

In-depth conversation about important issues



Slightly out of season but nonetheless a very interesting exhibition



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 9 (775) ● THURSDAY, MARCH 7, 2019 ● WWW.SB.BY



These flowers embody the spring holiday

March 8th — International Women's Day —
is always celebrated with great enthusiasm in Belarus



In-depth conversation

Last Friday, the meeting of the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, with representatives of the general public and expert community, as well as Belarusian and foreign media, lasted for almost seven hours

Over 200 people took part in the 'Big Conversation with the President', including reporters, political analysts, economists, real economy sector specialists, representatives of public associations and religious faiths. The Head of State answered dozens of questions relating to a broad spectrum of issues. Alexander Lukashenko spoke in detail about priorities in Belarus' domestic and foreign policy, mutual relations with Russia, China, the CIS states and other countries. The President spoke sincerely and at length about problems in the economy, industry, agriculture and the social sphere, drawing special attention to measures being taken to resolve the problems. In addition to asking questions, the participants of the meeting put forward initiatives, expressed their points of view and debated with the Head of State. The dialogue continued even during a brief recess, with Mr. Lukashenko answering questions while talking informally to experts and mass media representatives. In particular, the President reminded the audience that Belarus' foreign policy is conducted exclusively in the interests of providing security and preserving peace, "We are against any manifestations of aggression, both military and information. However, new points of tension emerge along the perimeter of our border. The treaties that have ensured the balance of military power on the planet are collapsing. We are in the midst of a new arms race. When we respond to modern challenges or make a step towards strengthening our own military capabilities, we immediately see high emotions both in international political circles and on the Internet. We are used to the fact that not everybody is happy about a small independent country in the centre of Europe with a quiet life and a socially oriented policy serving human interests. Not everyone likes it. This fact provokes, perhaps, the greatest number of attacks on our domestic policy from unofficial and anonymous sources."



The President of Belarus also spoke:

About the future of the Union State and relations with Russia

"When I was making decisions at the start of independence, the fate of our state and my policy was largely determined by the fact that we are connected to each other, we are a close people. The entire economic basis relied on it. Our economy was based on completing high-tech production, and we used huge amounts of resources, spare parts and other items from the Russian Federation. Then the finished products were exported. Many factors encouraged me to advocate for close allied relations with our brotherly Russia. When we signed the Union State Treaty, steps to create this state were envisaged. The main step that we had to take was to pass the Constitution of our state at a referendum in order to answer all the questions, from common currency to state administration bodies," noted Alexander Lukashenko, adding that the Russians did not fully support it back then. "If, today, we put the question of a

referendum in Belarus on the unification of the two states and, as many in Russia say, on the inclusion of Belarus in Russia, 90 percent would vote against. This is not because our society is against Russia. A new generation has grown up, and the old one has realised that we can live and co-operate in a completely different form — like relatives and friends. Belarusians today want to be together with Russia but to live in their own apartment. What's wrong with that?"

About Russian credits

According to the President, Russia has given Belarus a loan for the construction of a nuclear power plant at a rate of 4.8 percent, while a loan to Vietnam was provided at less than 3 percent. Armenia has also received a credit at a rate less than 3 percent. "Why?" asked Mr. Lukashenko. "Recently we returned to Mr. Gref [Chairman of the Board of Russia's Sberbank] the loan which was issued under the guarantee of Belaruskali at 9 percent, to the amount of about \$600m. We tried to negotiate and as time has passed, the interest rate has fallen. We tried to agree similar terms to how the West gives loans, at 2 percent, or China which also offers 2 percent. We

the Constitution," Mr. Lukashenko said, adding that he has not yet discussed election campaigns with anyone.

The elections will be held in good time. "I swear that even if the situation is really bad, I will never manipulate public opinion in order to find the right time to make a bid for power. In the coming days — probably in March or April — we will discuss the topic and decide on terms," he noted.

According to the President, these landmark political events will be a test not only for the acting authorities but for each of us. We share a single country. "I'm convinced we will pass the test with dignity. The most important thing is to hold these campaigns in a business-like manner — rather than initiating a battle when the country and our people could be affected. This would then affect our children," he added.

About information security concept

Belarus' National Information Security Concept will be revised at a session of the Security Council. Mr. Lukashenko noted that an information war is in progress around the world and stressed that Belarus should know how to confront these issues using various methods. "We are going to improve the Information Security Concept. We can see the problem and are dealing with it already. We are going to revise and toughen the concept so that you could understand in what direction the authorities will work, particularly in the run-up to the Presidential and parliamentary elections," he said.

According to him, it is necessary to first be united inside the country in order to resist information assaults from the West or the East. Opposition must be constructive. "I don't believe Russia want to lose Belarus, orchestrate a coup here, or worsen the situation in any way. It is possible there is a problem from the East but there is an even greater problem from the West. Russians haven't deployed missiles to the west of Moscow in order to target Belarus. Why do Poland and other countries (I'll not mention them) need this? Let's be objective about this," added the President.

About EAEU

"To be honest, I don't pin great hopes on the Eurasian Economic Union. There are too many suspicions and disagreements. Apart from that, the economic union is getting increasingly politicised, which is totally unacceptable," Mr. Lukashenko said. The President drew attention to the great number of exemptions in trade and to the failure to honour the commitments within the framework of the EAEU. "Even if we put forward a sensible proposal to resolve an issue, we end up rendering the decision meaningless. Each country tries to make the free movement of goods, capital and people impossible and to bypass it, although this is the nuts and bolts of this union," he said.

Speaking about Belarus' forthcoming presidency in the EAEU, the President noted that he does not expect any breakthroughs, because all decisions are

ACCENT

It's time when we should convene Helsinki-2 and talk seriously at least at the level of OSCE heads of state [the last meeting of the OSCE Heads of State took place in Astana in 2010, the previous one in Istanbul in 1999]. We cannot rush ahead. We have to do it step by step.

were refused and so I instructed the Government to immediately find funds, using gold and foreign exchange reserves, and return the money to the bank."

Mr. Lukashenko added that, in Sochi, the President of Russia began to say that the country helps Belarus with loans — noting that there are no problems with interest payments and Belarusians are very disciplined and mandatory in performing their obligations.

About forthcoming elections

"In the near future, decisions on the schedule of the parliamentary and Presidential elections in Belarus will be formalised. Everything will follow

about important issues

taken by consensus. Therefore, a position of one state, even the biggest one, hardly makes any difference if at least one state votes against.

About tax manoeuvre

The Head of State noted that, in Sochi, he and Russian President Vladimir Putin addressed the tax manoeuvre issue ‘only in the context of what we should not do if we want to maintain the balance of our relations’. “When we were discussing these issues, we had a full understanding. I said back then that if Russia was having any problems, difficulty with money etc., we would not raise the issue of the tax manoeuvre,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

The President recalled that the tax manoeuvre in the oil industry in Russia will cost Belarus about \$400m this year. “With the GDP at more than \$50bn, I think we will survive it somehow,” he said.

Additional expenses due to this policy have amounted to \$3.4bn since 2015. “When we were discussing the Eurasian Economic Union, especially the advanced integration within the Union State of Belarus and Russia, we did not ask for cheaper gas and oil. We agreed that we would work under equal conditions. This is the cornerstone of our agreements. We would never sign any agreements to the detriment of the Belarusian economy. The union means equality,” stressed the Head of State.

About placement of intermediate-range missiles

“If such missiles are deployed in Ukraine, it would be a catastrophe. You must understand that Russians will not allow these missiles to be deployed there. We’ll absolutely support them on this. That’s why Ukraine mustn’t take any steps in this direction.”

