

## NAVRUZ IN MOSCOW



Navruz is an ancient holiday which is rooted in the development of an agricultural calendar. It was celebrated on spring equinox according to solar calendar more than 3,000 years ago

This year Navruz that has already gained popularity among Moscow citizens and guests of the capital, was celebrated in Moscow for the 4th time. The key events of the holiday took place on March, 21 at the All-Russian Exhibition Center (VVTs). Various national communities of the Afghans, the Azerbaijanis, the Tajiks, the Kazakhs, the Kyrgyz, the Bashkir, the Lezgins, the Syrians, the Kurds, the Assyrians, the Uzbeks, the Turkmen, the Karakalpaks participated in it. The chairman of the Committee on interregional relations and national policies of Moscow Mikhail Solomentsev and leaders of national cultural autonomies delivered speeches at the solemn opening of the holiday. During the whole day the Rybolovstvo (Fishery) pavilion of the VVTs featured festive concerts with artists and national folk groups, exhibitions and sales of print production, sales of fine and applied arts of different peoples, theater performances, and sampling of national cuisines.

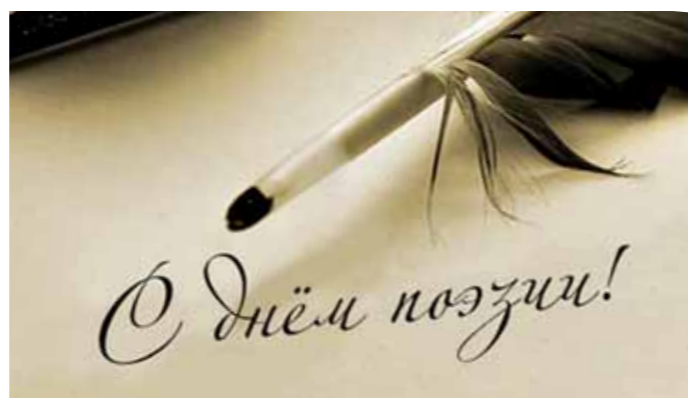
Felix Denikaev

## WORLD POETRY DAY

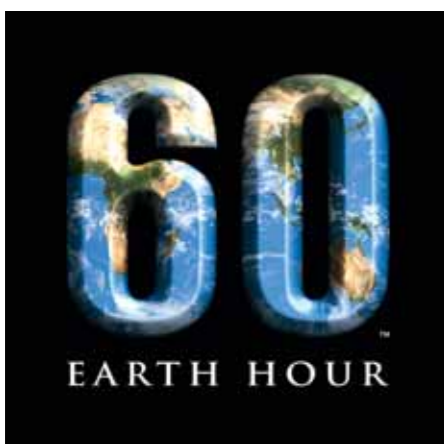
World Poetry Day was declared on the UNESCO 30th Congress in 1999. Since then it is celebrated on March, 21

The first Poetry Day was celebrated in 2000 in the UNESCO head-quarters in Paris and in Moscow in the Taganka theatre on the initiative of the DOOS (The Voluntary Society for Protecting Dragonflies), a literary group founded by a Russian poet Konstantin Kedrov in 1984. The purpose is to promote poetry and attract public attention to poetry. Besides, World Poetry Day grants a chance to show themselves to smaller publishing houses, as it is due to their effort that the reader gets acquainted with contemporary poetry, and literary clubs who revive the tradition of live poetry. It has already become a tradition to celebrate World Poetry Day with various poetry events in Moscow, one of cultural poetry capitals of the world. Meanwhile after all those years celebrations have run riot and now it takes almost a month. This year poetry evenings started on March, 12th, and lasted till the first decade of April.

Ljudmila Ivanitskaya



## MOSCOW SUBMERGED INTO DARKNESS



On Saturday, March, 28 Moscow citizens took part in the major action in the history of humanity, the Earth Hour.

The participants of the action had to switch off their lights, from 20.30 to 21.30, to demonstrate their eagerness to save energy and decrease air pollution. At 20.30 the Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov turned off the symbolic switch in the building of the Moscow Government on the New Arbat street. In several seconds it all plunged into dark-

ness. Then the lights of residential houses, business complexes, sport complexes, bridges also went off. There were no lights for only 60 minutes. On commenting the ceremony the Moscow head said: "Our city joins the world ecological action the Earth Hour in order to show we care about nature, the situation on our planet together with more than a billion citizens of the world, so that our Earth could have a break".

