," he said.

Mr. Pivovarsky also reminded us that in 2017, a memorandum on mutual understanding was signed between the Belarusian Government and the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development regarding the improvement of the control system of state enterprises. "As part of this dialogue, we suggested transforming as a pilot one or two companies and creating a prototype of the new type of management — a state

sovereign fund that would manage state property in a new way. It would be a type of holding on the premises of the State Property Committee," he explained.

Mr. Pivovarsky also said that if the EBRD find resources, a similar pilot project could be also implemented in one of Belarus' regions. "For example, we could create a regional holding in an area, for example, in Vitebsk. However, this issue is still under consideration and we haven't found resources yet," he said. The Head of the EBRD

Office in Belarus underlined that the Government and the State Property Committee are keen to realise the project on the improvement of the control system of state enterprises as soon as possible. As an example, Belavtdor Holdings was proposed. "It's planned that in 2018, one of the structural subdivisions of the State Property Committee will be officially registered as a separate legal entity and this experiment will be conducted on its premises aiming to create a new type of management of state property. It's a very important project for Belarus."

Mr. Pivovarsky noted that in future, specialists of this new structure at the State Property Committee will be able to independently conduct work on the improvement of management with other state enterprises.

The European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is the biggest institutional investor in the Belarusian economy. The bank's aggregate volume of operations in the country has almost reached 2bn Euros.

Latvia, Estonia and France have introduced start-up visas and it's very easy to move there to develop an IT project. Previously this was done by Ireland, Lithuania and other states. More and more countries are thinking of ways to attract young IT companies or grow their own and we are no exception. At the end of last year, the President signed Decree #7, significantly simplifying life for new businessmen.

Last year, according to Bloomberg's data, European start-ups attracted a record \$19bn of investments, an impressive figure. The popular belief that an investment injection will promote business holds true, including for the high-tech industries. Could Uber have gathered speed without the \$11.5bn injected into it?

Yulia Lokotkova boasts two degrees and considerable experience in marketing and journalism. Today she heads two projects: *PingFin* — an application which helps control personal finances and *Graime* — a social network for street musicians. She is aware of how to launch a start-up with zero injections. "Initially the team on the *PingFin* project included people such as programmers, a marketing specialist and a web-designer. In general, it's believed that one needs 10-20 thousand US Dollars. However, as a rule, this must come from one's own personal savings," she explains. *PingFin* is now developing in the Polish accelerator 'Huge Thing'. In such structures, start-ups are supported not only financially, "We are being trained here. This is practical support of innovations in the region at state level. In any country with well-developed entrepreneurship policies it's possible to join such structures and receive help. These are not yet developed in our country."

Israel is a good example; it's a true start-up nation and the closest to our model of market formation. Israel is 10 times smaller than us, but the population is almost the same. It's well educated, especially concerning engineering, mathematics and

programming, notes the Director of the Start-up Technology Business Centre, Alexey Shablovsky. "Annually, around 100 Israeli start-ups are sold abroad, while in our country this figure is small. However, the potential is huge. In Israel everything is based on universities, where investors and foundations come to create communities. Our system of education is not geared to business. When we start moving in this direction and money is put into the right areas, I think our country will repeat Israel's experience," said Mr. Shablovsky.

Where will we find the finances? The Belarusian-Russian Venture Fund has been established and there are prospects for co-operation with Chinese investors. Mr. Shablovsky believes it's too early to draw conclusions. "We have many investors who invest into the real sector but there are few who are ready to inject money into 100 projects, with the understanding that only

some of these will be successful. It's a completely different level of risk. Big investments — hundreds of thousands or millions of US Dollars — are needed to produce world-level software products and their promotion to western markets."

The start-up movement originated in our country around 5-6 years ago and within this rather short period companies have

We have no other IT

Increasing numbers of countries are thinking of ways to attract young IT companies or grow their own



grown up which has managed to become world famous. In 2013-2014, Maps.me and Viber successfully appeared on the market, while last year saw the sale of MSQRD to Facebook Corporation. This year, Google purchased Belarusian AIMatter and, according to Mr. Shablovsky, this sale is unique. "Investors who work on international markets have got used to world standards in the sphere of law. We have specific legislation in this area and foreign investors don't want to adjust to it and bear high risks. AIMatter is the first Belarusian company which was sold under Belarusian legislation. I think it's primarily because of the initiative of the team's leader, Yuri Melnichek and it was necessary to make huge adjustments for this."

We know what to work on and we're already taking the first steps. Decree #7 doesn't tackle directly the interests of IT start-ups but it's a powerful impetus for the liberalisation of business initiatives. Today we have 24 business incubators to assist entrepreneurs. Igor Saevets, Director of Future with Us (where today around 50 production and construction projects are developing), says, "The Decree will benefit those who are going to open their own business. It was not difficult previously to do this, but now it will become even easier. It's also extremely important to change the practice dealing with vicarious liability. Before the decree much uncertainty was linked to it."

Alexey Shablovsky says that the adoption of the Decree is an important step but it's also crucial to see how it will be fulfilled locally, "It's a good signal for business. However, the message of the decree should be broadcast through the whole system of power; then it will start working."

Many IT business issues will be settled in the Decree 'On the Development of the Digital Economy'. Previously key areas have been announced on the attraction of investment funds into the country and the creation of legal conditions for the development of unmanned vehicles and blockchain technology. It promises to be revolutionary and through these changes we have a good chance of building a digital economy.

