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Darya Domracheva coming out of the shadows

Three-time Olympic champion wins sprint at IBU World Cup stage in Hochfilzen and then claims bronze in pursuit

Winner Darya Domracheva celebrates on the podium after the women's 7.5 km individual competition in Hochfilzen

Russian regions keen on co-operation

By Vladimir Khromov

Alexander Lukashenko suggests Russia's Kursk Region reinforce integration in industry, agriculture and construction, speaking with region's Governor, Alexander Mikhailov

"Unfortunately, our trade turnover with Russia and the region has fallen. However, this year's positive trends lead us to believe that, through joint efforts, we'll manage to improve the situ-

ation and restore our volume of bilateral trade. We should, primarily, bolster co-operation in the manufacturing sector, agriculture, and construction. We have certain experience in these fields; I would even say certain achievements," asserted the President.

Mr. Lukashenko stressed that the Kursk Region is Belarus' reliable partner, and the visit of the Governor is viewed by Belarus as testimony to sincere interest in the development of bilateral

interaction. Mr. Lukashenko mentioned the delivery of BelAZ mining equipment to the Mikhailovsky mining and processing plant, which is one of the biggest iron ore mining and processing facilities in Russia and the CIS. Given existing industrial and innovative potential, Belarus and the Kursk Region should join efforts to expand industrial collaboration.

"Your delegation includes heads of large enterprises interested in strengthening liaisons with Planar

JSC, Minsk Motor Plant. I think this interaction will help us launch joint production of world-class high-tech products," noted Mr. Lukashenko.

The President remarked that the Kursk Region has made major achievements in agriculture, and that Belarus can make a contribution to the further development of this segment. Mr. Lukashenko discussed possible delivery of elite grain and vegetable seeds, as well as mineral fertilisers.

The President is convinced that the meeting will help enhance partnership ties, which Belarus greatly values. "Through our joint efforts, we'll be able to make the desired progress and reach our goals," he added.

Mr. Lukashenko suggested attracting Belarusian specialists into the construction of the nuclear power station in the Kursk Region. "I was pleasantly surprised by the proposal of our specialists, who say that, next year or the year after next, they'll



Alexander Mikhailov

be able to participate in the construction of your nuclear power plant," said the President.

The Russian Governor was visiting Belarus for the sixth time. This year marks the 15th anniversary since the signing of a bilateral agreement on trade-economic, sci-tech and cultural co-operation with the region.

Life in urban jungles

Minsk named among top thirty greenest cities in Europe — ahead of Moscow, Rome, Vienna and Paris

By Yulia Konovalova

German urban researcher Philipp Gärtner has been studying the greenest European capitals, comparing forty-two major cities via images from the Sentinel-2 satellite, focusing on a radius of eight kilometres from the official centre of each city.



BELTA

Minsk easily competes with European capitals due to its 'green' attractiveness

His programme has analysed green zones, creating a 'green index' of NDVI (Normalised Difference Vegetation Index).

Interestingly, the largest

capitals tend to have least greenery, while those on the coast are in the middle of the list. Among those with over a million in population, Kiev leads, occupying 15th place,

with 0.389 points. Minsk is close behind: having 0.2718 points, ranked 26th — ahead of Berlin, Vienna, Amsterdam and Rome.

Moscow (0.1426) is at

the bottom of the list (37th) but is ahead of London, Lisbon and Paris — although the Russian capital's population is several times greater. Greek Athens closes the list.

Whom do Russians trust?

By Alexey Fedosov

Alexander Lukashenko and Nursultan Nazarbayev top Russian trust ratings for CIS heads of state

According to a poll conducted by the Russian Public Opinion Research Centre (VCIOM), Alexander Lukashenko arouses trust among 62 percent of Russians while Nursultan Nazarbayev among 56 percent.

According to the survey, Belarus and Kazakhstan enjoy the strongest support of Russians among the CIS states. As many as 60 percent of those polled believe that Belarus is the most stable and successful country in the CIS, followed by Kazakhstan (41 percent). Moreover, 64 percent of Russians believe that Belarus is the key partner of their country in the international arena.

As many as 66 percent of Russian people believe that Belarus does a great job securing the rights of Russian-speaking citizens. (up from 27 percent in 2010). Kazakhstan is placed second with 38 percent (up from 18 percent in 2013).

VCIOM carried out the poll by telephone, speaking to 1,200 respondents.

European security requires special attention

By Alexander Pimenov

OSCE potential should be used fully, to reduce risk of military confrontation in Europe

Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, noted, at the 24th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council in Vienna, the continuing crisis of European security. He believes that polarisation is growing, trust is eroding, and challenges are multiplying. "What should be done to stop this trend and bring

about lasting stability, and what is the role of the OSCE? Firstly, we need to send a strong political message that the OSCE does matter as a unique forum for inclusive security dialogue. We should fully utilise its potential, to curb the risk of military confrontation in Europe. Belarus favours the development of a new conventional arms control regime, adapted to current realities. We support ongoing structured dialogue on current and future risks to security and stand ready to



Vladimir Makei at meeting in Vienna

further contribute," asserted the Minister.

Mr. Makei believes that the role of the OSCE should be strengthened in build-

ing partnerships to combat a range of complex transnational threats and challenges, such as terrorism, cybercrime, human and drug traf-

ficking and migration.

The Minister mentioned the initiative of the President of Belarus to launch the new 'Helsinki process' — aimed at overcoming contradictions and mistrust in relations between countries in our common Euro-Atlantic and Eurasian space.

Regarding the trilateral contact group, which meets with the aim of settling the situation in Ukraine, Mr. Makei believes that it deserves decisive support. He notes that the settlement of

conflicts — from Nagorno Karabakh to Ukraine — is a key area of OSCE activity. "The Minsk Agreements remain the cornerstone of peaceful settlement in Ukraine and should be fulfilled by all sides," stressed the Minister.

Belarus is ready to provide all possible assistance to Ukraine, to help the civilian population which finds itself in the zone of conflict. Mr. Makei spoke on this subject at the 24th meeting of the OSCE Ministerial Council.

‘Competition encourages quality and growth. This is why you need competitors...’

Alexander Lukashenko in favour of competitive development, with Belarusian economy operating under open conditions

By Oleg Bogomazov

The President of Belarus has praised the results of modernisation at Minsk’s Kamvol JSC, and is keen to see the project completed, with continued development. “I’ve come to congratulate you on the completion of this great modernisation project. We launched it long ago and faced many difficulties. Various things happened and I think we’ve done all we can to achieve our main goal: to produce good fabrics,” noted the Head of State, on meeting enterprise personnel. He explained that the decision to upgrade Kamvol JSC stemmed from the need for jobs and the necessity of supporting the business and maintaining best practices.

The Head of State noted that he is pleased to learn that the enterprise doesn’t have now sufficient workers to fully utilise production capacities. “There aren’t any problems or catastrophes. We have enough people willing to work at this modern, comfortable factory,” Mr. Lukashenko asserted. “Just recall the state of affairs before modernisation. I remember it. I think you do too. We’ve turned it into a good production facility, and you’ll enjoy working here, I think. We’ll see next year,” added the President.

The Head of State visited Kamvol

JSC five years ago, in December 2012, when it was in dire straits, with a poor financial and economic situation, and 90 percent of its machinery in need of replacement. Mr. Lukashenko criticised this state of affairs and made a number of tough personnel decisions, promising to

restore Kamvol JSC to its workers. The President has been monitoring the situation for the last few years, including mentioning it at two governmental conferences: in July 2015 and December 2015.