### OUR REFERENCE:

The Earth Hour took place for the first time in 2007 in Sydney, Australia. The following year more than 370 cities from 35 countries participated in the event. This year almost one sixth of the whole population of our planet switched off their lights. It is more than 1 billion of people (about 4,000 cities from 88 countries).

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## VISIT OF MONGOLIAN DELEGATION

From March, 21 to March, 27 a delegation from Ulan-Bator, led by the Mayor of the Mongolian capital Gotovyn Munkhbayar visited Moscow

The Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov discussed with his Mongolian colleague current situation and prospects for cooperation between the two capitals. The sides were pleased to state high level of bilateral relations and their dynamic development. High-ranking Mongolian officials held negotiations with the authorities of the Department for Housing and Utilities and Rehabilitation, the Department of Fuel and Energy Economy, Department for Supporting and Developing Small businesses in the city of Moscow, and visited Trade and Industry Chamber of the Russian capital. Meanwhile, representatives of the business circles of the two countries had a chance to meet.



Aleksandr Pogorelov

As a result of the visit a 2009-2012 Program on Cooperation between Moscow and Ulan-Bator, a Protocol on cultural cooperation between the Moscow Department of Culture and the Ulan-Bator Department of

Arts and Culture, a 2009-2012 Protocol on interaction in the sphere of public transport between the Transport Departments of the two capitals were signed.

Sergey Batyrov



## Eurovision: Moscow on air

Not much time is left before hundreds of millions of European and Russian citizens would follow Moscow hosting Eurovision-2009. Deputy Mayor in the Moscow Government, head of the work group on organizing the contest Valery Vinogradov, told how the capital is preparing to host the feast of music

The Moscow Government began working actively to prepare Eurovision-2009 after the corresponding decisions were made by the organizational committee in September, 2008. Issues dealing with transport for guests and participants of the contest,

hotel accommodation and safety, preparation of city landmarks that are involved in the event, are solved. Moscow has already staged several events that traditionally set the stage for hosting the contest in European cities. The official ceremony of passing



the symbol of the host-city, keys to the Eurovision song contest, from the Belgrade Mayor Dragan Dilas to the Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov took place last December. This event marked the beginning of preparation for the new Eurovision. On January, 30 Moscow Marriott Aurora hotel hosted the draw to determine the running order for the countries participating in Eurovision. On March, 16 a meeting between the heads of delegations of these countries took place, and tickets to the event officially started selling. Olimpijskiy sports complex is to be the main site for the contest. On May, 12 and May, 14 semi-finals of Eurovision-2009 will take place there. On May, 16 it will host the

Eurovision-2009 final. Another Moscow site to be involved in the contest is the Central exhibition hall of Manezh, which will stage the opening and closing Eurovision ceremonies, and all other days host the so-called Euroclub for participants of the contest. At present delegations from 42 countries confirmed their participation in the musical contest. About 2,500 participants and official representatives and 3,000 fans are to come to Moscow. Delegations from European countries are to arrive by the beginning of the rehearsals which will start from May, 1. There are enough hotels and rooms for the participants and guests of the contest for the whole event. 30

hotels will be used to accommodate the guests, including Marriott and Holyday Inn networks, Ritz-Carlton Moscow, Hilton Moscow Leningradskaya, Ararat Park Hyatt, Izmailovo Vega, Zolotoe Koltso, Aerostar, Iris Congress Hotel, Peter I, Renaissance Moscow. Kosmos hotel provided most rooms (about 600) for the participants and guests of the contest. Control stations to coordinate the work of transport in airports, hotels, Olimpijskiy sports complex, Euroclub will be set up. One of the priorities of the contest are safety issues. The Russian Ministry of the Interior, Moscow Central Internal Affairs Directorate and the Moscow and Moscow district department of the Federal Security service of Russia are in charge of the safety concept. All the necessary measures to avoid emergency situations during the Eurovision feast will be taken. From the point of view of organization, the city is ready to host Eurovision. We will be worthy of staging the contest, and Europe will see Moscow hospitality. The capital has enough experience in organizing large-scale sports and entertainment events, when thousands of foreign guests come to the city. One of the latest achievements was the UEFA Champion's League final which took place in Luzhniky last May and was highly praised by our foreign colleagues.