Friendship squared

By Maria Golubkova

Residential districts to be built in Minsk and St. Petersburg

Russia's northern capital has concluded the results of the architectural and urban contests for the development of a concept of 'symmetrical' housing projects in St. Petersburg and Minsk. Five architectural bureaus represented each city, working on their proposals for around six months. As a result, 'Petrovskie Verfi' (Piotr Shipyards) will be built in Minsk and the 'Zhuravli'

(Cranes) residential complex will appear in the city on the Neva River.

The two cities agreed to hold the competition after a St. Petersburg delegation visited Minsk in 2016. In line with the technical assignment, at least 60 thousand square metres of housing, incorporating commercial premises, improvement of factory areas and spacious parking lots, are to be built. Sites for the future developments in Minsk and St. Petersburg were given to the architects in advance, with the proviso that the projects must

be linked to the features of the landscape.

In Minsk, the Petersburg quarter will be built on the site of the village of Petrovshchina; it joined the city area in 1978. Until recently, private houses were situated there but they are now being demolished and the residents resettled. The site is around 10-15 minutes from the city centre by car. A hospital and a large green zone are nearby; the latter soon to be landscaped. The site of the former Horizont factory is situated on the opposite side of the road; in Soviet times, TVs and



Concept housing developments in Minsk and St. Petersburg

radios were produced at the factory, which is now among the largest manufacturers of household appliances and elec-

tronics in the CIS. In the near future, the plant will move, and its site will also become a part of the urban environment.



Digitalisation is crucial

‘If the 19th century was the age of empire, the 20th century was that of national states, then the 21st century will be the era of the city’, notes IBM Vice President on Smarter Cities Gerard Mooney. He refers to the development of the digital economy — a trend which Belarus has been following for more than a year. Continuing stabilisation of the economy facilitates this and opens new opportunities for each of us.

By Maxim Osipov

With the global economic crisis coming to an end, economic indicators are positive. The UN notes that the world prices for food products have risen to their maximum — good news for our exporters. According to the National Statistical Committee, the gross domestic product of Belarus in 2017 has increased by 2.4 percent — more than it was planned initially. What lies ahead?

Valery Belsky, the Director of the Institute of Economics of the National Academy of Sciences, believes that at the very least, we should expect the ten-

dency for GDP growth to continue.

“Investments in the Belarusian economy are rising, as is consumer demand, labour productivity and the real incomes of the population. Moreover, the situation has stabilised after a rather complex period in the market of our major trade-economic partner, the Russian Federation. The stabilisation of prices for energy resources on the world market is also an important factor in the growth of the economy and will also facilitate the increase of incomes for Belarusian oil processing facilities.”

Belarus’ Economy Minis-

ter, Vladimir Zinovsky, paints a broader picture at the junction of the current and future five-year plans. His forecasts show last year’s record low level of inflation in our country (4.6 percent) isn’t the limit. “In an ideal situation, inflation should be 2-3 percent, no more. This will enable us to reduce the refinancing rate and interest rates for loans. It seems to me that we are obliged to reach these figures in 2020-2021.”

Alongside the evident slowdown of price growth and enhancement of availability of loans, this will positively influence the situation in the sphere of employment. For example,

the process of the creation of new jobs in the state sector will continue, with a special role played by Decree #8 ‘On the Development of the Digital Economy’.

“With the adoption of the decree, we’ve created favourable conditions for the penetration of information technologies into industry, agriculture and the social sphere, and the creation of new business models,” explained the Minister.

The most important social areas in the development of the digital economy include healthcare and education, as well as smart homes, mentioned at the beginning of the article. There

are few such homes at present and the realisation of these projects are limited: Amsterdam, Barcelona, Brussels, Vienna, New York, Seoul, Tokyo and Shanghai. However, in May, it’s planned to conduct a digital forum of Eurasian countries in Minsk, aimed at developing various forms of public-private partnership, the harmonisation of national digital markets of the countries of Europe and Asia, as well as the gradual formation of the pan-Eurasian digital market space. Economic stabilisation in combination with digitalisation — isn’t this a formula for the promising growth of Belarus?

Sustainable Development Goals in focus

By Alexey Fedosov

Full and productive employment, decent jobs for everyone, reduction of poverty and hunger, quality education, launch of innovation, security — these and other global goals are set by the world community under the UN aegis. Our country actively promotes their achievement and public organisations and businesses have joined this process.

The first meeting of the partner group of sustainable development took place in Minsk, and the National Co-ordinator



for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic, Marina Shchetkina, assigns an important role to this interaction, “We can’t achieve our goals without our partners,

as the most important thing in achieving SDGs is the strategic actions of the whole community. The principle is not to leave anyone on the fringe, and this is possible only when partnership is established.”

Such interaction has a large task ahead, moreover, each country has its own problems.

WORD-FOR-WORD

Marianna SHCHETKINA, National Co-ordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals and Deputy Chair of the Council of the Republic:

On February 21st-22nd, we plan to conduct a regional forum of national co-ordinators of various states, inviting UN representatives. However, to host this event at such a high level, we should demonstrate real achievements in our work while also involving all interested partners, representatives and state and society, since we can achieve the Sustainable Development Goals together.

Belarus views the problems of employment and the creation of new jobs as its own priority. This issue was much discussed during the meeting of the partner group. The Chairman of the Republican Confederation of Entrepreneurship, Vladimir Karyagin, noted the important role played by the recently

adopted, Decree ‘On the Development of Entrepreneurship’. “It greatly influences the situation connected with sustainable development, since this includes efficient employment and the solution of ecological issues. All seventeen SDGs are of great concern to us and they shouldn’t be ignored by business community,” he noted.