Over the past five years, more than \$110 million has been invested into Kamvol’s modernisation. Now, it’s a high-tech enterprise whose contemporary equipment is unrivalled with the post-Soviet space and, even, in Europe.



Alexander Lukashenko during his visit to Kamvol JSC

More than half of Kamvol’s produce is currently exported, with positive dynamics of supply. From January-September 2017, it exported almost \$6 million of goods (up 1.5-fold on the similar period of the previous year). Speaking with the leadership of the Turkish company Zen Led (which has a technology transfer contract and a dealership contract with Kamvol), the President discussed prospects for increasing production capacity, to manufacture of 10-12

million running metres annually. “I’m told that it’s possible to sell 12 million per annum in 3-4 years, after creating a brand name. They may be mistaken, so let’s say 10 million. But this is a whole 10 million!”

According to expert assessments, the world market for worsted cloth stands at around 120 million running metres. “What prevents us from selling our 10-12 million, out of these 120 million?” declared the President.

Kamvol employees asked the

President whether it was possible to enforce sales of the company’s products on the domestic market via legislation. In response, Mr. Lukashenko promised that the state will continue supporting the enterprise but asserted the impossibility of closing the market to Turkish, Russian, and Chinese fabrics. He noted “Firstly, this is a matter of competition, which encourages quality and growth. This is why you need competitors. Secondly, we aren’t some huge country that runs the world. There are virtually no countries like that at present. If we close the market against someone, they’ll close their market to us, fast,” stressed the President.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised that the Belarusian economy is export-oriented. “We sell more than we consume, so we have to act carefully. Make quality fabric and we’ll deal with the rest later,” he added.

Mr. Lukashenko commented on the situation of Russian athletes being banned from performing at the Olympics in South Korean PyeongChang in 2018 under their state flag, following the decision of the International Olympic Committee. He said, “Russia can solve this problem in style by showing that it’s a great sporting power and that it’s been treated unfairly. If Russian athletes go out and win medals in snowboarding, cross country skiing, biathlon, short track and ice hockey, this will be the best evidence that these accusations are ungrounded.” The Head of State noted that he doesn’t think the Russian team should be punished collectively. “Every athlete must bear their own responsibility,” Mr. Lukashenko is convinced.

Forecast based on good results

By Alexey Zhemchuzhnikov

Government sums up economic work of past ten months

A couple of weeks remain until 2018 begins; the economic situation is unlikely to change considerably in that time, although it’s still possible to solve problems, as Prime Minister Andrei Kobyakov highlighted at the recent Council of Ministers session.

The Government met to discuss the results of economic activity over the recent ten months, also focusing on the whole year and making preliminary forecasts for



Belarusian economy is export-oriented

January 2018. Mr. Kobyakov was optimistic, saying, “According to statistics, the main indicators of economic development meet prognosed parameters, or even exceed them. We expect the growth rate — based on 2017 results

— to stand at 102 percent, against a forecast of 101.7 percent.”

The Government plans to increase GDP by 3.5 percent in 2018. For the time being, there is a slight lag in both the growth of real disposable

income and the attraction of direct (net) foreign investments. However, goals are still achievable by the end of the year, with revenues needing to grow by only 1.3 percent. The investment bank is only about \$130 million short.

From French Brest to Belarusian Brest

By Alexander Pimenov

Two Brest cities provide example of dynamic liaison between regions of Belarus and France

According to the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of France to Belarus, H.E. Mr. Didier Canesse, the opening of the Honorary Consulate of France to Brest, three years ago, created a robust foundation in the regional centre, helping trade in goods and encouraging French tourists. Today, the introduction of five-day visa-free entry to Belarus is attracting visitors,

with the city of Brest occupying a special place. The diplomat stresses that the Brest Region is also of great interest to French business. Mr. Canesse believes that the only Honorary Consulate of France is helping promote trade-economic relations between our two countries, strengthening inter-regional liaisons in science and education, culture and sports. “Brest is an example of the dynamic development of these mutual relations. French Brest twinned with that of Belarus a long time ago, setting the basis for exchange between our regions.”

Work or relax? Definitely work!

Working until a very old age partially alleviates problem of labour shortage

By Oleg Bogomazov

Sometimes in the future, we may see the Japanese working until they are 100! Yoshiko Iida, aged 85, is still working, as a senior salesperson for a large chain of cosmetics stores, in one of Tokyo's suburbs. She's not the only example of elderly Japanese deciding to continue working. It's becoming the norm rather than the exception to continue past 'retirement age'. Iida's team of sales assistants comprises people aged 70 and, even, 80. There's no doubt that she brings experience to her role, managing her team.

It may seem strange but the situation of an aging population is facing several developed countries. Twenty five percent of citizens in Japan are aged over 65, and the population is shrinking. If something doesn't change, could the Japanese die out, as a race?

Working until a very old age alleviates the problem of labour shortage. Every day, the number of Japanese companies allowing their employees to work after formal retirement is growing: a policy the government supports, since it eases the burden on the pension and social systems. If someone wants to work until they are 100, it's no problem. The authorities are also encouraging entrepreneurs to employ elderly workers, offering diverse subsidies and benefits to companies employing those aged over 65.

In 2016, approximately 23 percent of Japanese aged over 65 were still working: the highest figure among the seven most developed countries. Many work in positions which only pay salaries just above the minimum wage, such as shop assistants. This



situation is especially painful for those who are highly qualified. Most companies believe that elderly workers can be just as strong and resilient as young people. According to Nobuhiro Maeda, an analyst for the Nippon Life Insurance Research Institute, fears regarding the employment of elderly people are greatly exaggerated.

Naturally, increasing the age of retirement solves certain problems but many Japanese businessmen are afraid that, in this case, those occupying highly paid managerial positions will become a burden on the wage budget. Meanwhile, the Japanese Business Confederation believes that having older workers discourages young people from improving their professional skills, since the positions they covet are occupied.

WHAT IS THE SITUATION IN BELARUS?

According to the National Statistical Committee, in early **2017, 9,505,000** people were registered as residents in the country; **2.4** million of them (or about **25** percent) were of working age. This is producing a great burden on the pension system, especially as the average life expectancy is steadily rising. The decision on retirement age has been taken for the coming six months. It will be gradually increasing: by six months annually, for women until they reach **58** and for men until they turn **63**.

Many pensioners are continuing to work after retirement, as our legislation prohibits setting an age limit on vacancies (with exceptions for specific jobs). Almost **179,000** pensioners are working in Minsk alone — accounting for almost **30** percent of their total number. Katerina Bornukova, of the Belarusian Economic Research and Outreach Centre (BEROC), comments, "We've calculated how the pension fund will be accumulated and have concluded that its deficit can be kept at an acceptable level (below 1 percent of GDP) until **2022**. After that, the deficit will start growing. Most of those currently retired were born during the post-war baby boom. Meanwhile, the **1990s** generation (when birth-rates declined drastically) is coming to the fore. Young people are only partially replacing new pensioners and employment is falling. Accordingly, contributions to the pension fund are decreasing and the number of pensioners is rising. The problem is becoming evident and the path we choose will depend on many social and economic factors."

Establishing beneficial ties

By Olga Romanovskaya

Belarus presents its investment potential at forum in Singapore

International investment forums allow a country to present its economic potential, earning prestige in showing its portfolio. The *Belarus Calling Asia* investment forum was recently hosted by Singapore, focusing on co-operation between countries across the Asian region with ours, in

the financial and investment fields. Agreements in the trade-investment sphere were signed between Belarusian and Asian partners, including attribution of a sovereign rating to Belarus in line with the Chinese national scale, for placing valuable securities on the financial market of China in Yuans.