It is not the first time the President has expressed his concerns about the possible deployment of intermediate-range and shorter-range missiles in Europe. As the Head of State, he is concerned about what effect the deployment of such missiles may have on Belarus. “I wouldn’t like a catastrophe to happen in Europe, God forbid, a nuclear one,” he said.

About Belarusian-Chinese relations

China is a reliable partner who is always ready to lend a hand to Belarus, noted Alexander Lukashenko, answering a question from the Chinese journalist. He remarked that this support is mutual and tackled the development of economic and investment co-operation between the two states. He thanked the Chinese side, saying, “All the issues I brought to the leadership of China were solved.”

As an example, he cited the situation when problems with the delivery of products to Russia emerged. “When Xi Jinping came for a visit, Belarusians remember he tried our products and I asked if he liked them. He answered that the products were good and of high quality. As a loyal Belarusian I said that we needed help with the market. China purchases a huge amount of foodstuffs. Moreover, there is railway transportation between China and Western Europe via Belarus. It’s a real gift for us — trains won’t travel empty on the way back if we use them to transport our products, including farm produce, to the Chinese market.”



DIRECT SPEECH

I believe that we’ll have to adopt a new Constitution. We may have to enhance other branches of power: executive and legislative. After a thorough analysis we might have to overhaul the election system and decide whether we should introduce proportional representation or stay with the majority voting system. This will be easy to do, as it has already been done by Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries. We will study their practices.

Mr. Lukashenko emphasised the need to diversify the export of products to foreign markets and added that Belarus was recently highly dependent on the Russian market, while now we have the formula for an export-oriented country thanks to China and other states. Addressing the representatives of the Chinese side, Mr. Lukashenko said, “You should know that Belarusians will not be in your debt. You are a reliable partner who has always supported us. We will treat your country the same way. We are your friends.”

About visiting China

The President plans to visit China in April to take part in the 2nd *Belt and Road* Forum. He noted he’d received an invitation from the Chinese President to participate in the forthcoming forum. We will attend this forum and later, in June, we’ll meet in Bishkek, at the session of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation. We have a tough schedule, but I will share a secret: Xi Jinping also suggested meeting in Beijing.” The Head of State explained that a bilateral meeting was preliminary planned for March, but these plans have altered because Alexander Lukashenko will be in China for the April forum.

“During this stage, because of the changed situation around Belarus, and especially around the People’s Republic of China, we have an urgent need to meet and to talk how to collaborate under these new circumstances,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

About power

“I promise you that I won’t be president for life. Secondly, that I won’t hold on to power for the sake of my children or pass it on to them. I have no intention of

doing this,” said Alexander Lukashenko.

He also commented on speculation alleging that Russian President Vladimir Putin and he want to unite the two states, divide offices and so on. “I say it publicly: it is not my first term in office, I’m already fed up with this presidency. I would never agree to destroy the country to fulfil my personal ambitions. This would mean wrecking everything we’ve done for over two decades. Everybody needs to calm down,” said the Head of State, emphasising that he is not going to extend his political career using underhand methods.

“Everything will be conducted in line with our laws. Today I feel that, given my health today, the state of things in the country and the attitude towards me, I cannot but put myself forward as a presidential candidate. However, this is my vision today. Things might change, and I will have to act differently. I will run for presidency. You can elect anyone you want. You don’t have to vote for me. It is absolutely okay,” he added.

About Helsinki-2 Process

“It’s time when we should convene Helsinki-2 and talk seriously at least at the level of OSCE heads of state [the last meeting of the OSCE Heads of State took place in Astana in 2010, the previous one in Istanbul in 1999]. We cannot rush ahead. We have to do it step by step,” said Mr. Lukashenko.

The President mentioned negotiations of the leaders of the USA and North Korea as an example. Many people expected the first meeting of the heads of state to dismantle difficulties in relations between the countries right away, however, it did not happen. “Major matters cannot be tackled right away, particular-

ly where major players are involved and particularly at the level of countries,” he said.

New initiatives have emerged, including the revival of the Silk Road. “It’s now necessary to link these initiatives without making them contradictory to each other. How will our Chinese friends accept this initiative? Will it interfere with the Silk Road? There are many problems and a great many questions,” he concluded.

About conflict settlement in Donbass

“I said long ago, that until the Americans join or support the existing format and the talks that were held in Minsk, they will not make much sense. I publicly urged the United States to come to the negotiating table of the ‘Normandy Four’. I’m sure if they supported this process, we would see it move ahead in leaps and bounds,” noted Mr. Lukashenko.

He stressed that Belarus is prepared, if necessary, to participate more actively in the negotiations. “I don’t like mediation. I don’t like imposing myself either. You tell us what we should do, and we will do it. We don’t want to be accused of forcing ourselves as peacekeepers. But if you want something done, you know my position. We will do our utmost,” he added.

About Constitution

“I believe that we will have to adopt a new Constitution,” said Mr. Lukashenko, explaining that the issue will be dealt with by judges of the Constitutional Court. “I believe the judges of the Constitutional Court are very responsible people and they are working on it. We may have to enhance other branches of power: executive and legislative. After a thorough analysis we might have to overhaul the election system and decide whether we should introduce proportional representation or stay with the majority voting system. This will be easy to do, as it has already been done by Russia, Kazakhstan and other countries. We will study their practices.



Participants of the 'Big Conversation with the President' have their say



Vyacheslav Danilovich, Director of the History Institute at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus:

The event has a good format and all expectations were met. It's important for us that attention was given to the objective coverage of the history of our state and opposition to attempts to falsify it. Moreover, the concerns of our society — integration processes and the role of Belarus in them — were also tackled. The issues which were raised referring to coverage in the media and the role of information in the formation of public opinion were very clear to us, historians. It's an extremely vital aspect: broadcast of information via mass media should take place in a calm and objective manner, without fuelling conflict. The conversation was interesting and undoubtedly important for historians.



Alexander Shpakovsky, Director of the Actual Concept information and educational institution:

Firstly, the President has announced his intention to run for the forthcoming elections. At present, the public opinion polls available to me testify to the fact that the probability of his re-election for the highest state position is high. Furthermore, an assessment of the Belarusian political environment towards those who intend to stand for elections, points to the fact that the Head of State has no serious rivals.

Secondly, a range of important announcements have been made tackling support for mothers and maternity policy. According to the President, unprecedented measures are being planned to support families, including free provision of housing for families with many children.

Thirdly, the Russian context has come to the fore. On the one hand, I note the critical remarks addressed to the Government of the Russian Federation. On the other, as far as Vladimir Putin is concerned, our President has used the word 'friend' many times (which is an important point in a speech by any politician from a psychological point of view). Both leaders will eventu-

ally agree, even though Mr. Putin is likely to not be as free to make decisions or have control over their fulfilment, as the President of Belarus.

Of course, there's some concern regarding economic restrictions which separate representatives of leading circles in Russia are trying to introduce against us, and those information diversions which often come to us from the East. In recent times, two significant decisions have been adopted in Belarus. Firstly, the Belarusian Strategic Research Institute was established — a principally new structure, which the President tasked to 'look beyond the horizon' in the area of strategic forecasting. Secondly, the regulation of the State Secretary of the Security Council has formed a scientific-expert group. This is important in the context of the forthcoming election campaigns and since we have found ourselves at the epicentre of information confrontation flows.

During the 'Big Conversation with the President' several important messages were voiced — addressed to our foreign partners. They all come down to the fact that we, as a sovereign and independent state, don't wish to quarrel with anyone or break off relations. However, we will react to any non-friendly manifestations towards us.