The conversation regarding the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals was continued in Berlin, with the Belarusian delegation discussing with the leadership of German state, structures interaction in the sphere of SDGs and familiarising themselves with the advanced experience of Germany in the sphere of sustainable development.

Deserved scientific title awarded to charming woman



Emilia Kolomiets

Title of 'Scientist of the Year of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus-2017' goes to Head of Microbiology Institute, Emilia Kolomiets

By Yulia Vasilieva

The National Academy of Sciences has named Emilia Kolomiets as the Scientist of the Year. She is a member of the Academy, Head of the Institute of Microbiology and the General Director of the Chemical Synthesis and Biotechnology Scientific-Production Association. The honorary title was awarded for the first time, symbolising the launch of a new tradition: to recognise the most significant person on the eve of the Day of Belarusian Science (celebrated on the last Sunday of January). The name of Emilia Kolomiets opens this new page of national science. She's deserving of the title, being not only a great scientist and organiser, but also possessing a charming personality. She is encouraging to others and strongly committed to the development of the biotechnology industry.

The figures speak for themselves: in the last five years, over \$4m of biotechnological products have been

sold; all have been produced based on the Institute of Microbiology's developments. The key idea is that microbial biotechnology can help with problems previously solved using only chemistry; furthermore, it produces nothing harmful to the environment. Among the



Yekaterina Shmyga, from the Institute of Microbiology, involved in bacteria micro-copying



Institute's developments are uniquely efficient bio-pesticides (able to enrich the soil and fight pathogens), microbial fertilisers improving ecology, probiotics for animal husbandry and fish farming (interestingly, a popular food additive for fish is named Emilin), enzymes used to pro-

duce the anticancer drugs Lecladin and Fludarabel, as well as those to make an express-analysis of blood glucose... All these and many other developments are based on a strong scientific school. The Centre of Analytical and Genetic Engineering Studies, established at

the Institute on Ms. Kolomiets' initiative, as well as several production facilities, make it possible to bring ideas into practice. Unsurprisingly, the Institute has shown the best indicators of socio-economic development among scientific organisations on many occasions.

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The past year was full of events for the Institute of Microbiology. It won a grant in China and gained an opportunity to work with Chinese researchers. Moreover, the laboratory, led by Ms. Kolomiets, was included in the scientific top-10 of 2017. Among the important milestones was the launch of facilities to produce enzymes and dry forms of probiotic preparations, opening the way to the Turkish market.

The awards ceremony took place on January 26th at the National Library, during the National Assembly of Scientific Community dedicated to the Day of Belarusian Science. Many other awards were then presented to distinguished scholars. In addition, a major exhibition of sci-tech achievements was organised to welcome visitors at the open-air exhibition square in front of the library and also inside the building: 270 advanced developments were on show. Among them were examples of new machinery designed by MTZ, Minsk Wheel Tractor Works and Minsk Automobile Plant. In addition, the possibilities of additive technologies and an office super-computer (included on the list of the top ten major scientific achievements) were on show. To ensure the effective promotion of developments into production, the Academy of Sciences is considering the possibility of launching the Akademtekhno-grad Technopark.

REFERENCE

Emilia Kolomiets describes her emotions on receiving the award, "I feel sort of 'not quite here'. It's almost impossible to prepare yourself for such a moment. I think we have many great scientists and it's a hard decision to name someone as the best. Of course, this is a reason for joy. Everyone at our Institute celebrates this award. After all, this is recognition of all our team."

Leaving with a promise to come back

By Olga Zdanovich

Returning home, these young people promise to come back as established scientists, artistes and sportsmen

The young guests from Syria, who have spent two weeks in Belarus on the invitation of Alexander Lukashenko, have recently returned home. Many of them have never left their country and were amazed with everything in our Republic — especially the snow and unusual cold. The Syrian pupils will remember their winter adventures for a long time, this is obvious just by looking at their smiles. These hide the difficulties of their childhoods spent in a war zone and there were tears in everyone's eyes at their departure. Many children admitted they would love to return to

study at Minsk's higher educational institutions.

The Belarusian-Syrian shift at the Zubrenok Centre ended with the presentation of awards for the Olympiad and sports competitions. The most talented Syrians were invited to Belarus: among them were winners of international and national competitions. Overall, 144 guests arrived to form three groups: 'intelligence', 'creativity' and 'sport'. Each of them had its own programme to enable the teens to take away from Belarus not only new impressions but also useful knowledge and skills.

Many of the Syrians realised what they'd wanted to achieve during their stay in Minsk. "When I grow up, I want to continue my education here," said Naya Jamali. She is 14, but despite her youth, is already a pro-



Syrian schoolchildren in Belarus

fessional musician, playing the piano and winning competitions: she's been acknowledged as the best in her native Latakia and was placed second at the Republican championship. "I really appreciate your musical schools and I hope to return here to receive my education. At first, I was very surprised to see all the children so well-behaved and well organised, they stick together — even

when they are not accompanied by their parents. We've made friends and are truly sad that we need to part," she said.