Documents were signed to allow new residents to join the Great Stone Industrial Park; the *Car-sharing* — Ma-



During investment forum in Singapore

chinery for General Use project focuses on supply of large batches of dairy products and poultry to China and natural rubber for tyre production from Singapore to Belarus.

Moreover, Belarusian and

Asian companies established direct contacts. Our representatives discussed possible co-operation in the spheres of trade economy and credit-investment, as well as the sci-tech field.

Focusing on high level of liaisons

Deputy Chairman of the National Assembly's House of Representatives, Boleslav Pirshchuk, joins Prime Minister of Armenia, Karen Karapetyan, to discuss issues of trade-economic co-operation and development of contacts in the spheres of education, tourism and medicine

Boleslav Pirshchuk has emphasised the importance of promoting economic ties, setting up joint companies and increasing mutual trade turno-

ver. The Vice Speaker met with the President of the National Assembly of Armenia, Ara Babloyan, with both sides noting the high level of inter-parliamentary interaction. They exchanged opinions regarding work at international parliamentary grounds. The Belarusian delegation, led by the Vice Speaker of the House of Representatives, took part in the 10th meeting of the Commission on Co-operation between the National Assembly of Belarus and the National Assembly of Armenia.

EEC and World Bank see prospects for collaboration

By Alexey Fedosov

Eurasian Economic Commission and World Bank plan joint financial market projects, following Washington meeting between Chairman of the Board of the Eurasian Economic Commission, Tigran Sargsyan, and World Bank's Vice President for Europe and Central Asia, Cyril Muller

"The Eurasian Economic Commission is working with international organisations and regional integration associations on a wide range of sectoral and global issues," notes Mr. Sargsyan.

"This allows us to study best world practices and propose them for implementation within Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) member countries. Interaction with the World Bank has

become an important step for the EEC in forming strategic vectors of Union development. We've successfully completed a joint project to assess the potential and prospects for the digital agenda within the EAEU. Its outcome, among other things, has become the basis for developing the Union's digital agenda through until 2025. This document was presented to the presidents of the five countries on October 11th, 2017, and we've now begun to implement its provisions."

Cyril Muller noted that

collaboration with the Eurasian Economic Commission is very important for the World Bank. Within its study of prospects for the EAEU digital agenda, the World Bank considered various aspects of Eurasian integration, in order to gain a better understanding of integration processes.

Assessing prospects for further interaction, Mr. Sargsyan notes that 'the priorities of the EEC regarding development of the business climate within the Eurasian integration space largely coincide with areas of co-operation declared by the World Bank'. In particular, the EEC and the WB can

realise joint projects to develop financial markets. "Representatives of the WB are interested in infrastructure, transport and logistics initiatives. All envisage the continuation of constructive dialogue, supplementing it with practical work in the interests of business and of the economies of our countries," stresses the Chairman of the EEC Board.

According to the Vice President of the World Bank for Europe and Central Asia, the possibility of co-operation between organisations on these issues is promising. He also spoke about new directions for the World Bank in the Eurasian region. In particular, Mr. Muller highlights the importance of developing trade relations as the main source of economic and industrial growth.



**THE
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Ecological impact is really important

Paper Mill Goznak manufacturing office stationery from waste paper, with new facility recently launching in Borisov

By Vladimir Velikhov

The pilot initiative is part of a major EU-financed project, called *Supporting the Transition to a Green Economy in the Republic of Belarus*, financed by the EU and implemented by the UNDP, in partnership with the Ministry of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection of Belarus. Innovative technologies are being used at Belarus' first paper recycling site. No other company, including those affiliated with Bellesbumprom Concern, has ever produced

office paper from recycled materials.

EU funding of 860,000 Euros has equipped the facility to fully recycle paper, using cutting-edge Italian machinery. Meanwhile, an industrial building for coarse screening has been constructed to house the equipment.

Thanks to the pilot initiative, the technological process covers complete waste paper recycling, turning low-quality waste into office paper. The paper mill will be able to process more than 2,000 tonnes of secondary

raw materials annually, once it reaches the capacity envisaged by the project. The mill will process recycled paper, instead of similar amounts of bleached cellulose, reducing annual expenses to 800,000 Euros per year.

Iya Malkina, Belarus' First Deputy Minister for Natural Resources and Environmental Protection, has called the initiative 'a gem' in Belarus' transition towards a green economy. "All in all, twenty-three initiatives have been put into practice in Belarus so far but this is among the most expensive and in-

teresting," she stresses.

Environmental, economic, and social effects were explained at the presentation. For instance, a new trail camera reduces the use of fresh water for paper production and the concentration of suspended particles in urban wastewater. Meanwhile, energy-efficient equipment saves up to 100kW per tonne of office paper produced from waste paper, reducing gas consumption by 50,000 cubic metres a year. Around 17,000 Euros a year should be saved on fuel and energy, thanks to the project.

Parliament discusses progress

Recent governmental session at Parliament focuses on food security and future of agriculture, with Deputy Prime Minister Mikhail Rusy announcing impressive figures

By Yevgeny Kononov

According to the FAO, Belarus is ranked 8th globally for milk exports, and is among the top twenty exporters of sugar, meat and flax fibre. Last year, 785kg of grain, 630kg of potatoes, 123kg of meat and 752 litres of milk were produced per capita: exceeding Germany, France and the United

Kingdom.

Those present at the Oval Hall listened with interest to the Deputy Prime Minister, as he compared the dairy business' profitability with that of oil, saying, "Our producers receive up to \$570 of profit per tonne of milk, while \$1,200 is generated from butter sales and cheese brings \$1,400 per tonne."

Clearly, the use of modern



Cheeses from Rogachev factory

technologies is vital, raising efficiency and profitability, as the experience of successful enterprises

shows. Results come fast when businesses are treated wisely and money is reasonably calculated.

The Deputy Prime Minister also spoke of:

Exports

This year, food exports will reach nearly \$5 billion and, by 2020, will increase to \$7 billion. Belarusian food products are sold to sixty-one countries. In three years, we'll ensure production of 10 million tonnes of grain (not taking corn into account), about 9 million tonnes of milk, 6 million tonnes of potatoes, over 5 million tonnes of sugar beets and about 2 million tonnes of meat.

Quality of life

To keep people in our villages we must raise the standard of living on offer. Establishing 'villages of the future' is our focus. We've done well with agro-towns and model projects, with districts in each region having pilot projects. There are sixty-two townships in Belarus and we plan to tackle up to three annually.



Border switches on the board

Newest system of electronic queue has recently started operation at Kotlovka border checkpoint

By Tatiana Kondratieva

An automated system of registration of individuals is welcoming travellers at the Kotlovka border checkpoint. The innovation was already trialled by drivers arriving in Belarus from Lithuania and vice-versa. The *MT* reporter assessed the innovation.

The system was trialled for a month, so it was already operating smoothly before the launch date. What other changes will take place at the border checkpoint at international level and why do we need them? Our reporter arrived at the border checkpoint to see how easy it is now to cross it.

The Republican point of customs clearance, Kotlovka, of the Oshmyany customs office at the Belarusian-Lithuanian border, is located 24km from Ostrovets. In 2006, its reconstruction was completed and it acquired its current appearance. By the queue of trucks with Lithuanian, Polish, Russian and other number plates from various countries of the world (waiting for their turn) we may see how popu-

lar this transport artery is. Together with the head of the Kotlovka customs clearance point, Andrey Zaitsev, we go to the site to start a new working day.