Sergey Musienko, the Head of EcooM Analytical Centre:



I remarked on the personal involvement of the President — a quality he has demonstrated since 1994. Personal involvement in people, towards the country and concrete solutions. The answers to many questions were often tinged with criticism, regret for actions and the inaction of some officials: why haven't you stirred yourself and done this? If, for instance, we show a piece about youngsters from the Slutsk District who have nowhere to practice sports, this is primarily the problem of local authorities and of the rural council and should not be escalated to the level of President.

A record seven and a half hours of discussion revealed one more aspect. Over the years, Alexander Lukashenko hasn't turned into a boring president. On the contrary, with each year he is becoming more charismatic. He is sensitive to the audience and sees if a topic is interesting and important to people. This greatly inspires people from an emotional point of view.

Roza Turarbekova, Associate Professor of BSU's International Relations Faculty:



The conversation was fairly long and serious, with several sensational announcements being made, tackling both internal policy and issues of a foreign political nature. I even managed to get an answer to the question I wanted to know but didn't ask. The question tackled the would-be presidency of Belarus in the Eurasian Economic Union. The President sincerely expressed his concerns regarding further movement in this direction. In my opinion, it was a sober assessment and a good start. If expectations are realistic then movement beyond these expectations will bring a huge psychological effect.

Semen Uralov, Chief Editor of SONAR-2050 project:



A serious conversation is the major feature of this event. I received an answer to my question and now I'm waiting for continuation because, as I've already said, media security is an allied issue. The statehood of both Russia and Belarus is being attacked and recent tendencies confirm this. For example, attempts to discredit the Russian and Belarusian armies are purposeful and concentrated. They primarily aim at the 'under-30' generation.

Alexander Moshensky, Head of Santa-Bremor JV:



The conversation and discussion were a success. As far as business is concerned, I listened attentively to the issues of relations with Russia, the amnesty of capital and issues of power pressure on business and heard many answers and thoughts of the President. It seems to me that he has also heard that business is ready for conversation. The President showed that he thinks about the issues and this is a prelude to the conversation that may take place in a different format. Probably, we'll see the results.

No one has abolished the presumption of innocence



Head of State has warned the law enforcement bodies about non-admission of innocent people being charged with criminal offences

By Alexey Fedosov

On hearing the report from the Chairman of the Investigative Committee, Ivan Noskevich, Alexander Lukashenko asked for clarification of how the work of the Investigative Committee is currently organised and what the drawbacks are. "I monitor closely the work of the Investigative Committee. I'm concerned, we have taken decisive steps to modernise and reform our law enforcement bodies," said the President. He noted that many countries, including Russia, Kazakhstan and Ukraine, had reformed their investigating authorities, but had failed to achieve an improvement in results. "Nevertheless, we've taken a bold decision: investigation should be independent if we want to achieve conclusive

and efficient results," said the Head of State.

According to Mr. Lukashenko, a discussion will soon take place concerning the work of the whole security industry in the country and it will consider in detail the activity of the Investigative Committee.

Mr. Noskevich noted that last year, the Committee focused primarily on the objective and comprehensive investigation of criminal cases and the non-admission of innocent people being charged with criminal offences. The Head of State was informed about the Investigative Committee's work in 2018. "The President once again stipulated that the department must be a filter, preventing innocent people being charged with criminal offences. I believe that we've managed to

fulfil this task in 2018," said Mr. Noskevich to journalists, after making the report.

As an example, he cited data showing that, last year, the courts justified 44 people in criminal cases, investigated by the Investigative Committee. At the same time, in 2017, there were 59 such people. "This doesn't show that courts have become more liberal. It testifies to the fact that in their work, the investigators are subject exclusively to the law and have a principled attitude to cases where there is not enough evidence to send the person to court. This is confirmation that the Investigative Committee should have an attentive, principal and prudent attitude towards each situation and towards every person under investigation," said the Chairman of the Investigative Committee.

High status for collaboration

Belarus and Kyrgyzstan develop opportunity to exchange visits at top level



By Oleg Bogomazov

The recent meetings between the heads of state and government of Belarus and Kyrgyzstan have been mainly held in multi-lateral format as part of large-scale international events of the EEC, the CIS, the CSTO, and the SCO. "We have been actively working with these integration associations," noted the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Kyrgyzstan to Belarus, Kubanychbek Omuraliev.

One such meeting took place in June 2018 during the SCO Heads of State Summit in Bishkek. As far as bilateral relations are concerned, the Ambassador announced a future exchange of visits by the heads of state, "We're working on the future official exchange of visits. The first may take place at the end of the year."

Kubanychbek Omuraliev stressed that Kyrgyzstan appreciates Belarusian industrial products. "We believe that Belarus has well-developed industry, especially agricultural and utilities machinery. These products make up the bulk of exports," he added.

In 2018, Kyrgyzstan purchased \$120.3m of Belarusian products. The supplies of Kyrgyzstan products to Belarus made up \$10.6m. "Despite Kyrgyzstan's trade deficit, this does not mean unilateral trade. It's mutually beneficial, as well-known Belarusian tractors and other agricultural machinery were supplied in Soviet times," explained the Ambassador. In his words, the current situation proves the high quality of Belarusian products and their popularity.

Reaction to new challenges

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

Belarus calls for the speedy launch of the negotiation process for world security

During the High-Level Segment of the Conference on Disarmament, Andrei Dapkiunas, Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, announced the necessity for a speedy launch of the international negotiation process.

The Deputy Foreign Minister called on the participants of the meeting to consider the depth of the security crisis that the international community has faced in recent years. He stressed that the urgent launch of large-scale multilateral negotiations to overcome disagreements must be the response to the current crisis. The talks should be aimed at developing new algorithms and 'acceptable-to-all' rules in the context of the growing multipolarity of international relations.

Mr. Dapkiunas laid out Belarus' approaches to the possible role of the conference in reducing tensions and responding to new challenges and threats to international security. The Belarusian delegation takes an active part in the work of the Conference on Disarmament and is in favour of reviving the work of this multilateral negotiating mechanism as soon as possible.

Complete support is ongoing

By Vladimir Khromov

Officially, Beijing completely supports Belarus' efforts to join the World Trade Organisation, notes Permanent Representative of China to the WTO, Zhang Xiangchen, as he met Belarus' Deputy Foreign Minister, Andrei Dapkiunas

The representative of China to the WTO, Zhang Xiangchen, expressed the official full support of Beijing for Belarus' efforts to join the WTO. He shared China's vision of current WTO reform negotiations and expressed confidence that, after the changes, the WTO would retain its relevance and effectiveness as a foreign trade regulator, including in the protection of its members' interests.

The meeting in Geneva took place in trilateral format and

was also attended by the WTO Deputy-Director General, Yi Xiaozhun. He assured delegates that the Secretariat will continue providing Belarus with support for building national potential for promising work with the organisation. This support will initially be expressed in training specialists from Belarus. According to WTO data, in 2017, 38 Belarusian experts took part in various courses and seminars of the organisation while, in 2018, the figure increased to 83.



During meeting in Geneva

Andrei Dapkiunas thanked officials for their support and expressed the belief that the maintenance of effective international regulations for economic foundations is vi-

tal for the entire international community, both for public institutions and private business given the degradation of the international law system in the areas of peace and security.



By Olga Korneeva

The award was presented to the Bank at the 42nd Annual Meeting of the Association of Development Financing Institutions of Asia and the Pacific (ADFIAP), held in Oman. The Development Bank was recognised for its infrastructure development efforts that have helped improve the country's

Award for the financing of infrastructure sites

Development Bank of Belarus has been recognised by the Association of Development Financing Institutions of Asia and the Pacific

transport infrastructure and create conditions for promoting other industries, as well as facilitating closer integration of the national economy into the world economy.