Social networks will help these young people to stay in touch. "Everyone here is kind and treats others with love," says 17-year-old Good Asaad, from Homs. The boy plays the ney flute — a traditional Islamic instrument. "Before coming to

Belarus, I knew nothing of your country but have got to know Belarusian culture and traditions, also tasting your cuisine. Most of all I like your Academy of Music where we went on the excursion. I would be happy to study here. I dream of opening my own music school in Syria to enable Belarusian children to also come to us," he added.

Bushra Kassis studies ballet and plays the piano. She wants to become an artiste and already dreams of performing on the stage of the Belarusian National Opera and Ballet Theatre. While enduring the chaos of the war, these children have not lost the most important feature of any childhood: faith in a happy future. They were all presented with paper cranes, symbolising hope, while saying farewell to Zubrenok.



Crisis in Catalonia: what next for Spain?

The crisis in the Spanish region of Catalonia seems to be getting more complex every day, experts believe

The Spanish region last week postponed the election of a new president, after the country's highest court said separatist leader Carles Puigdemont, the sole nominee, was ineligible as long as he remains in exile in Belgium.

"The speaker of the parliament can postpone the plenary until the constitutional court decides whether or not to allow

online investiture," said Argelia Queralt, a professor of constitutional law at the University of Barcelona.

"Precedents suggest it will not, but we have to wait and see if the speaker of the parliament accepts the Constitutional Court's decision and proposes a new candidacy — then the clock restarts in terms of deadlines."

From a legal point of view, when there is a new government, article 155 (which imposes direct rule on Catalonia) is lifted. That's why it's so important for the regional president to form a government: so the institutions can return to normality. It doesn't mean giving up on having a pro-independence president, but returning to the constitutional fold

and to political dialogue with the central government, which is absolutely necessary.

The decision of the speaker of the Catalan parliament, Roger Torrent, to postpone the election debate has raised tension among separatist parties. Now the leak of text messages from Puigdemont admitting political defeat could deepen the divide.



Vehicle catches fire and crashes into pedestrians in Shanghai

A van injured 18 people after catching fire and ploughing into pedestrians in a busy part of Shanghai, China

A 40-year-old man lost control of his vehicle and ploughed into pedestrians on a busy Shanghai street, after the van he was driving caught fire.

Eighteen people were injured, including the driver surnamed Chen, when the van mounted the sidewalk at an intersection in downtown Shang-

hai around 9am.

The driver is currently in a coma and was the only person seriously hurt in the incident. Nine have already left the hospital, while the others were described as 'lightly injured'.

Chen, a worker at a Shanghai metal product company, was smoking and driving while carrying hazardous material 'illegally', police said. Authorities also said that Chen had been illegally delivering liquid gas in recent years

Up Helly Aa: Shetland islands celebrate bright Viking festival

People marched through the streets of Lerwick dressed as Vikings to mark the annual Up Helly Aa Festival

The festival of fire (on the last Tuesday in January) marks the end of the Yule season and remembers the Vikings who used to rule the Shetland islands. The day's events cumulated in the burning of a Viking longship that was built by locals. To participate as a Viking in the procession (also known as a guizer) individuals must have been a resident in Shetland for five years. Women participated in



some of the other ten fire festivals held across Shetland but female guizers featured in the Lerwick event.

Controversial Holocaust bill was passed in Poland

The Polish Senate has approved a law that makes it illegal to suggest that Poland played any part in the Nazi Holocaust, which took place on its soil during World War Two

The law would make the term 'Polish death camps' punishable by up to three years in jail. The Auschwitz and Treblinka concentration camps were built on Polish soil.

The bill has already caused a rift with Israel. The Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu accused Poland of attempting to change history.

In a statement he said, "I strongly oppose it. One cannot change history and the Holocaust cannot be denied."

UK minister offers to resign after turning up late to work

A British politician offered to resign after turning up a few minutes late for a debate in Parliament

Michael Bates, formerly an MP in the governing Conservative Party, now represents the government on international development in the upper chamber, the House of Lords.

"I've always believed that we should rise to the highest possible standards of courtesy and respect in responding on behalf of the government," he said after arriving at a session shortly after it started and missing a question directed to him. "I'm thoroughly ashamed at not being in my place and therefore I shall be offering my resignation to the prime minister."

Train carrying US Republicans hits truck, killing driver

A passenger train carrying Republican members of the US Congress to an annual retreat slammed into a rubbish truck last Wednesday in Virginia, killing its driver

No serious injuries were reported among the lawmakers or their staff on the train, the US Department of Transportation said. There was one death and one serious injury among those on the truck. Two crew members and three train passengers were hospitalised with minor injuries after the crash in Crozet, Virginia.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



National Art Museum's permanent exhibition boasts many works dedicated to the Great Patriotic War

World outlook — natural for its time and destiny

The war theme has naturally become one of the most important in Belarusian fine art, playing a significant role in the formation of the national art school

By Veniamin Mikheev

The National Art Museum's current virtual exhibition showcases painting and sculpture from the museum's collection — all devoted to the first months of the Great Patriotic War. The earliest of them were created in the war years and the latest were from the mid-1980s. Some of the works reflect the heroic resistance to the occupiers and the heroism of the soldiers who defended the Motherland, while others depict the first victims of the war, as well as the destruction and forced resettlement. Some pieces are devoted to particular days: i.e. Nikolay Gastello's pieces on the defence of Brest Fortress and the formation of the people's militia. The exhibition provides an opportunity to get to know diverse ways of interpreting the war theme in art and demonstrates how the pictorial language transformed from illustration during the war and in the immediate post-war years, to the more complicated and philosophical compositions of the 1960-80s. The realism of Ivan Akhremchik coexists with the symbolic conditionality of Israel Basov, the expressiveness of Andrey Bembel contrasts with the externally restrained drama of Leonid Shchemelev, while heroic pathos depicted by Vitaly