“Do you see cameras when approaching the border post?” asks Mr. Zaitsev pointing to the unseen devices. “Our vehicle has already been photographed. Previously a paper control receipt was given when arriving at the border checkpoint which bears the marks of all services. One hour was need for this procedure.”

Shouldn't we wait for thorough testing? Are employees ready to work in a new regime?

Almost a month ago the work was launched to abolish paper control receipts and to introduce an automated registration system of individual persons, vehicles and goods. The system was created based on an automated sub-system, 'Transit of the Customs Union', which is functioning in the customs bodies.

What is it?

It recognises registration

numbers of a transport vehicle with the help of special software and then introduces them into a

beneficial?

Foreveryone. Citizens and services responsible for border crossing will both benefit.

First-

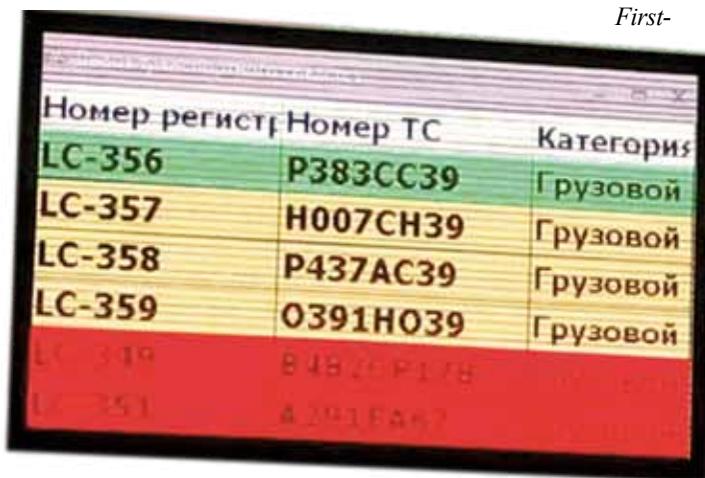
officers. Moreover, the system enhances the quality of their mutual information. In total, these efforts aim to exclude unauthorised departures from the border checkpoint. Previously there were attempts at unauthorised crossing of the state border and now this system helps excludes these. The risks of various types of corruption also falls and there is less opportunity to fake a document for example.

Kotlovka border checkpoint was established in 1991. Two channels are equipped here for arriving trucks, one of which is used for buses. Meanwhile, three channels are used for passenger cars. Daily capacities of the checkpoint are envisaged for 350 trucks, 635 passenger cars and 15 buses, while in reality this reaches up 400 trucks and more than 800 passenger cars (both for arrival and departure). A considerable increase in all types of vehicles is seen on weekends.

Almost half the vehicles in Ostrovets have Lithuanian number plates. Our people also drive to Lithuania on

occasion. According to Mr. Zaitsev, during the holiday period, Kotlovka border checkpoint enjoys popularity among those who would like to get to the Klaipeda sea resorts. A town of nuclear workers is also expanding, so the popularity of this destination is only gaining momentum. Very soon one more item will appear at the international border checkpoint: a system of electronic queuing will be in place.

We have seen the construction works near the checkpoint and how the ground is being cleared for parking. Infrastructure is being created by a Turkish investor which has already built a new hotel in Ostrovets and a filling station in close proximity to the border checkpoint. An electronic queuing system has been already tested at the Varshavsky Most customs clearance point. The electronic queue will be available for trucks and passenger cars. Vehicles that arrive will be in the service zone waiting for their number to appear on the board. It will be possible to pay the service charge at home.



During the holiday period, Kotlovka border checkpoint enjoys popularity among those who would like to get to the Klaipeda sea resorts

database which has a special electronic registry. Furthermore, this information is supplemented with information on passing of border and customs controls.

For whom is it mainly

ly, it reduces the time of a vehicle's stay at the border checkpoint. Secondly, this system reflects the results of all types of control. Thirdly, it regulates the co-ordination between frontier guards and customs

Bell for digital breaks

Minsk hosts international specialised exhibition-forum, *Information Technologies in Education — ITE-2017*

By Yulia Matuzova

Education Minister Igor Karpenko has announced plans to create a single software platform for the *Electronic School* project. The project envisages not merely an electronic diary and electronic

register, but a complex including a pupil's card for use countrywide.

“A pupil could use their document to confirm their right to free public transport or it could be used as a means of payment. This year, we've studied the opinions of directors, teachers and form

tutors. All believe that a single national software programme is necessary, in addition to centralisation of this process all over the country. A centralised software platform, for example, will enable us to monitor the dynamics of academic progress: in schools,



During the work of ITE-2017 forum

micro-districts, regions and countrywide. Moreover, it will allow us to see how the education pro-

gramme is being mastered, in line with calendar planning,” notes Mr. Karpenko.

Sympathy cannot replace action

By Yana Vidnikovich

Belarusian Denis Sakhvon, aged 28, from the Brest Region's Luninets, makes missionary trip to Africa

At our time of meeting, Denis was full of impressions of his long-awaited trip, made alongside thirteen other missionaries. With the help of social networks, Denis raised funds to travel to Africa, wishing to help children in one of the poorest regions on the planet, spending three weeks in Kenya.

Denis, what were your first impressions?

We arrived at night and were amazed by how exotic it was. I've never seen such huge palms. We took a bus for about 350km, from the capital of Nairobi to the city of Kisumu. The road was terrible, with many huge potholes. We stayed in a house rented by local missionaries, in the village of Dunga, near Lake Victoria. Known as Father's House, it's open to all who need help, accommodating a children's orphanage, where missionaries teach.

Housing was comparable with a slum; we could hardly call their homes houses, as the rooms are so tiny that there's hardly room for two people to turn around. We visited the houses of local families, seeing a mattress on the floor, where a mother slept. Even a mattress is a rarity, as most family members sleep on reeds on the floor, woven into mats, each costing one or two dollars. The largest salary a man can earn, working on a construction site, is four dollars a day. They also fish on Lake Victoria, with the women cleaning the fish. Some bring fruits to the market in Kisumu: bananas, mangoes and papayas, which grow near their homes.

Young guys earn money by offering a ride on their motorcycles, which is the major form of transport. A trip from the village to the city, taking 15 minutes, costs one dollar. Many earn money transporting missionaries or tourists.

Are there many tourists?

There are quite a few but they don't go to the villages. Only missionaries do; but there are plenty of them, mostly Americans. People assumed that we were American, as there are so few Russian missionaries. However, our group comprised eight people from Russia and six from Belarus.

How did the locals treat you?

Missionaries are loved, being viewed as the sole source of help. Many people ran up to us, wanting to touch us, especially our hair — even pulling it a little. Blonde hair is a curiosity for Kenyans; they stared at our blonde girl as if she were a miracle. People believe all white people are Christians in the area where we were staying, so families we visited asked us to pray for them. Most local people are believers, attending Protestant churches, where they receive food, money, clothing.



Missionaries are loved, being viewed as the sole source of help. Many people ran up to us, wanting to touch us, especially our hair.



Denis Sakhvon has seen the life in Africa first-hand

What about the rural life?