Infrastructure facilities such as roads, bridges and airports are vital for any national economy, particularly those with huge transit flows. Moreover, the level of transport infrastructure development is viewed as a

benchmark by investors, and can encourage or discourage cash injections into a region. The Development Bank is actively involved in building a modern and efficient transport infrastructure in the country.

The ADFIAP was founded in 1976 and is currently one of the largest international unions of development institutions, uniting 131 organisations from 45 countries.

New and promising markets to be conquered by exporters

By Vladimir Mikhailov

Final figures for last year's export volumes haven't been calculated yet but it's already clear that they will be higher than those of 2017 both in quantitative and monetary terms

Even though our country maintains trade relations with more than 160 states, there are more new and promising markets for Belarusian exporters, believes Vladimir Ulakhovich, Chairman of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry. "We're conducting a comprehensive study to assess the most interesting foreign markets. When planning trade fairs, we study proposals and recommendations from our embassies and state bodies. These two sources are expanded with our own marketing analysis. We're looking for markets where there's a real niche for domestic produce and financially reliable partners, while also assessing the risks and logistics. The National Exhibition of the Republic of Belarus will be presented in Nigeria as part of the International Agrofood Expo for the first time. This is a promising market for exporters of agricultural machinery and food products. Argentina will also be a new country in the exhibition calendar, with an exposition scheduled there for June. The



Belarusian stand at one of international exhibitions

marketing analysis points to demand in the Latin American region for fertilisers and technology in plant growing and animal breeding."

According to Mr. Ulakhovich, another important task is to reinforce our position in the large market of Indonesia — very important for world exporters; at present, this country lays claim to the role of a sub-regional leader in South East Asia. The national exhibi-

tion of Belarus will be organised with the aim of being included in the universal exhibition in Jakarta. This year, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry will continue organising large-scale branch exhibitions of Belarusian manufacturers — *Made in Belarus* — to be held in Georgia and Kazakhstan.

Nowadays, 70 percent of Belarusian exports are supplied to five countries which are our traditional partners with whom

clear parameters have been established and there's no need to inject money into marketing. However, Mr. Ulakhovich believes that this is where we may be vulnerable. Belarusian enterprises regularly face unfair competition, restrictions and bans. In order to neutralise the losses from such situations, an ideal export formula is needed. "It's important to understand that we aren't setting out to keep supplies to the EAEU at 30 per-

cent; we're saying it's necessary to expand our export supplies to Europe and distant states to this level," said Mr. Ulakhovich.

At present, the formula seems to be that we sell more than half of all our goods to the post-Soviet countries, around 25 percent goes to the EU, while the remaining is sold to more remote states.

Though there are areas where we see good dynamics of growth, there are also positive indicators on the markets of the South East Asian countries and China. For example, we recently discussed supplies of our produce to the People's Republic of China worth \$10m, while last year we reached \$100m. We shouldn't ignore Africa, as the market has huge potential. There's also a niche for Belarusian produce in the Latin American region.

The situation is more difficult with the European market. On the one side, our partners speak about the openness of the market and WTO principles while, on the other, it's very difficult to get into EU markets with one's own goods, as lots of restrictive measures are in operation. Nevertheless, the Chamber of Commerce and Industry motivates domestic manufacturers to enter the European market, since receiving a certificate for it, makes it much easier for businesses to work in other areas.

Agreeing with Pakistan to expand deliveries

By Svetlana Savelieva

Belarus plans to expand the supplies of domestic machinery to Pakistan, with corresponding agreements reached during the visit of the Belarusian expert delegation to this country, headed by Belarus' Deputy Industry Minister Dmitry Korchik

The two sides agreed to increase supplies of Belarusian machinery, especially agricultural, to Pakistani provinces. Representatives of both states confirmed their interest in developing co-operative ties between Belarus and Pakistan.

The Belarusian delegation comprises representatives of the country's leading enterprises, including MAZ JSC and MTZ, as well as companies of the industry. During the visit, they held meetings with representatives of Pakistani industry and the armed forces. Negotiations were held with the Federal Secretary of the Ministry of Industries and Production, Azher Ali Choudhry, and the Federal Min-



Dmitry Korchik and Azher Ali Choudhry

ister for National Food Security and Research, Mehboob Sultan. Moreover, the Belarusian delegation also met representatives of leading economic structures of the Pakistani army, including the Frontier Works Organisation.

According to the Belarusian Embassy to Pakistan, the visit was a continuation of agreements reached during the talks with the President of Belarus, Alexander Lukashenko, and Chairman of Joint Chiefs of Staff Committee of the Armed Forces of Pakistan, Zubair Mahmood Hayat, last December.

Electronic system is presented in London

First Deputy Director of the National Marketing Centre, Alexander Zapolsky, presented a project for an electronic system for state purchases by Belarus, during an international seminar tackling the development of electronic governments in the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development

By Olga Korneeva

London hosted the discussion about modernising the system of state purchasing in view of the prospects of Belarus' joining the WTO and the development of e-government in the country. The compliance of Belarusian legislation for state purchasing according to the agreement of the WTO for state purchases was also high on the agenda, while further steps have been determined to launch electronic purchases based on OCDS (Open Contracting Data Standard) and open data in Belarus. According to the National Marketing Centre, the digital government will facilitate an improvement in the quality of state services in general and in the sphere of state purchases. It



At presentation in London

will promote the enhancement of transparency and efficiency of state contracts and the reduction of operating costs for buyers and sellers.

The Centre's First Deputy Director spoke about national goals, key problems and ways to solve them in order to move to an electronic method of state purchasing on a large scale. The Belarusian expert also present-

ed a technical project for the development of state information and analytical systems and possible variants of launching the system in Belarus.

The National Marketing Centre of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus is an operator of the www.icetrade.by — a website which contains information about state purchases and purchases using own funds.



David-Gorodok always pleased to welcome guests

‘One-storey town’ in the south of Belarus is known for its thousand-year history

By Anna Kurak

Praying to St. George

David-Gorodok was owned by the wealthy Radziwill family for more than two hundred years. Being Catholics, they promoted the Roman Catholic church in their estates, but residents defended the faith of their ancestors — Orthodox beliefs.

A modest wooden house in the centre of the town is St. George Church. It was built back in the 17th century for David-Gorodok Cossacks, headed by Ivan Bogdashevich. Here they prayed to St. George for success in the struggle for faith and freedom. There was time when the church was so richly decorated that it ‘topped’ even Orthodox churches in the capital. A bright iconostasis and *The Lord’s Supper* in the centre were so beautiful! The altar was skilfully decorated by local masters Levon Bulok, Yan and Semen in 1724. Pierced work was painted with egg tempera and gilt. The icons of the church were set in unique silver-plated frames. Part of this legacy of

the ‘David-Gorodok Baroque style’ can be seen at the National Art Museum of Belarus.

Finding out about the grandson of Yaroslav the Wise

David-Gorodok is very quiet but it wasn’t always like this. At the turn of the 11th and 12th centuries, passions were running high: the descendants of Yaroslav the Wise couldn’t divide the western provinces. His grandson — young prince David Igorevich — became an orphan early in life and couldn’t lay claim to even the smallest district. However, he was very wily and clever, managing to reign for a while in Tmutarakan, to shut the trade route to Byzantine and take part in the campaign to the River Don together with Vladimir Monomakh.

By the end of his life, David became tired of bloody adventures and decided to settle down. He wanted to build a city on the River Pripyat but his influential relatives wouldn’t allow him in case he also seized the trade route? So, he chose a

location near the picturesque River of Goryn. According to the legend, David saw two aurochs on the bank, stopped and said: ‘I have come here to make my name famous forever!’ A citadel in the suburbs of the town and a monument to the founder duke serves as a reminder of past times.

