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Countdown to the May 25
30 Days

Presidential Election

vol. 19, issue 17/18

INDEPENDENCE. COMMUNITY. TRUST

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April 25, 2014

Escalation

Ukraine's government launched an anti-terrorist operation on April 24 and attempted to regain control over the city of Sloviansk in eastern Ukraine. Russia threatened to retaliate and initiated war games on Ukraine's eastern border. The nation is holding its breath to see what happens next just a month before a critical presidential election takes place on May 25.



Ukrainian special forces take position during an anti-terrorist operation at a roadblock in the embattled eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk on April 24. (AFP)

CHRISTOPHER J. MILLER
MILLERJCHRISTOPHER@GMAIL.COM

Ukrainian forces moved in with tanks and armored personnel carriers to tighten their grip on Kremlin-backed rebels in the country's restive eastern Donetsk Oblast on April 24, wiping out three rebel checkpoints on the outskirts of Sloviansk and swarming the

embattled city. In doing so, at least five Kremlin-backed rebels but perhaps as many as seven were killed and one Ukrainian soldier was wounded in the anti-terror operation, security officials told the Kyiv Post.

The April 24 military push, an attempt by Ukraine to avenge a demoralizing defeat in its first try last week to purge the eastern region of separatists,

resulted in the seizure of at least six of Ukraine's armored vehicles and some of its soldiers switching allegiances. That, in turn, followed an April 13 ambush of Ukrainian counter-terrorism soldiers at the hands of Moscow-backed militants that led to the death of a Security Service captain and three more wounded.

It also threatened to escalate ten-

sions between Kyiv and Moscow, who have traded barbs for a week since supposedly agreeing in Geneva on April 17 to deescalate the situation.

Russia responded shortly after news of the counter-terrorism operation in Sloviansk broke out. Its defense ministry announced war games to be carried out mere kilometers from the Ukrainian border. Video footage

purported to show Russian military vehicles advancing toward the border spread across social media while Russian Defense Minister Sergei Shoigu said Russia would "have to react."

Ahead of the offensive action, in the early morning hours of April 24 Ukrainian forces repelled a group of about 70 armed pro-Russian insurgents who attempted to seize a → **16**

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Засновник ТОВ "Паблік-Медіа"

Головний редактор Брайан Боннер

Відповідальний за випуск Якуб Парусинський

Адреса видавця та засновника

співпадають: Україна, м. Київ, 01004,

вул. Пушкінська, 31А, 6-й поверх.

Реєстраційне свідоцтво

Кв № 15261-3833ПР від 19.06.09.

Передплатний індекс ДП Преса 40528

Надруковано ТОВ «Новий друк»,

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Mailing address:

Kyiv Post,
31A Pushkinska, Suite 600, 6th floor
Kyiv, Ukraine, 01004

Advertising

tel. +380 44 591-7788
fax +380 44 591-3345
advertising@kyivpost.com

Editorial staff

tel. +380 44 591-3344
fax +380 44 591-3345
news@kyivpost.com

Subscriptions & Distribution

tel. +380 44 591-7788
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While the leader in Ukraine's presidential race Petro Poroshenko supports tough measures against pro-Russian rebels in the east, his rival Yulia Tymoshenko tries to negotiate with them. Tymoshenko shakes hands with Kremlin-backed rebels in Donetsk on April 18. (byut.com.ua)

Russian-backed interference poses biggest challenge to presidential election

BY OKSANA GRYSSENKO
GRYSSENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

The snap presidential elections scheduled for May 25 will be the hardest to conduct in Ukraine's modern history. They follow the EuroMaidan Revolution that ousted former President Viktor Yanukovich and Russia's annexation of Crimea that left five percent of the nation living in occupied territory, and will be held amid Russian military aggression in Ukraine's eastern regions.

Yanukovich, whom Russia is harboring from criminal prosecution in Kyiv, has already denounced the upcoming

election as "illegitimate." Russian President Vladimir Putin has also warned that he won't recognize the outcome, and pro-Russian separatists operating in Donetsk and Luhansk oblasts have pledged to disrupt it.

But Ukraine's Central Election Commission (CEC) says nothing will stop it from being held.

"The election process is ongoing and there are no laws to stop it," says Andriy Mahera, deputy head of the CEC. "If the process of voting doesn't happen in some constituencies it will not affect the validity of election, and can't prevent the Central Election

Commission from counting the results and the newly elected president from taking an oath."

Oleksandr Chernenko, the head of election watchdog Committee of Voters of Ukraine (CVU), says that the only thing that can prevent the election from happening is if the government declares a state of war. But various government officials have said that won't happen.

The presidential election will also coincide with some 270 snap local elections as well as a by-election of lawmakers in Ivano-Frankivsk city, the CEC said.

Experts say that odds of holding a referendum on raising the status of the Russian language or amending Ukraine's constitution on the same day are low due to the shortage of time for preparation and absence of laws that would regulate some procedures.

"Of course in Crimea they managed to prepare a referendum in just 10 days, but do we need a show like this in the whole of Ukraine?" Chernenko said.