In villages, everyone is poor, and their houses are small. Some are built from bricks but many are made of tin and boards — resembling garages, and situated close to each other. There are no fences and no running water. Unsanitary conditions reign. People bathe and wash their clothing in the lake, as well as fishing and taking water for cooking from there. We couldn't help thinking that the villagers were lazy, as they might have done more to improve their living conditions or earn money, on the construction sites. Howev-

er, it seemed that they didn't want to make any effort, being used to living in poverty. They seemed almost satisfied.

Most are illiterate and the cultural level is extremely low: after eating a banana, they simply throw the skin under their feet. In church, children eat sweets and throw wrappers on the floor. When asked why they did so, they had no understanding of what we meant. Nobody had taught them to act differently. However, everyone was kind, adults and children.

How did you communicate with local people?

There were difficulties. Only children who study at school know English, while adults speak Swahili. We had two translators: Swahili-English and English-Russian.

You mentioned the unsanitary conditions. Did you worry for your health?

Many locals are HIV infected — including small children. Malaria is also common. It's easy to pick up infections, so we constantly treated our hands with antiseptic. Before going to Kenya, I was vaccinated against yellow fever.

We also slept under mosquito nets, as any bite from a malarial

mosquito can lead to illness. Children often die from malaria there, as medicine is expensive. Residents can't afford even antipyretic drugs, and medical care is also expensive. We visited one of the hospitals, bringing toys, sweets, and milk to children. We saw babies with a high temperature, and no treatment given, as mothers had no money to pay for medicine. A surgeon was on our missionary team, so we treated unwell children free of charge at our house. One mother addressed a man from Minsk with the request: 'Take my child to your country. I can't feed and raise him'. It's savagery for us but normal for them.

What presents did you take from Belarus for local children?

We brought sweets, toys, and many medicines. Everyone in our group had two suitcases: one for personal belongings and another for presents. We bought tents and sleeping bags as well. In Dunga, it's very hot in the afternoon and cold at night.

Did you buy presents with your own money?

No, via social networks, I asked for help, raising \$1,100: \$600 went on tickets and my visa, while the remainder paid for gifts and medicines. On arriving, we bought mattresses for families, so that children wouldn't have to sleep on hard mats.

What did you eat?

They cooked the national dish for us, which is like pressed white rice, served on a single plate, accompanied by a bowl of green potage (made from grass). We broke the rice and dipped it in the stew. It's the daily staple, sometimes eaten with beans, if they have any, or porridge from corn.

Are families large?

Each family has at least six children but some even more: 10-12. Half may be treated as strangers, and some parentless children live with their relatives.

Is the mortality rate high?

Yes, but death there is celebrated, as weddings are in Belarus. We saw this ourselves. While at home one day, we heard music, shouting and car horns. We ran onto the street, to see everyone dancing. People were happy, and we thought it must be a wedding but it was a funeral. In Dunga, funerals are celebrated for a whole week: one day, people rejoice and, another, they cry. This continues for a week. For some reason, this ritual of alternating laughter and tears is very important. To celebrate a funeral, villagers take out loans and then work hard to return the money. The dead can be buried anywhere: behind the house, or under a tree... There are no cemeteries.

Are you planning to return to Kenya?

I'd like to, with my future wife. I'll definitely do this if I can afford to.



Fears of new intifada dissipate despite violent protests over Jerusalem

Israel is on high alert for Jerusalem confrontations

Palestinian protesters and Israeli security forces clashed last Friday amid heightened tensions in the region and elsewhere over US President Donald Trump's decision to recognise Jerusalem as the capital of Israel

A 30-year-old Palestinian was shot and killed during clashes in eastern Gaza, Palestinian Authority's Ministry of Health said, with more than 300 people injured across the West Bank, Gaza and Jerusalem, 50 of whom needed hospital treatment.

Most of the injuries were minor, the ministry said, adding that they were caused by bullets, rubber bullets, tear gas and asphyxiation. Protesters in the West Bank and Gaza began to disperse in the early evening, the Israeli military said.

An Israeli army statement said what it called violent riots had broken out in about 30 locations across the West Bank and Gaza.

About 3,000 protesters were involved in the West Bank unrest, with 28 people arrested and about 65 injured, it said.

In Gaza, about 4,500 Palestinians were demonstrating at six locations along the border with Israel, the army said, with protesters rolling burning tires and throwing rocks at IDF soldiers.

Two sources said the deal would raise at least \$500m. Fosun, co-founded by Chinese billionaire Guo Guangchang, was in the vanguard of China's global deal-making spree over the past few years, snapping up assets.



Violent overnight riots break out in Athens

Police and demonstrators have clashed in Athens overnight after commemorations for a teenager shot dead by police 9 years ago

Greek police fired teargas on youths marching in Athens to mark the ninth anniversary of the killing of teenager by a police officer. Around 2,000 police had been deployed for the commemorations of the 2008 death of 15-year-old Alexandros Grigoriopoulos.

At least twenty-three people were detained overnight — although there were no immediate reports of injuries. The teenager's murder sparked the worst rioting Greece had seen in decades, when thousands took to the streets, torching cars and smashing shop windows. The riots, that were also fuelled by anger over unemployment and economic hardship in the prelude to Greece's debt crisis, lasted for weeks.

Impact assessments of the effect of Brexit on the UK 'don't exist'

Confusion reigns over British economic preparations for leaving the EU after Brexit Minister David Davis admitted impact assessment studies had not been done

The UK Government faces fresh accusations that its Brexit plans are confused and in total disarray after the Minister responsible for strategy admitted that no economic 'impact assessments' had been done.

David Davis's comments have been criticised for appearing to contradict his own assertions in October that a series of papers had been drawn up analysing in 'excruciating detail' the expected effect of leaving the EU.

The Brexit Minister has been involved in a long-running argument

with members of Parliament over the Government's preparations and how much should be made public.

His admission came when he appeared before the House of Commons Brexit Committee, which had demanded the assessments were released by the Government. "There's no sort of systematic impact assessment I'm aware of," David Davis said.



Dangerous wildfires rage across California

Southern California still remains in the grip of five major wildfires

Whipped up by dry Santa Ana winds, tens of thousands of people have been forced to evacuate, including in the high-end Los Angeles neighbourhood of Bel Air. A number of homes there have gone up in flames.

Several A-list mansions are reported to be under immediate threat, including a winery owned by billionaire media mogul Rupert Murdoch.

In Ventura, around 90 kilometres northwest of Los Angeles, firefighters continue to battle the biggest blaze. Authorities say some 12,000 structures remain threatened by the so called Thomas fire which has destroyed more than 150 homes.

China's Fosun International plans \$500 million IPO of tourism business

Chinese conglomerate Fosun International is in talks with banks to list its tourism business, which includes French resort chain Club Med, to raise at least \$500 million, citing people familiar with the situation

Fosun Tourism & Culture Group includes a Chinese joint venture with tour operator Thomas Cook Group and a luxury hotel in Hainan Province, as well as Club Med. Shanghai-based Fosun is considering spinning off the unit as early as next year and is likely to pick Hong Kong as the listing venue. Two sources said the deal would raise at least \$500m. Fosun, co-founded by Chinese billionaire Guo Guangchang, was in the vanguard of China's global deal-making spree over the past few years, snapping up assets.