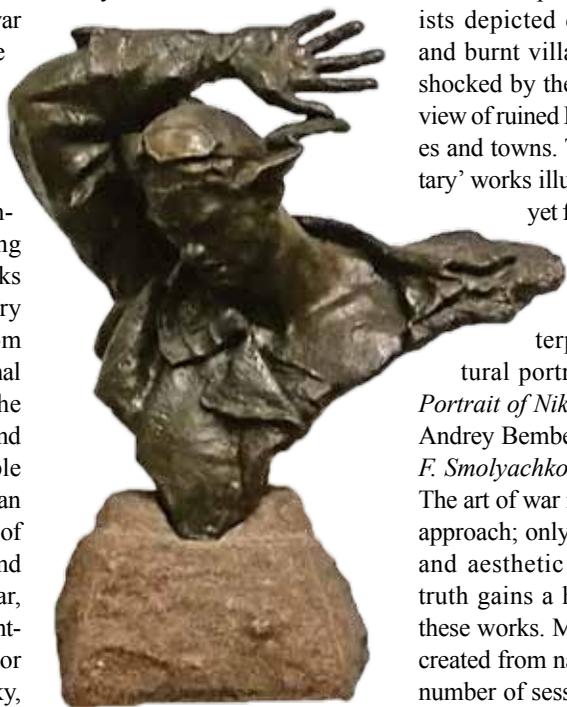
Works which reflect the military theme

Tsvirko and Yevgeny Zaitsev is replaced with tragic motives of Victor Gromyko and Adolf Gugel.

The works are full of strong emotional content. Each of them uniquely conveys the cruel, bitter truth about the most terrible war of the 20th century. From the beginning of the 1940s and for almost a half a century, the military theme was key in Belarusian art. The scope, breadth and spirituality of images created by artists during that period made many works widely famous: almost every pupil knows about them from their school textbooks. National art from this time reflects the history of Belarus, attacked and then occupied, with its people actively involved in the partisan movement. Around 25 percent of the population were killed, and during the Great Patriotic War, many painters went to the frontline. Among them were Victor Gromyko, Algerd Malishevsky, Pavel Maslenikov, Alexander Mozalev, Mikhail Savitsky, Victor Sakhnenko, Vladimir Sukhoverov, Leonid Shchemelev and others. In 1944, the Great Patriotic War History Museum opened in Minsk.

The war was a 'watershed' in people's minds and specific concepts were invented: the 'pre-war' and 'war' generation. This division has nothing to do

with age: it refers to quality. Three generations of artists were formed in the 20th century; they devoted their pieces to the war. Primarily, these are the painters of the 1930s whose artistic maturity coincided with the



Bust of Nikolay Gastello by A. Bembel

war years. The second generation joined art in the 1960s; these people witnessed war-related events in their childhood. Finally, our contemporaries — artists born in the 1950-1960s — comprise the third group; they know about the war from works of art and their parents' stories and have no personal experience.

Each generation of artists has its own unique world outlook. However, they all are united by the understanding that this theme requires truth without external effects or strained pathos.

Contemporary wartime artists depicted destroyed cities and burnt villages. They were shocked by the unrecognisable view of ruined Belarusian villages and towns. Their 'documentary' works illuminate the harsh yet fair truth. This period is perfectly represented by such masterpieces as sculptural portraits from 1943: *Portrait of Nikolay Gastello* by Andrey Bembel and *Portrait of F. Smolyachkov* by Zair Azgur. The art of war requires a special approach; only then can ethical and aesthetic aspects merge, truth gains a historic value in these works. Many pieces were created from nature in a limited number of sessions; as a result, the liveliness of personal experience is evident, in addition to the sketchy execution of portraits. It often happened that sketches and drafts were used in the post-war years. For example, the painter Yevgeny Zaitsev created his *Stand to Death* work in 1948, based on such sketches.

Interest in the war theme among the 'middle' generation of artists was based not only on

its scale but also the desire to artistically understand the dramatic events and try to involve themselves in socially important work, which combines pathos, psychology and tragedy. The war theme became the highest standard of excellence for late 20th century Belarusian art (in the 19th century, historical and mythological genres performed the same role). Philosophical reflections and generalisation of the war theme were common to many artists of this 'middle' generation, who conceptualised events in the context of the post-war reality. The 1960s marked the beginning of such stressful searches — followed in the following decade by the so-called 'severe style' organically developed in Belarusian Soviet painting. The attitude to war events became a historical theme and such masterpieces of Belarusian painting like Ivan Akhremchik's *Defenders of the Brest Fortress*, Mikhail Savitsky's *Partisan Madonna* and Mai Dantsig's *About the Great Patriotic War* were created.

Emotionally rich works devoted to the war years also have 'special status' in the history of Belarusian art. June 22nd, 1941 was expected to be an ordinary Sunday, people were planning how to spend their weekend until the Great Patriotic War — one of the most destructive and bloody wars in the history of our country — began. Belarus experienced one of the first strikes of German troops in Soviet territory: by June 28th, Minsk was occupied, and by late August 1941, the whole region of Belarus was captured by fascists. Three years of occupation and severe battles in 1941 and 1944 killed around two million people, leaving terrible memories in Belarusians' minds. As a result, recent history is viewed as 'pre-war' and 'post-war' for many.