Collecting the most beautiful bouquet

An evening walk along paved streets between nice wooden houses, decorated with fancy carving is always a pleasure for both the eyes and feet. What aromas there are here! From April to October, flowers are blossoming in front gardens practically in every house. David-Gorodok has long been known as the ‘capital’ of seeds’. The most splendid asters, the most sweet-scented roses and the brightest dahlias are collected here. The local market enjoys popularity among summer residents from all over the country. Moreover, the streets of David-Gorodok are also captured in the film based on the autobiographical novel of the Belarusian writer Georgy Marchuk — *Province Flowers*. In 1995, the film was awarded the *Golden Vityaz*.

Moulding pots

The famous village of Gorodnaya is located nearby. It owes its popularity to pots, as well as jugs, bowls, cups and other utensils. White-clay, non-glazed and water pots are appreciated all over the world for their simplicity. Gorodnaya ceramics combines aesthetics and practicality while also preserving thousand-year-old traditions.

The peak of the tourist season in this village is from late July to early August, with masters from all over the world competing in the skilfulness of their hands, to determine whose pots are more beautiful.

Have you ever held clay in your hands? The village still preserves Belarus’ only school of pottery which teaches how to mould, decorate and fire utensils. In the Potter’s Estate Museum, you will be shown how local masters have lived in ancient times. Don’t

Local potters master the craft from early childhood



forget to buy souvenirs: penny whistles and trinkets will definitely cheer up the children.

Pacifying one’s pride in the ‘Polesie Venice’

The River Goryn on which David-Gorodok stands, was previously called Gordynya (translated as ‘pride’), as its character is capricious. ‘The same as Duke David’, joke the locals. In spring and autumn, the river floods as if it were a sea, so it was called the ‘Polesie Venice’ or ‘Belarusian Amsterdam’. Even Herodotus in the 5th century BC wrote about ‘the sea among the marshes’ and later Ptolemy called this the Sea of Herodotus.

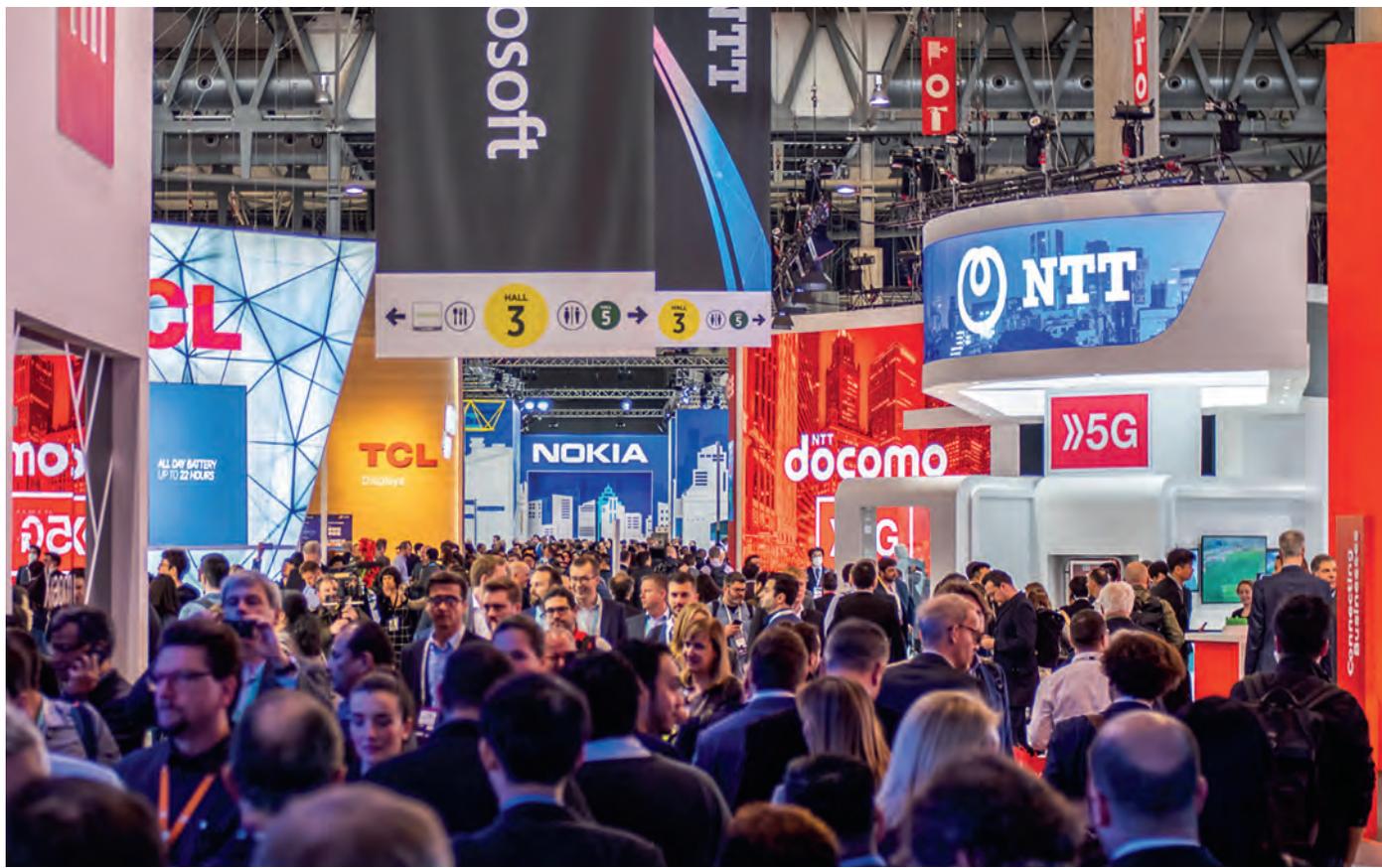
In the 20th century, the town was flooded many times: in 1948, 1950, 1958, 1960

and 1974. Both people and cattle had to float on rafts. For tourists, the flood of the River Goryn is a true miracle, while residents learnt to cope with the flood over a thousand years. Unlike Venetian gondolas, the local ‘dubasy’ — medieval exotic boats made from oak trunks — haven’t been preserved. To be more precise, only one example has survived, being discovered by an archaeologist made from 700-year-old oak on the bottom of Goryn. It’s 13m long and 2.6m wide.

The fearsome floods were only stopped after a large-scale flood of 1974 when a network of canals with a flood wall was constructed around the town, thus pacifying the impetuous Goryn.



St. George Church



MWC 2019: 5G is here, and it's certainly time to celebrate

5G Internet is being called the next wireless revolution and is one of the main themes at this year's Mobile World Congress in Barcelona

Both Huawei and Samsung launched 5G connected phones ahead of the MWC, but what is it really going to change in our day-to-day lives?

To put the speed of the network into perspective, downloading a HD film using a 4G connection can take around 10 minutes, whereas you will be able to do this in less than a second on 5G.

It will allow surgeons to perform operations remotely

and connect whole urban areas to make smart cities among other wide-reaching applications.

When are we going to be able to use the 5G network?

Bart Salaets, Systems Engineering Director of 5G experts F5 Networks, explained that the network will be rolled out in different countries at different times, as the infrastructure is put in place. This should happen between 2020 and 2022, he said.

What are the risks?

5G will require hundreds of thousands of radio antenna to be built to support it, and some say the effects of this on our health must be studied more closely before the network is rolled out.

What's more, cybersecurity experts have raised concerns that 5G poses a higher security risk than 4G and are calling for measures to be taken to safeguard back doors.