Alibaba to co-operate with Ford Motor for new retail opportunities

China's e-commerce giant Alibaba said it signed an agreement with Ford Motor on strategic co-operation to jointly explore areas such as connectivity, cloud computing and artificial intelligence

"The agreement aims to explore new ways to redefine how consumers purchase and own vehicles, as well as how to leverage digital channels to identify new retail opportunities," Alibaba said in a press release. The agreement between Alibaba and Ford is to 'explore a pilot study' for new retail opportunities, it added.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Golden giant from Kazakh steppes comes to Minsk museum

The *Golden Man Procession Across World Museums* international project launches in Belarus — as announced at the opening ceremony of the *Art of the Great Steppe Nomads* exhibition at the National Art Museum



By Veniamin Mikheev

The *Art of the Great Steppe Nomads* show is dedicated to the Day of the First President of the Republic of Kazakhstan and the 25th anniversary of the establishment of diplomatic relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan. It coincides with the visit of Nursultan Nazarbayev to Belarus.

The international exhibition project aims to acquaint us with the cultural heritage of the Great Steppe Belt of Eurasia from the Early Iron Age. The Acting Director of the National Museum of Kazakhstan, Leonid Kochetov, notes that Minsk has been chosen to launch the tour due to the many years of co-operation connecting the National Art Museum of Belarus and the National Art Museum of Kazakhstan. The project is to tour for the next three years, visiting China, the Republic of Korea, Japan, India and Spain in 2018, before moving to Europe and the USA. The exhibition remains in Minsk until the end of this year.

In all, 232 exhibits are on show, featuring Saka gold from the 7th-3rd century BC. In 1969, an archaeological expedition, led by well-known Kazakhstani archaeologist Kemal Akishev, un-

earthed a burial chamber with the remains of the Saka leader, in Issyk Mound (50km to the east of Almaty). All ornaments of his costume and headdress remained undisturbed, in the order in which they had been sewn onto the clothes. Such attire was worn on days of solemn receptions and ceremonies. The Saka leader's clothes were decorated with a complex composition of plaques depicting animals, plant motifs and geometric figures. All are works of art in Scythian-Siberian animalistic style.

The buried warrior was accompanied by almost five thousand ornaments (the largest number of golden objects ever found in a tomb, after Pharaoh Tutankhamun). The 'Golden Man' is now known worldwide, and is a symbol of Kazakhstan. The 1969-2013 Kazakh archaeological dig re-



The Art of the Great Steppe Nomads exhibition at Belarus' National Art Museum is part of the Golden Man Procession Across World Museums international project, introducing the cultural heritage of the Great Steppe Belt of Eurasia from the Early Iron Age to foreign audiences

vealed six 'Golden Men' to the world: a true cultural heritage of the Great Steppe Belt of Eurasia. Among the unique finds from Issyk Mound is a small silver bowl with a two-line inscription of twenty-six runic letters, demonstrating that writing appeared in Kazakhstan earlier than had been previously thought.

Over forty years have passed since Issyk Mound was explored, and several books and dozens of scientific articles have been published since, with work continuing on the significance of this find, by historians, archaeologists, artists, and linguists. The central exhibit of the show is a man in golden clothes: a complete, full-size reconstruction of the costume and weaponry of a 5th-4th century BC warrior. The

exhibition aims to show the heritage of the steppe culture of Eurasia and achievements of Kazakh archaeological science.

Other Minsk exhibits are placed under glass pyramids, with magnifying glasses offered for some, to enable better examination of inscriptions and ornamentation. The small silver bowl with twenty-six runic letters proves that writing appeared in Kazakhstan around a thousand years earlier than researchers originally believed. Meanwhile, the grivna neck decoration is both elegant and luxurious, its triple gold spiral adorned with the miniature heads of leopards. On show also is an intricately made wooden sculpture of a bird, covered in gold, its wings cut from sheet metal and neatly inserted

into slits on the bird's back. Sadly, we have no idea of the names of the artists.

Animals on other decorations are depicted extremely realistically: the golden tigers are a particularly good example, with their searing eyes and meticulously created noses, cheeks, moustaches and eyebrows. They even have wrinkles on their foreheads. Such decorations were used on kaftans and on suit sleeves.

The exhibition also features elegant earrings, which even modern fashionistas would appreciate. Among them is a question mark shaped pendant with a pointed end, decorated with a turquoise stone in the form of a drop and two pearls.

Apart from expensive metal objects, visitors to the show will see a felt hat which resembles a long vase, as worn by a man from the 4th-5th century BC.

The Minsk exhibition also presents articles from the burial mound of the ancient nomads of Berel, who gained worldwide fame due to the graves of their nobility, and the intricate articles made in the Scythian-Siberian animalistic style, which remained well preserved beneath artificially created permafrost.

Other exhibits include bronze cast boilers, ceramic vessels, and stone and amber beads. There is even an altar from a priestess' burial place, with canonical depictions of wolf heads with bared mouths.

Are you attracted by blood-curdling stories of the castles of Dracula and the Countess of Bathory, mysterious Stonehenge and Loch Ness? Belarusian attractions can also make your nerves tingle.

By Lyudmila Minkevich

COOLER THAN CASPER

The most famous Belarusian ghosts are the Black Lady of Nesvizh and the White Lady of Golshany. The story of the former has lived on in ancient Nesvizh for over 400 years. According to legend, the great Lithuanian Duke and then Polish King Sigismund II Augustus, fell in love with the beautiful Barbara Radziwill. His love was returned and the two even secretly married. However, Sigismund's mother — Queen Bona Sforza — was against the marriage and, according to the story, it was she who poisoned Barbara. The king could find no peace after her death and, to alleviate his sadness, invited alchemists to summon the spirit of his beloved. They agreed but insisted he did not touch the ghost under any circumstances. When the ghost of Barbara appeared, Sigismund forgot his promise and rushed to embrace his love with a shout of: 'My Basenka!'. There was an explosion, a cadaverous smell followed and the ghost disappeared.

From then on, Barbara has wandered the castle in a black mourning robe, with no way to rest in her grave. People say she appears mostly as a warning on the eve of misfortune. She was said to have been seen in 2002 when most the castle was burnt.

The White Lady of Golshany has her own tragic story. During construction of a Franciscan monastery near the castle, the builders faced an incomprehensible problem: one of the walls was constantly collapsing. Deciding that the place was cursed, they conducted a rite of sacrifice: by walling in a woman alive. A bitter fate befell the wife of one of the builders who happened to be the first to bring dinner to her husband. Since then, the White Lady has wandered around Golshany and often appears to residents and visitors — especially those who decide to spend a night in the monastery. Eyewitnesses say that they have seen a reflection of the White Lady in the mirror, her translucent arms coming out of the

ONLY MYSTICISM



wall. Unsurprisingly, the ghost particularly dislikes men; on seeing it, they turn grey and become confused.

Another ghostly woman is believed to live in the Loshitsa manor in Minsk. It can be seen next to the unusual Manchurian apricot tree when it is in flower, which coincides with the full moon. It is believed that this is the ghost of Yadviga, the wife of the owner of Loshitsa manor — Yevstafy Lyubansky. One day — after a quarrel with her husband, she left for the river and was found dead in the water the next day. It is still unknown how she drowned — by her own hand or with someone's 'help'. After the tragedy, Yevstafy ordered that the window of Yadviga's room be bricked up and he left the estate. Before leaving, he planted a Manchurian apricot in the park, near which the ghost of Yadviga has appeared in modern times. It seems to be seen mostly on the eve of a lucky event: people believe Yadviga can help them in love affairs.

LIVE CROSSES

Many have heard of the Turov crosses in the Gomel Region; these grow from the earth. The first of them became fa-

mous in the 1980s, when a stone appeared between two graves. There were failed attempts to move it. Since then, the stone has been growing: at present, it is around 40cm high. There have been many miracles claimed in connection with it: babies born in childless families, sick people healed and girls dreaming of love have met their sweethearts. In 2008, the Turov cross received 'a small brother': on the site of the St. Boris and Hleb Church in Turov. A small stone appeared initially and then its side 'wings' began to grow.