Many hurdles still remain for the vote to go off. At the moment, over 1.5 million Ukrainian voters live on the Crimean peninsula, which is occupied by Russia. They have no chance → 3

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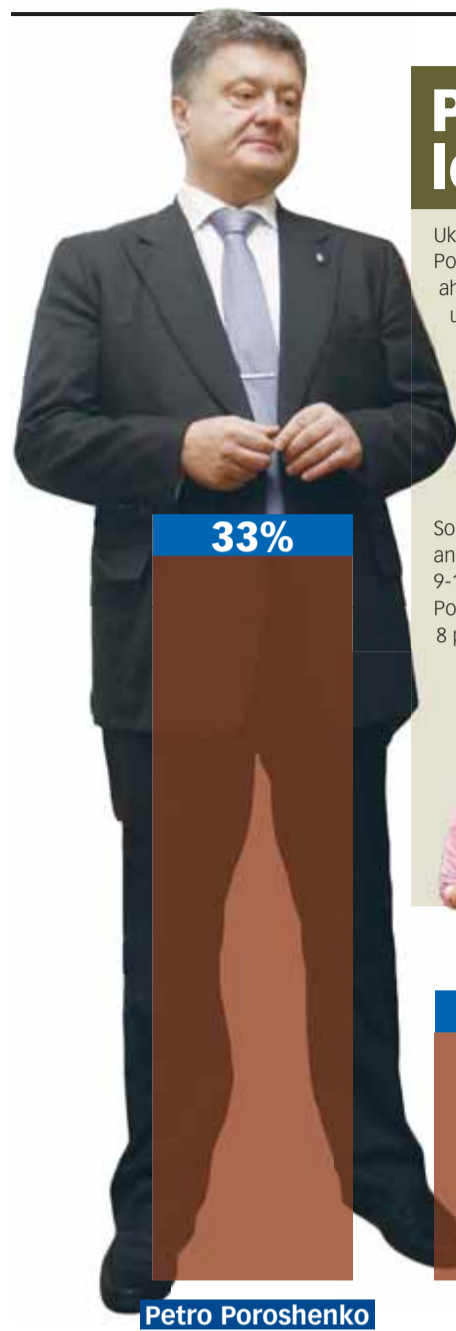
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Poroshenko widens his lead in presidential polls

Ukraine's confectionary magnate Petro Poroshenko increased his popularity ahead of presidential elections scheduled on May 25 to almost 33 percent, leaving his main rival Yulia Tymoshenko with only 9.5 percent of support, a new poll revealed.

A sociological survey jointly done by Center of Sociological and Marketing Surveys "SOCIS," Kyiv International Institute of Sociology, Sociological Group "Rating" and Razumkov think tank on April 9-16 showed that self-nominated Poroshenko's support has gone up by 8 percent compared to March.

At the same time, the number of people who said they were ready to vote for Tymoshenko, leader of Batkivshchyna political party, increased only by 1.3 percent.

The third contender in the polls

is Serhiy Tihipko, also an independent. He has 5.1 percent of support.

Then comes the official candidate of the Party of Regions, former Kharkiv Governor Mykhailo Dobkin with 4.2 percent of people ready to vote for him. Communist party leader Petro Symonenko is number five with 4 percent.

There are 23 candidates running for president in this election.

Despite concerns about disruption of elections in eastern Ukraine and annexation of Crimea by the Russians, some 85 percent of Ukrainians said they would come to the polls.

The companies surveyed 6,200 people across the country, with the exception of Crimea. The margin of error is no more than 0.8 percent.

Kyiv Post staff writer Oksana Grytsenko can be reached at grytsenko@kyivpost.com



9.5%

Yulia Tymoshenko



5.1%

Serhiy Tihipko



4.2%

Mykhailo Dobkin



4.0%

Petro Symonenko

33%

Petro Poroshenko

Businessman and politician Petro Poroshenko leads the polls by a wide margin a month before the presidential election on May 25.

Officials: Nothing will stop presidential elections from taking place in Ukraine

→2 to vote at home.

If they want to vote, they will have to travel to mainland Ukraine and register at any polling station there. The problem is that the procedure has to be completed five days before the election, or on May 19. At the moment, Crimean voters can check in with regional administration departments that keep voter registers. After May 6, when the polling stations are set up, voters can register at any of those.

This means that Crimean Ukrainians will have to travel from the peninsula twice, perhaps taking time off work to vote. Several Crimean residents informally polled by the Kyiv Post say they will hardly use the procedure to exercise their right. The Crimean Tatar Mejlis, its governing body, is yet to make a decision on whether to recommend the Crimean Tatar community to travel to Kherson city to vote. "Unfortunately we have no other mechanisms to organize this," Mahera said.

Chernenko of CVU says there are proposals to make the voting procedure easier for Crimean residents, but it's not yet clear if parliament is prepared to back them up.

Elections are also at risk in some parts of Donetsk and Luhansk regions, which are home to a whopping 5.2 million voters.