The war affected the fates of many Belarusian artists. However, we praise and respect them all for not erasing the pain and suffering from our memories. They have preserved these heightened sensations in their work — as a symbol for generations to come.

Marka Centre continues to maintain its reputation

Laureates of special prizes of the President of Belarus to figures of culture and arts: Marka maintains reputation

By Lyudmila Minakova

Originality of Belarusian art miniatures recognised at international competitions

Surprisingly, neither the development of the Internet, nor the emergence of e-mail and dozens of instant messaging systems have completely stopped the sending of letters on paper. Furthermore, people's interest in stamp collecting is not fading. Many of these artistic miniatures are real masterpieces which represent the history and culture of the country. Irina Shipilova — the Head of Marka Publishing Centre (which has received a special award from the President for its significant contribution to the preservation of our spiritual heritage and for the creation of highly artistic stamps dedicated to the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing and the 135th birthday of Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas) — discloses the secrets of stamp making.

Ms. Shipilova, postage stamps are a small window into our country. While traveling around the world, it introduces foreigners to Belarusian history and culture, flora and fauna. What is the first thing to consider when developing new designs?

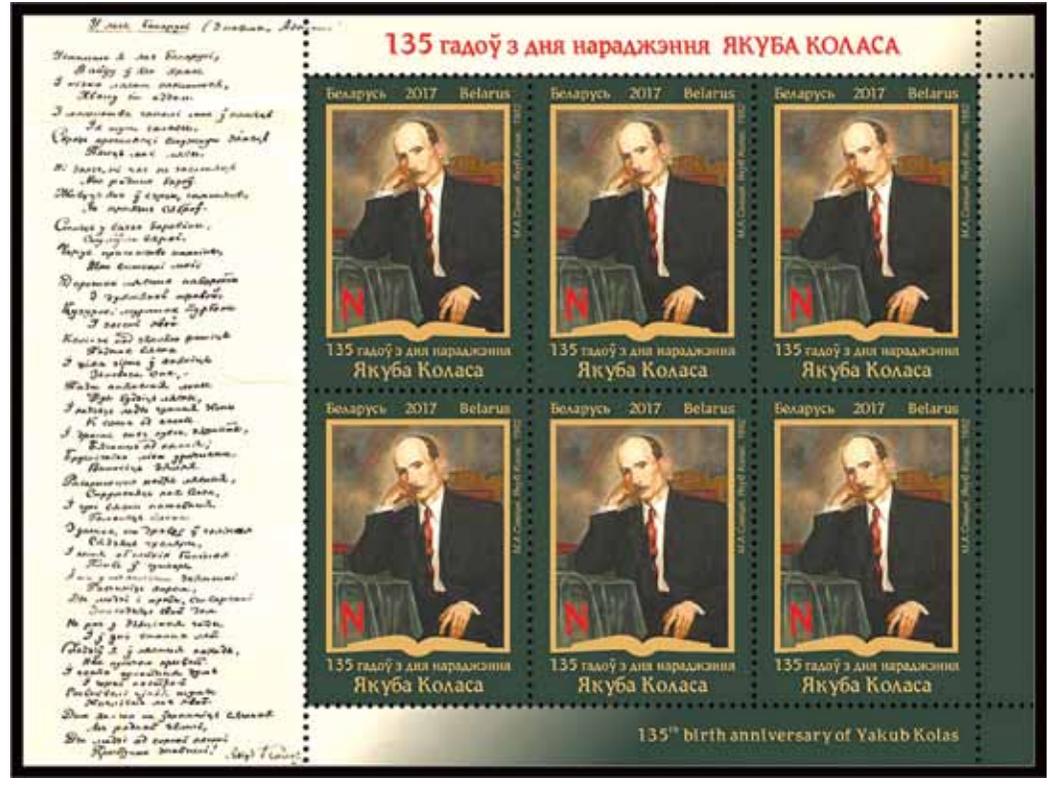
As is traditional, stamps perform several functions. Firstly, they are used as a payment for postage. Secondly, they act as a collectible. Thirdly, as you've mentioned, stamps are an expressive means of displaying significant events in the history of a state, a means of propaganda of its cultural heritage and natural attractions. Postal administrations of different countries try to produce stamps as attractive, expressive and rich in content as possible. These criteria are also used by the Art Council of the Ministry of Communications and Informatisation of Belarus when developing thematic plans for the release of postage stamps. These plans are prepared 1-2 years before the start of the planned production period. The production of state postage stamps is preceded by a great deal of preparatory work collecting information and proposals from state agencies, public organisations and individuals. The most significant ideas are selected and around 50 blocks of Belarusian artistic stamps are released annually.

In Soviet times, virtually every family collected postage stamps. Are there many devotees of this hobby at present?

A postage stamp is not a very old invention. However, it



REFERENCE
In the philatelic world, there are many traditions and rules. The issue of a postage stamp miniature requires laborious work, research and, of course, creativity. For a quarter of a century, Belarusian stamps have shown style and diverse themes. In recent years, they have become 'more elegant'.



has revolutionised the work and development of the post. Since 1840, postage stamps have travelled a path from simple means of postal payment to artistic miniatures with a variety of complex post-print improvements.