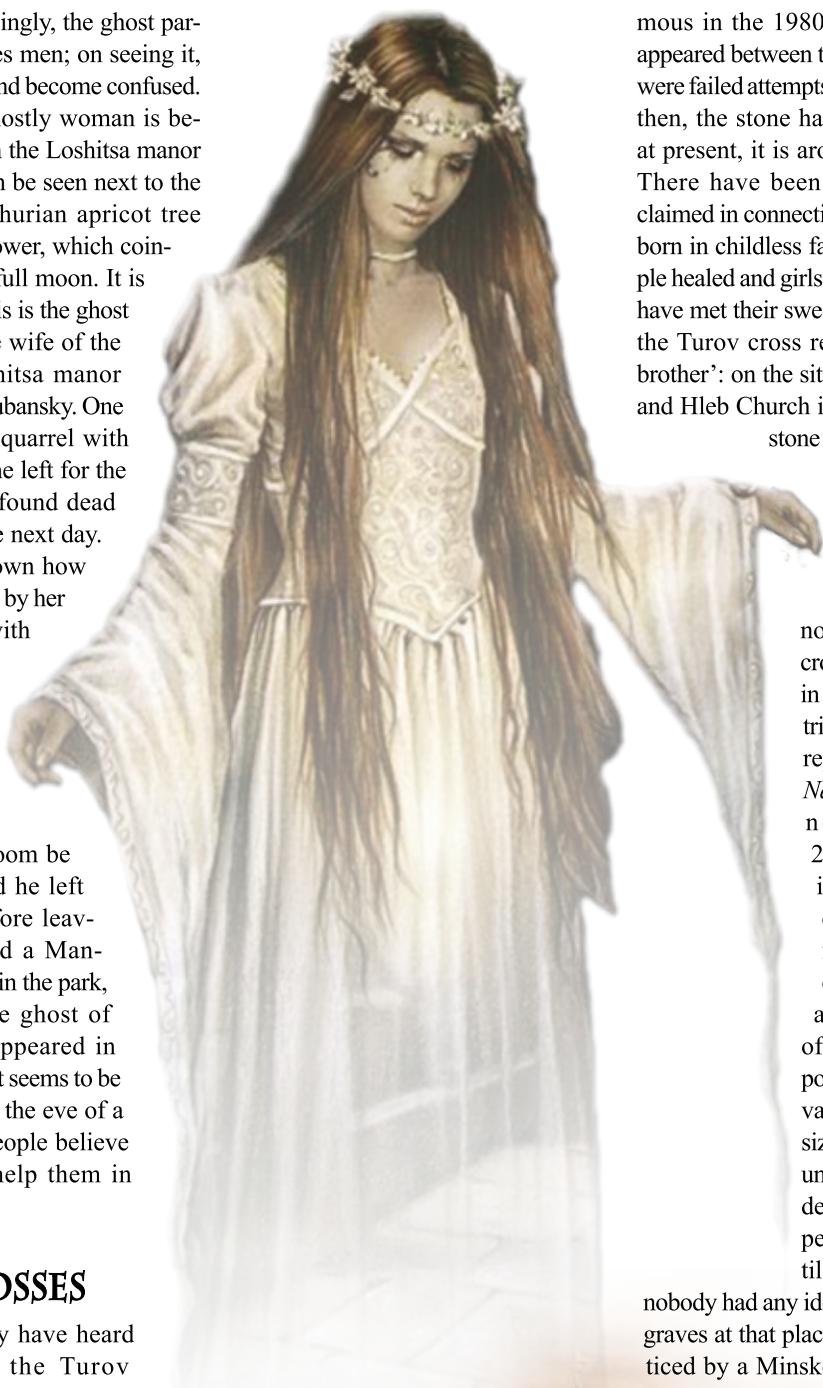
Lesser known but no less impressive crosses have grown in the Ushachi District; these were first reported on by the *Narodnaya Gazeta* newspaper in 2011. After arriving at Zamoshie cemetery (25km from the district centre) with the accompaniment of a guide, the reporter saw stones of various shapes and sizes — rising from under the moss in a dense forest. It appeared that up until the early 2000s, nobody had any idea that there were graves at that place. They were noticed by a Minsker who bought a plot of land for her summer cottage in Zamoshie. Exploring the surround-

ings, she came across an area in the forest where the stones were 'rising'. They were later proved to be 12th-15th century monuments. Some are now as tall as a person. Scientists try to explain the anomaly with temperature changes in the soil but the locals have a single explanation: these crosses are a sign of God.

LAKES SHROUDED IN MYSTERY

Most come to Mir Castle to enjoy the architecture and the spirit of history. Others search for mystical legends associated primarily with the pond near the castle. To make the pond in the late 19th century, the owner of the castle — Nikolay Svyatopolk-Mirsky — ordered the flowering garden to be demolished. Residents knew that it was a bad idea to cut down flowering trees but this did not stop the owner. During the tree cutting and pond digging, many people died. The mother of one of them who — according to a legend — was a witch, came to Svyatopolk-Mirsky and cursed both him and the pond, saying that people would perish in it: one for each felled tree. The first victim was 12-year-old Sonechka, the daughter of Nikolay. A few years later, he himself drowned in the pond.

In turn, Lepelskoe Lake in the Vitebsk Region is a Belarusian version of Loch Ness. According to locals and the classic of Belarusian literature and connoisseur of our history — Vladimir Korotkevich, Tsmok lives here: this is a fantastic creature like a seal, with the head of a fallow deer, fins and a long neck. Some believe Tsmok still comes out from the depths of the lake, turning into a handsome man and seducing girls — punishing them if they behave badly. However, in Belarusian mythology, Tsmok is known not only as protector of water but also a patron of the family. Couples who live in harmony and love can always count on his support. Many visitors gather annually at the festival of mythology — *Visiting Lepel's Tsmok*. Those who don't see it with their own eyes can touch its sculpture in the city.



GEORGE SHABLUK



Winner Darya Domracheva (C), Slovakia's second placed Anastasiya Kuzmina (L), and Italy's third placed Dorothea Wierer (R) on the podium after individual competition



Darya Domracheva at the firing ranges during the 10km pursuit race

Darya Domracheva coming out of the shadows

By Kirill Karin

The 31-year-old Belarusian, who started rather late — in 71st place — managed to hit every target at the firing ranges, despite unfavourable weather conditions. During the distance, the three-time Olympic champion had the fourth fastest speed of the day, behind Finland's Kaisa Mäkäräinen, in first place, by 12.6 seconds. Ms. Domracheva covered the distance within 22 minutes and 40.2 seconds, followed by Slovak

Three-time Olympic champion wins sprint at IBU World Cup stage in Hochfilzen and then claims bronze in pursuit

Anastasiya Kuzmina, who had one missed target and was 22.1 seconds behind the winner. Bronze went to Italian Dorothea Wierer, who also missed once and was 30.6 seconds behind Darya.

This victory is the 29th of Darya's career and her first following the birth of her child, which necessitat-

ed some time off from the track, returning less than a year ago. Ms. Domracheva is back in shape and is eager to fight for medals at the forthcoming Olympics in PyeongChang.

The President congratulated Darya on this brilliant victory, writing: 'Throughout your career, you've

demonstrated the qualities of an outstanding athlete and, today, you've claimed a well-deserved victory in Hochfilzen. We believe in you and, with great hope, we expect a bright and productive season from the women's team'.