## Spanish Investments Waiting in Moscow



Aleksandr Pogorelov

On March, 30 a meeting between the Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov and a Spanish delegation led by the president of Madrid Trade and Industry Chamber Salvador Santos Campano took place in the building of the Moscow Government on Tverskaya, 13. Yury Luzhkov reiterated his interest in attracting Spanish companies to cooperate with the Moscow Government in such spheres as high-tech, developing transport infrastructure, tourism, universities cooperation, interaction in the financial sphere.

## OPENING OF THE PETER'S ROAD PALACE



One of the most important sites of Moscow cultural and historical heritage, architectural jewel of the North district, the Road Palace of Peter the Great, started its third life

Its first life began when it was constructed in 1778, the second one - when it was restored after devastation in 1812, and its third life began in March, 2009 when it opened after large-scale restoration and adaptation to present-day conditions. The Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov and the first deputy Mayor in the Moscow Government Ljudmila Shvetsova officially cut the red ribbon. The Palace was built by the order of Catherine the Great, and the atmosphere of her epoch feels the architectural ensemble. The opening ceremony of the architectural monument was both solemn and original. Those who came to see this unique architectural ensemble felt as if they were taken back to the times of Catherine the Great. All the women were greeted with courtesy and gallantry by brave hussars, taken by the hand and conducted to the festive hall through age-long stairs. Orchestras played ancient music in the halls, pairs danced. In 1998 by a Decree of the Russian President the Palace was passed from federal property to the Moscow Government on the latter's petition. Restoration works began the following year on the total surface of 25,000 sq. m. Today the Road Palace of Peter the Great has acquired its original historical view both from the

outside and from the inside. All later additions were dismantled in its 12 buildings, and elements and decor of the XVIII were restored. At the same time much work was done in the adjacent zone. A new building was constructed to include a restaurant, a parking and a recreation center. The specialists considered this part of the architectural ensemble as the most delicate of all possible variants of adding contemporary spaces to the Palace. The new building is situated behind the main building and thus is visually shielded and does not violate the historical view of the whole palace complex. The Road Palace not only regained its historical view, but preserved its functions as determined by Catherine the Great herself in 1778. Today this unique architectural monument is the center of international cooperation and the Guest House of the Moscow Government as it used to be 230 years ago. And like in the past, the Palace also serves as an elite hotel. Yury Luzhkov told the journalists, one of the hardest challenges was to solve two tasks at the same time. On the one hand, it was necessary to restore the historical facade of the Palace, on the other - to adapt it to contemporary exploitation with the most comfortable conditions.

Irina Rummyantseva

## THE CHRONICLE

On March, 26 the chairman of the Moscow City Duma Vladimir Platonov participated in the V ceremony of Yury Dolgorukij Award to Russian-language writers which took place in Kiev (Ukraine).

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On March, 29 the head of the Department for External Economic and International Relations of the City of Moscow Georgy Muradov participated in the session of the Presidium of the International Council of Russian compatriots which took place in the Moscow library and fund "Russkoe Zarubezhje" at Radischevskaya street, 2.

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On March, 30 a meeting between the Moscow Mayor Yury Luzhkov and the Chairman of Sevastopol City Council Valery Saratov took place. During the meeting the leaders discussed social and economic situation in Ukraine and the Crimea and outlooks for developing bilateral cooperation between Moscow and Sevastopol.

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On March, 31 the head of the Department for External Economic and International Relations of the City of Moscow Georgy Muradov had a meeting with the members of the World Coordination Council of Russian Compatriots (CC) at Tverskaya, 13. Activities of the Moscow Government in supporting our compatriots abroad, cooperation between the CC and the International Council of Russian Compatriots (ICRC) and some of the aspects of their position in the host countries were discussed. The participants of the meeting reiterated their willingness to do all the necessary steps for a closer interaction between the CC and the ICRC to use the potential of the two organizations to the utmost to support Russian compatriots abroad.