With the advent of the first postage stamps, the rapid development of a new type of collectibles — philately — started. At present, there is a general global tendency of a decrease in interest in collecting postage stamps. This is due to the development of informatisation of society — primarily through the Internet. However, I can say

for sure that there is an interest in Belarusian stamps! This was confirmed at the 9th National Philatelic Exhibition — 'Bel-fila-2017' — held last year as part of the TIBO Forum. The show was dedicated to the 25th anniversary of the first Belarusian postage stamp and the 950th anniversary of the city of Minsk and gathered 115 collections from Azerbaijan, Armenia, Germany, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Poland, Russia and Ukraine. I was pleased to see the interest of children and young people in stamps: 21 of the collections were presented by them.

What are the most popular topics for philatelists?

Stamps with images of flora and fauna are mostly in demand in the world of philately. About one third of our postage stamps are devoted to this topic: the nature of Belarus is rich, beautiful and truly unique.

The British Post has recently released stamps with the characters of Games of Thrones. Can we have stamps devoted, for example, to stories of the World of Tanks that have battled all over the world or something similar that young people may be interested in?



Irina Shipilova

Everything can happen; let's keep the mystery... We understand that it is possible to increase the interest in the philatelic production of any country, by expanding the advertising and information work among the population, especially among children and young people. The Belarusian Post has an annual competition for the best postage stamp, organises practical classes in the Philately shop and, following the results of the competitions of children's drawings, publishes postage stamps, envelopes and cards with scenes by young artists.

What philatelic novelties does Marka plan for this year?

We expect bright postal projects and fresh topics. We hope the result of our work will be even more interesting to collectors and those who are simply interested in history and are looking for new knowledge. Among the projects with themes represented for the first time are: '400 Years Since the First ABC Publication', 'Admiral of the Navy', 'Natives of Belarus', stamps from the 'Masterpieces of Painting from Belarusian Museums' series (featuring reproductions of paintings by I. Aivazovsky, I. Shishkin, A. Kuindzhi, A. Savrasov).

Belarusian stamps have often been appreciated at international exhibitions in Russia, Austria, Indonesia... What distinguishes our philatelic products from foreign ones? How are they unique?

In the philatelic world, there are many traditions and rules. The issue of a postage stamp miniature requires laborious work, research and, of course, creativity. For a quarter of a century, Belarusian stamps have shown style and diverse themes. In recent years, they have become 'more elegant'. It is no wonder: modern post-printing technologies are now used in their production — such as embossing, selective varnishing, thermal stamping with metalised foil and others. Of course, this is a major step forward. With the development of the printing capabilities of manufacturers, unusual postage stamps are now released in the form of a triangle, a circle or oval. The originality of our art miniatures is acknowledged at international competitions.



Belarus' national women's tennis team during the press conference

Line-ups have been announced to show the strongest teams

Captains of Belarusian and German national squads name their teams for the Fed Cup by BNP Paribas

By Semen Bondarev

The Belarusian team coach — Eduard Dubrov — is putting his money on the play-

ers who reached the finals of the last year's unofficial team world event: Alexandra Sasnovich, Arina Sobolenko, Vera Lapko and Lidia Morozova.

In turn, Tatjana Maria, Anna-Lena Friedsam and Anna-Lena Groenefeld will make up the German team led by Jens Gerlach.

The Belarus' 2018 Fed Cup World Group first round tie against Germany is scheduled to take place at Chizhovka-Arena on February 10th-11th.

Force majeure makes correction

By Ivan Listin

Minsk SKA handball club confirms return of goalkeeper Vyacheslav Soldatenko

The team's sporting director, Andrey Krainov, commented that the transfer is the result of long negotiations with the player's former club: Odorheem. The Romanian team was on the verge of collapse after the death of Attila Verestoy — the club's director and sponsor; it com-

pleted its performance in the national championship ahead of time. As well as Soldatenko, another Belarusian player, Maxim Baranov, has also lost his club; he is now trying to prove himself at Brest HC. At the recent European Championships in Croatia, Soldatenko proved himself one of the best goalkeepers — turning aside 35 percent of the shots.

On February 10th, SKA will play in the group stage draw of the EHF Cup match against the German team, Magdebu.



Training on the firing range

Azarenko is awaited in Indian Wells



Belarusian tennis player and former world number one receives a wild card to the BNP Paribas Open in American Indian Wells

After receiving the special invitation, Victoria posted a video message on social networks to thank the organisers of the Indian Wells competition. She noted that this is one of her favourite tournaments; it has an amazing audience and boasts excellent organisation. Victoria said that she really wants to play there again and intends to take part in March. The tournament in Indian Wells will be held from March 7th-18th. In 2012 and 2016, Azarenko won it. As previously reported, the tennis player was also invited to the competition in Doha — to be held in mid-February.

Representative competitions to take place near Minsk Raubichi to welcome European Biathlon Championships in 2019

By Kirill Karin

The Executive Committee of the International Biathlon Union (IBU) adopted a decision to hold the European Biathlon Championships in 2019 at the Republican Centre for Olympic Training in Winter

Sports, Raubichi, according to the press service of the Belarusian Biathlon Federation.

The continental biathlon forum is to take place from February 18th-24th. Furthermore, in 2019, Raubichi will welcome the IBU Summer Biathlon World Championships.

The number of Belarusian athletes at the 2018 Olympic Games has increased, with three more places being earned by our ice skaters

After the ban on Russian athletes attending the Olympics, the right to perform in PyeongChang was won by Vitaly Mikhailov and Tatiana Mikhailova, as well as Ksenia Sadovskaya. The International Olympic Committee decided to give two more lucky tickets to our skiers. Belarus is now represented by 33 athletes at the Olympic Games, performing in six sports.