"It's obvious that this network needs to be very tightly secure," said Salaets. "The technology is ready, it's there, but getting it secure from all angles is something that the industry needs to do."

However, MWC has long since covered other topics as well. Above all artificial intelligence, the new 5G standard, the expansive topic of mobility and AR/VR all play an important role at this year's Mobile World Congress.

Germany gauging blockchain potential

Germany has opened a consultation process on how to tap into the potential of blockchain technology ahead of presenting a strategy by the summer

Berlin is a hub for start-up companies of which around 170 in one way or another look at blockchain, the distributed ledger technology that underpins the bitcoin currency.

There is great interest from would-be participants and investors across a raft of industries including cars, pharmaceuticals, energy and public sector administration that hope to transform mass market processes via blockchain.

Companies and industry groups that could become stakeholders in a blockchain deployment process in Europe's biggest economy were invited to supply recommendations.

While concrete results were being sought, it was as yet unclear whether those would immediately materialise in any legislative moves.

Blockchain start-ups have said that without a legal framework, there are high entrance hurdles. Governments urge caution toward cryptocurrencies that run on the technology. Few major economies worldwide have crafted comprehensive strategies on how to nurture blockchain start-ups.

Some, including Britain and Singapore, have allowed such firms limited freedom to experiment with innovative applications of blockchain in the financial sector.



A 2,000-year-old Biblical treasure

Jerusalem's Terra Sancta Museum, which displays ancient artefacts excavated by the Franciscan Order over the past 100 years, offers insight into life in the Holy Land

Inside the new archaeological wing of Jerusalem's Terra Sancta Museum, a hallway leads visitors past a deep water cistern, then becomes a bridge as it passes over an even deeper and older water cistern, built nearly 1,000 years ago. Tucked under a Roman Catholic Franciscan monastery within the walls of the ancient Old City, the museum's location itself is a journey through the past of both Jerusalem and the religious order dedicated to preserving it.

"This was all filled with dirt," said museum director and Franciscan friar, Reverend Eugenio Alliata, as he stood on the metal bridge in his brown robe and sandals, overlooking the vast

stone cistern below. "We weren't even sure what was here." Looking up and continuing to walk, visitors follow him into a stone room from the 13th century, likely a workshop used by the Crusaders who ruled the Holy City back then. This room — now containing an elaborately carved stone that once sat atop a column at one of King Herod's luxurious palaces in the hills outside Jerusalem — was also, until recently, filled with earth.

But a multi-year restoration project has made this underground labyrinth — built and rebuilt in several layers from the time of King Herod in the 1st century to the Mamluk sultans in the medieval period — into a museum that tells not only the history of Jerusalem, but also the story of the Franciscan Order's archaeological discoveries made throughout Israel, the Palestinian territories, Egypt and Jordan over the last century.



Winter temperature record tumbles again in the UK

The UK has broken the record for its warmest winter day for the second consecutive day, with a temperature of 21.2°C in Kew Gardens, London

Last Monday was the first time temperatures of over 20°C had been reported in winter, breaking a record that had stood since 1998.

It means parts of Britain have been hotter than destinations such as Ibiza.

In February 2018, temperatures in the UK plunged as low as -11.7°C at South Farnborough, Hampshire.

Temperatures broke the previous day's record of 20.6°C in two other places, the Met Office said.

Meanwhile, firefighters have warned the warm weather could lead to a greater risk of outdoor fires.

The warning, from East Sussex Fire Service, came after two large fires broke out in Ashdown Forest — the East Sussex forest made famous by

AA Milne's *Winnie the Pooh* novels.

According to the Met Office the record-breaking conditions are a result of warm air combining with a period of sunshine across the UK, resulting in higher temperatures.

Winds from the south and southeast of the country, including from Spain and Africa, are pushing air over a part of Wales that has the greatest 'land track', causing it to get gradually warmer.

The further the air travels over land the more moisture it loses and faster it heats up, the Met Office said.

Scientists such as those at the Met Office are usually reluctant to link individual heatwaves, storms or floods directly to climate change without a specific study to prove it. But the research had shown that events like last summer's heatwave were made more likely by the rising levels of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases in the atmosphere.

Slightly out of season but nonetheless a very interesting exhibition



By Veniamin Mikheev

On Winter Canvas exhibition at Minsk's Artel Gallery attracts the attention of true connoisseurs of landscape art even on these March days

It's no surprise that, for many artists, winter is the most inspiring time of year. After all, in winter nature freezes, opening up endless opportunities for creativity and showing its true beauty in unforgettable colours.

While viewing the works on show, it's easy to think that every artist sees the charm of the winter landscape in their own way. Some admire shades of sparkling snow or noisy blizzards and others appreciate relaxing and rustic motifs. The exhibition combines different works in a single showcase — though they have all been created at different times and are in different moods. The show features work by European, Russian and Ukrainian artists of the 19th-early 20th century and modern Belarusian artists. It's impossible to leave out a picture by Minsk artist, Abram Krol. There is the impression that, in landscape painting, he found peace and harmony. In the natural beauty of his homeland, the author drew inspiration and showed himself not only as a soulful lyricist in praise of nature but also as an experimental painter. Krol felt the Belarusian winter keenly, with its grey days, gloomy sky and large snowdrifts. He learned from his teacher Lev Leitman who said: 'The key in our job is the ability to see'.

In winter, it's physically difficult to work with nature, but Krol — his contemporaries recall — loved open air workshops. His winter landscapes feature all the signs of the then dominant 'severe style' — with laconism and monumentality, restraint of colour palette and a narrative idea (such as running skiers or sporting events).

In turn, Vasily Sumarev's *Merry Winter in Loshitsa* (1970) creates a picture of the celebration of life — with inexhaustible imagination and almost childlike impartiality. His use of colour, musicality and reverence creates the feeling of a winter fairy tale inhabited by cheerful little creatures: boys and girls who look here almost like 'tin soldiers'. In his devotion to children, wanting to help them master the skill of drawing, Mr. Sumarev believed that a little artist exists inside each of them. He enjoyed the charm of their innocent storytelling, their colour extravaganza, the courage of their compositional elements. Perhaps only professional exactingness to himself and a sense of humour protected the master from the deliberate primitivism which it would have been easy to fall prey to: even thematic works in exhibitions such as *Physical Culture and Sport* were painted by Mr. Sumarev with a child's looseness and ease.

That approach was typical for the talented artist. His pre-New Year marketplace depicted in his *New Year Coming Soon* work is a colourful kaleidoscope. Mr. Sumarev's sharp eyes captured colour with the predominance of crimson, yellow and blue. He created the

composition which amazes — like a carousel twirling around a huge tree, with lace branches, flocks of birds and the fair spirit reigning over the market. The master could not only notice certain details but also organise them and subordinate them to the logic of his picture's composition. The many scenes, episodes and plots featured in this picture do not violate the integrity of the overall impression. Against the verbosity of his works, Mr. Sumarev remains an interesting and thoughtful conversationalist. The key to this is the confidence with which he addresses the audience — always keeping a distance and not boring the listener by repeating the same ideas and stories.



Near Vasily Sumarev's picture

The present exhibition presents a landscape genre which reflects a certain time of year. Valery Shkaruba, whose work is also represented at the show, has his own view on landscapes. "It's not what's depicted in the picture that matters but what's behind it," he explains. "You must feel it. The sufferings of artists

should be visible. Everything must be depicted — including experiences and thoughts, anything could be depicted in a landscape as in no other genre. A landscape for me is a mystery of nature. This is the key to art."

Can you explain why the landscape has replaced other genres for you?