Alexander Lukashenko wished Darya Domracheva,

the whole team and coaching staff confidence, strong health and good luck.

The next day saw a 10km pursuit race, where Ms. Domracheva started in first place. Sadly, she had some problems with speed, finishing 31st, 21 seconds behind Nadezhda Skardino and 17 seconds behind Irina

Krivko. Kaisa Mäkäräinen won the skating step, with Domracheva 1 minute and 14 seconds behind.

First place in the sprint went to Slovakia's Anastasiya Kuzmina, with silver claimed by Finland's Kaisa Mäkäräinen.

Darya Domracheva is pleased with her form and speed but admits having problems with her ski equipment, saying, "I see that I must work on this. I'll miss the next stage in Annecy, as I have a training camp at that time."

Much work still lies ahead

By Igor Grishin

Borisov BATE footballers fail to reach playoffs of Europa League, losing in final group away match to London Arsenal — 0:6

To enter the playoffs, Alexander Yermakovich's team needed to beat the 'Gunners', while Belgrade Red Star (Crvena Zvezda) and Köln should have ended with a draw. However, nothing of the kind happened.

Arsenal has already secured first place in Group H. With this in mind, their highly experienced coach, Arsene Wenger, enabled his main line-up to rest, while BATE sent its best footballers. Sadly, Arsenal outranked BATE significantly, scoring three times in the first half, to goalkeeper Denis Shcherbitsky's consternation. Only at the very beginning of the match did the Borisov players almost score. Arsenal's footballers took control of the ball in the 10th minute, and then fully took the initiative,



One of the distressing moments for BATE

pleasing their fans with beautiful play: in the 11th minute, defender Mathieu Debuchy scored, followed by goals from Theo Walcott and Jack Wilshere.

Almost immediately after halftime, BATE defender Denis Polyakov scored an own goal. Afterwards, Olivier Giroud realised

a penalty — followed by the final goal by Mohamed Elneny, taking the score to 6:0.

In the first round, BATE lost to Arsene Wenger's players at Borisov-Arena — 2:4. The Belarusians have twice ended in a draw against Red Star — 1:1 (away), 0:0 (home), and have exchanged

victories with Köln — 1:0 (home) and 2:5 (away). In Belgrade, Red Star defeated Köln (1:0) and, with Arsenal, is through to the playoffs.

Group H is led by Arsenal, on 13 points (goal difference — 14-4), followed by Red Star — 9 (3-2), Köln — 6 (7-8), and BATE — 5 (6-16).

Medal standings in Mexico

Belarusian Paralympic athletes claim twenty medals at World Para Swimming Championships in Mexico

Igor Boky earned the seventh gold medal at the tournament, winning the 100m freestyle (S13 category), finishing within 52.24 seconds. The Belarusian swimmer also claimed gold medals in 50m freestyle, 100m backstroke, butterfly and brass, in 200m medley swimming and 400m freestyle. On the final day of the world forum, Natalia Shavel took silver in the 200m medley (SM6 category) while Grigory Zudilov came second in 50m freestyle (S11 category). In total, Belarusian Paralympic athletes earned eleven gold, seven silver and two bronze medals in Mexico. In the overall medal standings, our national team was ranked fifth for the number of gold awards. At the previous world championship, in 2015 in Glasgow, Belarusian Paralympic athletes won nine awards and occupied ninth place in the medal standings.

12 AGENDA

The Minsk Times Thursday, December 14, 2017

Illumination of the week



Gomel streets adorned by festive New Year illumination

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 17th December. *Mikhas Rogalevich: Song of Life* Until 7th January. *Symphony of Life*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 10th January. *Fashionable Century*

BELARUSIAN STATE MUSEUM OF GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 24th December. *We Fly in Sky Alone*
Until 31st January. *Fighting for Homeland*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 31st December. *Francysk Skaryna and His Epoch* Until 15th January. *Passenger from Nastrom* Until 15th February. *Valery Slauk's Graphics*

PALACE OF SPORTS

4 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 10th January. *Minsk Christmas Festival*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 31st December. *Meeting the Master*
Until 7th January. *Naked Nature*

MUSEUM OF THEATRICAL AND MUSICAL CULTURE HISTORY

5 Muzykalny Lane
Until 28th December. *Valentin Yelizariiev: Ballet as Art of Soul*

UNIVERSITY OF CULTURE ART GALLERY

1 Oktyabrskaya Square
Since 7th December. Exhibition of painted carpets: *For Happiness, For Life* Until 21st December. *Russian Old-Believers of Estonia*

GALLERIA MINSK

9 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 31st December. *Large New Year Market* Until 14th January. *13th World Miracle* Until 15th January. *Robots and Transformers* Until 15th January. *Museum-Factory of Fir Tree Toys*

HOUSE-MUSEUM OF FIRST RSDRP CONGRESS

31a Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 14th January. *Minsk 1917*

CHELYUSKINTSEV PARK OF CULTURE AND REST

84/1 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 30th June 2018. *Legacy of Belarus: Dedicated to Minsk's 950th Anniversary*

MUSEUM OF NATURE AND ECOLOGY

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

THEATRES

NATIONAL ACADEMIC BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Street
14.12. The Swan Lake 15.12. The Magic Flute 16.12. Cavalleria Rusticana 18.12. Carmen 21.12. La Traviata

BELARUSIAN STATE ACADEMIC MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
14.12. The Sleeping Beauty 15.12. Merry Poppins 16.12. The Nutcracker; A Thousand and One Nights 17.12. Bridegrooms 19.12. Cleopatra 20.12. Ball in Savoy 21.12. Cherry Orchid

YANKA KUPALA NATIONAL ACADEMIC THEATRE

7 Engels Street
14.12. Not Mine 16 and 17.12. The Black Lady of Nesvizh 17.12. Jeweler's Jubilee 19.12. Pan Tadeusz 20.12. School of Taxpayers 21.12. Weltmaster-Accordion

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
14.12. Taming of the Shrew 15.12. An Intimidated Apostle 16.12. As If By Magic; An Ideal Husband 17.12. Hot Mothers 20.12. Truth is Good but Happiness is Better 21.12. Circle of Love

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
14.12. Playing Happy Family

THEATRE-STUDIO OF FILM ACTOR

13 Pobediteley Avenue
14.12. #13 15.12. Who Laughs Last 16.12. Night of Anton Chekhov's Miniatures 17.12. An Unnamed Star 18.12. The Same Place Next Year 19.12. A Very Simple Story 20.12. Pygmalion

REPUBLICAN THEATRE OF BELARUSIAN DRAMA

44 Kropotkin Street
15 and 16.12. Suffering from Common Sense 17.12. Adam's Jokes 18.12. From Insects' Life 19.12. Doctor Raus' Career

BELARUSIAN STATE PUPPET THEATRE

20 Engels Street
15.12. Mann Ist Mann 16.12. Little Red Riding Hood 17.12. The Kid and Karlsson-on-the-Roof

YOUNG SPECTATORS' THEATRE

26 Engels Street
15.12. Teddy 16.12. Dungeon of Great Goodwin 17.12. Poliana 20 and 21.12. How Kikimora Turns to Snow Maiden

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
14.12. Husband As Many 15.12. Cuckold 16 and 17.12. Father the Frost Changes Profession 16.12. Two in Lift, and Tequila 17.12. New Year Visits Barboskiny 18, 20 and 21.12. New Year Tricks of Baba Yaga

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