Alexey Alexandrov, 44, has won the 2018 Belarusian Chess Championship. This year, the tournament brought together the strongest players in the country and took place in the National History Museum.

Alexander first became the champion of Belarus back in 1989 and claimed his last title in 2007. This time, second place is occupied by the 2017 European champion, Sergey Zhigalko, followed by 2016 champion, Vladislav Kovalev. Among the women, Anastasia Zezyulkina — leader of the Belarusian national team for several years — was unrivalled; this is her sixth championship title in her career and the third in a row. Olga Badelko, 15 (our leader in the world rankings) finished second, while another young athlete, Natalia Kusenkova, claimed bronze.

The United Arab Emirates hosted an Extraordinary Congress of the International Amateur Boxing Association (AIBA) where our country was represented by the Chairman of the Belarusian Boxing Federation, Dmitry Tikhomolov

The most important aspect of the congress was the election of AIBA's new interim president. Before this, this post was occupied by Franco Falcinelli, who stepped down. Following the voting results, the Uzbek businessman, Gafur Rakhimov, previously Vice-President, was elected. The delegates unanimously rejected the proposal to approve Dr. Ching-Kuo Wu as honorary president of the AIBA. He headed the AIBA from 2006 to November 2017; however, last summer, the Executive Committee expressed a vote of censure against him because of financial problems in the organisation.

Show of the week



Illusionists, which has already toured 200 cities across 25 countries, hosted by Minsk

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 11th February. *Poetics of Landscapes* by Semen Domarad Until 18th February. Leonid Shchemelev. *Pictorial Art* Until 20th February. *Saints of the Undivided Church*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 17th February. *Dungeons of Light*
Until 18th February. *Great Britain*
Until 25th February. *Solar Height*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 15th February. *Valery Slauk's Graphics* Until 28th February. Exhibition of experiments: *Science Museum*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 4th February. *Reflection* Until 25th February. *Lev Borodulin: Legend of Sports Photography*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 11th February. *Belarusian Opera Legend*

YANKA KUPALA STATE LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 14th February. *Yiwarra Kuju: The Canning Stock Route — Images of Aboriginal Australian Western Desert Art*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 18th February. *Special Photography*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 17th February. Exhibition dedicated to 170th anniversary of French artist Paul Gauguin Until 24th February. *Our Travel*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Until 21st February. *Looking at Your House*
Until 28th February. *Marat Gadzhiev's Zunzul Chani*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 4th March. *13th Wonder of the World*
Permanent exposition of Experimental Science Museum: *EXPERImENTuS*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

117 Kazinets Street
Until 25th March. *Water Residents*

REPUBLICAN SCIENTIFIC-TECHNICAL LIBRARY

7 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 28th February. *Reserved Corners of Belarus: Vitebsk Region*

BELARUSIAN STATE CIRCUS

32 Nezavisimosti Avenue
09-14.02. *Ice Fieri*

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
08.02. *La Traviata* 10.02. *The Queen of Spades* 11.02. *The Swan Lake* 13.02. *Carmen* 14.02. *Esmeralda*

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
08.02. *Cleopatra* 09.02. *Tristan and Isolde* 10.02. *Mary Poppins; Women's Revolt* 11.02. *Buratino.by; The Bat* 12.02. *Dubrovsky* 13.02. *Old-Fashioned Wedding* 14.02. *My Fair Lady* 15.02. *Ball in Savoy*

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
08.02. *Taming of the Shrew* 09.02. *Caught in the Net* 10.02. *Stars of the Seventh Sky; Pygmalion* 11.02. *Pane Kokhanku* 13.02. *Bridegrooms* 14.02. *Innkeeper; He and She* 15.02. *Zoika's Flat*

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
08.02. *The Pinsk Gentry* 09.02. *Art* 10.02. *Evening* 11.02. *School of Taxpayers* 13.02. *Inspector* 15.02. *Not Mine*

YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street
08.02. *Belarusian Vaudevilles* 09.02. *Taras on Parnassus* 10.02. *Thumbelina* 11.02. *Doctor Aybolit* 15.02. *Wings of My Youth*

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
09.02. *Belvedere* 10.02. *Wash'Em'Clean* 11 and 13.02. *Kid and Karlsson-on-the-Roof* 14.02. *Christmas Story* 15.02. *Interview with Witches*

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
08 and 09.02. *Nobody Ever Said Life Would Be Easy* 10 and 11.02. *#13* 12.02. *The Same Place Next Year* 13.02. *Even a Wise Man Stumbles* 14 and 15.02. *An Unnamed Star*

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
08.02. *Blue-Blue* 09.02. *This Is All She* 10.02. *A Two Dogs' Tale; If No Tomorrow* 11.02. *Medea Syndrome* 13.02. *PlaStforma Minsk-2018; Concrete* 14.02. *Adam's Jokes* 15.02. *Portrait*

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabrskaya Square
09.02. *House #2* 13.02. *Romeo and Juliet* 14.02. *House Upside Down*

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
08.02. *Vanyushin's Children* 09.02. *Goat's Island* 10.02. *Lesson of Love; Kosciuszko Story* 11.02. *Playing Happy Family; A Man from Podolsk* 13.02. *Celestino's Career* 14.02. *Caught by Love* 15.02. *Dreamworks*