This is probably because the landscape is the most philosophical genre to me. It's the simplest and at the same time the most difficult genre. Landscapes have always been drawn by almost all artists. Many believe that it's easy. I'm sure that, in its simplicity, all its depths are hidden; I'm only just beginning to comprehend the mystery of it myself.

How do your images emerge?

When I paint nature, I create an image of what I want to see in advance. The plot is not the key for me. It is not important what is portrayed but how it conveys mood and state of mind. I go to nature and look for what I need. It doesn't mat-

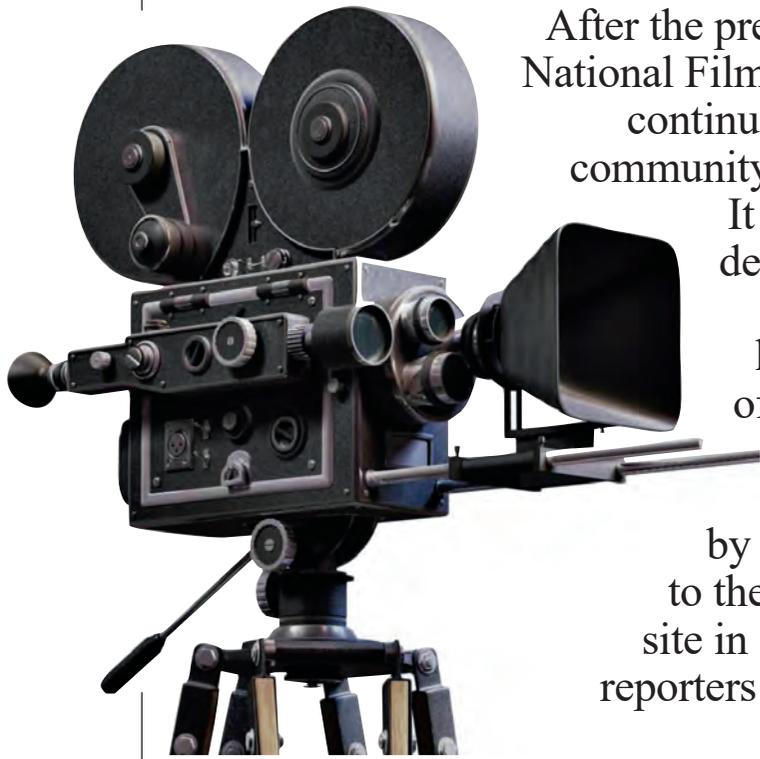
ter to me what I draw or what time of the year it is. These all are secondary. The image created in my head is the main thing and then I search for elements in nature to reproduce it. It might be a piece of sky, the forest... All my landscapes are collective. No such sights exist in nature, as I invent them. It's a long journey. I work until I get what I want. It takes me a long time to paint a picture. It's a process fraught with difficulties.

Would you like your artistry to influence those who get to know your works?

I think not. Art probably has other roles. I would hope people feel what I felt when I was drawing: all my thoughts and experiences. It's difficult to influence people and especially to educate them.

The exhibition is well worth a visit. You should come to enjoy the paintings of Nikolay Isaenko who is, undoubtedly, the most interesting landscape painter and ruthless critic of abstract art. He once said, "In Europe, there are almost no realist artists. This is because fashion — or even the market and popular culture — dictate the rules of the game everywhere. Often people speak of the financial crisis — trying to seek out its reasons. The reason is simple: many perceive the world exclusively from the point of view of consumers and view art as a commodity. It is strange that nobody speaks about the spiritual crisis..." These words are probably too simplistic, but I have no doubt that they are sincere. Nikolay Isaenok can only speak or draw from the heart.

Educational trails to interesting places



After the presentation of the first National Film Award, Belarusfilm continues to delight the film community with creative ideas.

It is now, for example, developing new tourist routes. Belarusfilm has a 90-year history of talented people and films to rely on. It is well represented by excursions and tours to the studio and shooting site in Smolevichi. Our MT reporters are the first to travel along the routes.



By Victoria Popova

Belarusian cinematography in posters

A film tour began in the centre of Minsk — in the Museum of Belarusian Cinema History. Rare examples of cinema equipment, costumes, photos and the main treasures of the collection — film posters — are kept in the modern mansion, not far from the Red Roman Catholic Church, on three museum floors. Among them are the first posters of Belarusian films from the 1920-1930s. The collection is complemented by a trendy multimedia application in three languages, which allows the visitor to learn about the posters' creators and, most importantly, to see the main extracts of the films for which they were drawn. "At auctions, such posters are worth thousands of Dollars," said the museum Director — Igor Avdeev — to the interest of the tourists.

Minsk-Smolevichi road

It takes no more than 40 minutes to reach the Smolevichi site from the capital. While travelling, an enthusiastic guide describes the interesting places in Minsk shot in the famous films: *Fa-*



vourite, Plumbum, or Dangerous Game, Amazing Adventures of Denis Korablev, Our Man in San Remo, Massacre, Footprints on Water and many others. "Incidentally, one of the roles in *Dudes* was performed by Oleg Yankovsky who, he recalls, was also once a dude of 'Minsk Broadway': near the GUM store is the site where Mr. Todorovsky's film was shot," our guide Vlad Khilkevich tells us. "The school where the future People's Artist of the USSR studied was two blocks from here, on 17 Engels Street."

DIRECT SPEECH

Belarusfilm Director Vladimir Karachevsky: From today, we are ready to receive guests at the studio and adapt to the requests of tourist groups

Max Korzh's favourite site

Many people know the second unofficial name of our studio is Partizanfilm but most

have not yet visited our site in Smolevichi, where many movies about the war were shot. The site is surrounded by hectares of picturesque forests and a lake. On arrival by bus, we were welcomed by actors in costume as 'guerrillas' — with bread, honey and hot tea in metal mugs. The tour through the local 'villages' has no interactive elements as it's impossible to shoot at imaginary enemies from the trench. However, the visitors can take photos with a rifle, no doubt,

their Instagram friends will be delighted. The local nature is beautiful and amazing; not long ago, a film about Yanka Kupala was shot here. They are currently building the scenery for the series about Zoya Kosmodemyanskaya — the site is never empty. Another rapper, Max Korzh, chose the beauty of local nature as his concert venue and this summer organised a grand musical festival here.

Hand out weapons

Our tour ended in Minsk, in the large pavilions of Belarusfilm, where tourists are now shown not only the costume department but also the weapons shop which has more than a thousand units of storage of unique weapons, bayonets and machine guns of every type. For the ladies in the group, the main attraction is to hold Mosin's rifle in their hands, to be surprised at how heavy it is (in *Battalion*, the actresses run with it on the sand). For men, the main feature of the exhibition was the Lewis machine gun, with which comrade Sukhov killed the bandits in the *White Sun of Desert*. There is enough fun to be had on this tour to fill the entire day.





Perfect triple somersault

Alexandra Romanovskaya earns gold in freestyle at Winter Universiade in Krasnoyarsk

Alexandra Romanovskaya performed one of the most complex elements — a triple somersault — which received 100.29 points from the judges. For

Alexandra the season has been very successful. At the World Championships in the USA she also earned a gold medal. At the 2019 Winter Universiade that will finish on March 12th, 76 sets of medals will be played for across eleven sport disciplines: biathlon,

cross-country skiing, curling, alpine skiing, snowboard, ski orienteering, figure skating, freestyle skiing, ice hockey, bandy and short track speed skating. Around 3,000 athletes from more than 50 countries of the world take part in the event.

Third in final standings

Belarusian aerial Anton Kushnir earns bronze at FIS Freestyle Ski Aerial World Cup final stage in China



In the final attempt, the athlete received 121.72 points for his complex jump with a coefficient of 4.5. Victory was celebrated by Sun Jiaxu of China (123.90), followed by Noe Roth of Norway (123.01).

Among the women, Xu Mengtao of China was unrivalled, earning 101.16 points. Silver went to Ashley Caldwell (93.41) while bronze was claimed by Chinese Xu Sicun (90.40). Snezhana Drebenkova of Belarus was placed ninth in the final standings while the leaders of the Belarusian national team — Anna Guskova and Alla Tsuper — didn't take part in the competition.

In the final standings of the FIS Freestyle Ski Aerial World Cup, after four stages, which were held from January to March in the USA, Russia, Belarus and China, Wang Sin Di of China won for the men (boasting 316 points) while Anton Kushnir is placed third (with 249 points). Among the women, Xu Mengtao is ranked first (with 410 points).

Hospitable ice to accept guests

Prime Minister Sergei Rumas conducts first session of the organising committee for preparation for the 2021 IIHF World Championship

By Ilya Kryzhevich

The Head of Government assessed the level of our readiness as high, saying that, "The 2021 IIHF World Championship, hosted by Belarus and Latvia, will take place at a high level. We've already had the experience of conducting the world forum. The IIHF World Championship in 2014 was recognised by the International Ice Hockey Federation

as one of the best in history and beat attendance records. We boast ice hockey arenas, many hotels and public catering facilities. Nevertheless, we must do everything to make this championship even more successful than the previous one. We aren't lowering the bar."

The Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation and Deputy Chairman of the Organising Committee,

Gennady Savilov, reminded listeners that work on preparation for the championship was begun two years ago, "The directorate has been already formed, as well as the organising committee, with a trilateral treaty signed with the International Ice Hockey Federation and a bilateral agreement concluded with Latvia. The business plan dealing with preparation for the championship is next in line."



First title claimed in tennis this season

Victoria Azarenko and Zheng Saisai win the Mexico Open women's doubles title in Acapulco

The Belarusian tennis player, Victoria Azarenko and Zheng Saisai of China have won the doubles event of the tournament in the Mexican city of Acapulco. In the decisive match, the Belarusian-Chinese duo confidently defeated the US-Mexican tandem, Desirae Krawczyk and Guiiana Olmos.

Performing in the singles, Victoria reached the quarter-finals where she lost to the US representative, Sofia Kenin — 4:6, 6:4, 5:7. After that, the US athlete reached the finals where she was beaten by Wang Yafan of China — 6:2, 3:6, 5:7.



An impressive cache of awards

In 2018, Belarusian athletes earned 680 medals at large international tournaments

Belarusian athletes won a total of 680 (227 gold, 216 silver and 237 bronze) medals at the Olympic Games, world and European championships, and World Cups in 2018. Of these, 253 medals were claimed in Olympic sports, noted Belarus' Sports and Tourism Minister, Sergey Kovalchuk, at the final ministerial session in Minsk.

Belarus won three medals (two gold and one silver) at the 23rd Winter Olympics in PyeongChang — the major start of the previous year. Gold medals were clinched by aerial skier Anna Guskova and the biathlon team comprising Darya Domracheva, Nadezhda Skardino, Dinara Alimbekova and Irina Krivko in



the women's 4x6km relay. Furthermore, Darya Domracheva won silver in the women mass start event.

Mr. Kovalchuk noted that the 2018 Winter Paralympics in PyeongChang was the most successful for Belarusian athletes, who earned 12 medals (four gold, four silver and four bronze).

As far as summer sports are concerned, Belarus won five medals in the Olympic disciplines (one gold and four bronze). Belarusian athletes made it to the top eight in Olympic sports at the world championships on 14 occasions.



Gold, silver and bronze

Belarusian Greco-Roman wrestlers earn four awards at prestigious international tournament in Istanbul

Belarusian athlete Victor Sosunovsky (weight category 92kg) claimed gold, while his teammate, Sergey Starodub (97kg) lost in the final match to the Turkish wrestler and bronze medallist of the 2016 Olympiad in Rio de Janeiro, Ildem Cenk, earning silver.

Bronze medals were won by Radik Kuliev (87kg) and Kirill

Grishchenko (130kg).

The tournament in memory of Vehbi Emre and Hamit Kaplan took place for the 37th time, bringing together around 200 athletes from 11 countries of the world. These competitions were the first for the head coach of the Belarusian national squad, Vladimir Kopytov, in his new role.

Wrestling is part of the 2nd European Games and 18 sets of medals will be competed for in June at Minsk's Sports Palace.

Show of the week



The National School of Beauty organised a special fashion show *Colour Dreams*, involving about 120 children from children's homes

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM OF BELARUS

20 Lenin Street
Until 10th March. Boris Grebenshchikov's *Totems of Zimogors*
Until 17th March. *Discovery of the Genuine*

NATIONAL HISTORY MUSEUM

12 Karl Marx Street
Until 18th March. *Sacral Culture of Belarusian Roman Catholic Churches*
Until 30th May. Exhibition of party dresses: *Invitation to the Ball*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 15th March. *Manifest of Republic*
Until 1st April. *Who Am I?*
Until 7th April. *Fantasy Land*

GREAT PATRIOTIC WAR HISTORY MUSEUM

8 Pobediteley Avenue
Until 31st March. *Echo of Fiery Mountains: Afghanistan*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 23rd March. *Marco Antonio Lillo. Glad to Meet You*
Until 30th March. *Native Corner*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 24th March. Exhibition of Oleg and Yuri Krupenkovs: *Tandem*

LOSHITSA ESTATE

8-2 Chizhevskikh Lane
Until 17th March. *Beauty of Southern Kurzeme*
Until 31st March. *Circle of Time*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

47 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 3rd March. *Family*

MAXIM BOGDANOVICH LITERARY MUSEUM

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 8th April. *I'm Mother*

TROITSKY SUBURB

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 7th April. *Insects and More*

VILNIUS GALLERY

55 Kalinovsky Street
Until 10th August. *Yakub Kolas and Vilno*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE

1 Parizhskoy Kommuny Square
07.03. To Beloved Women
09.03. La Traviata
10.03. Giselle, ou les Willis
12.03. The Magic Flute
13.03. Esmeralda / Love Melody
14.03. The Flying Dutchman

MAXIM GORKY NATIONAL ACADEMIC DRAMA THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
07.03. Russian-Style Cabbage
09.03. Viva Commedia!
10.03. Tricks of Khanuma
12.03. Dangerous Liaisons
13.03. Pygmalion
14.03. Woe from Wit

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

13 Pobediteley Avenue
07.03. Abduction of Yelena
09 and 10.03. Mixed Feelings
11.03. Bridge of Love
12.03. A Very Simple Story
13.03. Forgetting Herostratos
14.03. Pygmalion

MODERN ART THEATRE

5 Oktyabryaskaya Street
08.03. House Upside Down 2
10.03. Mad Money

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
07, 09 and 10.03. Kolyady Night
10.03. The Government Inspector
12 and 13.03. Kupala Night Dream
13.03. Elza's Land
14.03. Harvest / School of Taxpayers

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
07.03. Adam's Jokes
09.03. This Is All She
10.03. Medea Syndrome
11.03. Dora, or Sexual Neuroses of Our Parents
12.03. Suffering from Common Sense
13.03. Hunting for Self
14.03. Pelican

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
07.03. About Fedot-Shooter
09.03. Rich Brides
10.03. Double Double
12.03. Warsaw Melody
14.03. Man from Podolsk / Tectonics of Feelings

MUSICAL THEATRE

44 Myasnikov Street
07.03. Jane Eyre
09.03. Madame Rubinstein
10.03. Repulsive Love
12.03. Cleopatra
13.03. Retro Style Wedding