Crimea, Donetsk, and Luhansk together are home to 18 percent of Ukraine's voters. But an April 23 nationwide poll — excluding Crimea — by four major sociological groups found that the top presidential candidate, Petro Poroshenko, would win by a margin of 37 percent in the second round of election.

The two most troublesome electoral districts in mainland Ukraine are in the cities of Donetsk and Sloviansk. District election commissions have failed to assemble there because they face intimidation, and sometimes violence, from the Kremlin-backed separatists who control those territories.

"We will take all the necessary measures so that the elections in the southeast don't happen," Vyacheslav Ponomarev, leader of separatists in Sloviansk, told Russia's Gazeta.ru.

But Mahera said that the two district commissions have time until May 6 to start their work. He did not, however, dare to predict how many polling stations would be disrupted. But under Ukrainian law, it won't really matter.

"If at least one polling station in Ukraine holds the elections, they will be considered legitimate," Chernenko says, referring to Ukraine's law on elections.

Mahera believes that despite all the troubles, voter turnout will be at least on par with previous elections, or 70 percent. "In the west the turnout could be much bigger given the rise in patriotic sentiment, while in the east it will probably be lower," he said.

Polls indicate his expectations are right. They show that some 85 percent of Ukrainians will go to the polls.

Mahera also expects the election to be cleaner than the previous ones. "The biggest challenge we have comes from the outside," he says, referring to Russian interference.

Kyiv Post staff writer Oksana Grytsenko can be reached at grytsenko@kyivpost.com. Staff writer Lily Hyde contributed reporting.

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How many of us can claim ourselves to be successful? How many of us can consider ourselves to be happy? And finally how many of us can claim ourselves to be both? In a modern society it became easier to come closer to 'success', feel it and even 'touch' it, because success lies within and out of successful people, people, who achieved something in their lives and most importantly — people, who are ready to share their road to it. This openness impresses, moreover — inspires... Business education has always been one of the top priorities for people. It's not a secret that in the modern day, people pay a lot of attention to their professional development and invest lots of time in it.

The EBA Education Centre in cooperation with professional training companies and business schools (EBA member companies or EBA partners) offers a wide range of business pro-

grammes to the EBA community.

Today's statistics demonstrate the high level of involvement into educational programmes from the EBA Education Centre. We are delighted to inform that during the last two years, the number of participants who attended EBA educational programmes has tripled. Our target audience has also become more diversified: we offer programmes to both the business community, from entry level specialists to top managers, and to university degree students. Together with trainers and speakers, we create unique workshops & seminars, training programmes and presentations, webinars and courses which are designed for the professional development of soft and hard skills. Every year we conduct educational surveys to find out the interests and requirements of our audience and we do our best to satisfy them.

In 2014, we created new educational projects which we hope will be successful and in future they will always be presented in our programmes. They are as follows:

1. "Hopes & Fears" of the CEO
2. Monthly workshops dedicated to anti-corruption issues
3. Student project: Successful Start



Now more about the first program: on 17 April EBA Education Centre launched a brand-new project — an events series with top-managers from leading companies in the Ukrainian market. The aim of the project, named "Hopes and Fears of...", is to introduce senior managers from member-companies of the Association to employees and help them to find out more about member-companies area of work, by creating an interactive platform for communication and the exchange of life and professional experiences.

The concept of the event is an informal dialogue between a leading speaker (a well-known professional, top manager of a major company) and an audience consisting of the EBA community. During the event, the speaker tells their story, lessons learnt and challenges mastered, and share their life and career milestones with the audience. Christos Tsolkas — Managing Director at Philip Morris Ukraine hosted EBA's first "Hopes & Fears" session. During the meeting Christos introduced the company, its talent and career development initiatives, shared his management philosophy and 10 important lessons he has learned from his rich personal and professional experience. The event was held in a cozy atmosphere of Philip Morris Ukraine's Kyiv office.

The EBA Education Centre is already preparing the next installation of the event series and we are really looking forward to it in order to feel again

this powerful ambiance of success!

We would be pleased to have you among our participants or alternatively as a guest speaker at future events of the series "Hopes and Fears of..."

Please contact the EBA Education Centre:

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The EBA Education Centre held more than 30 educational events for more than 400 employees from EBA member-companies during the period of February — April 2014.

During the workshops and seminars in this period we talked about:

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- Task management and how to get things done
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And much more!

We're looking forward to seeing you participate at our educational events!



Editorials

Viva UT-1

All 23 presidential candidates will take part in live debates to be aired and organized by the National TV and Radio (UT-1) in the lead up to the May 25 elections. Zurab Alasaniya, the recently appointed head of UT-1, made the announcement on April 23.

For the first time in Ukraine's history, journalists from UT-1 and elsewhere will carry out the debates, along with representatives of civil society, students and volunteers. A lottery will determine how the candidates will be paired for the debates.

Hosting actual, transparent debates is a brand new (and welcome) development at the clumsy, publicly-financed company that used to epitomize corruption, crony management and a skewed, Soviet-style information policy.

Slowly, things are starting to change there. Apart from the old faces, some air time has been given to journalists from Hromadske.tv – a young startup that broadcast the EuroMaidan Revolution live online for more than three months. Hooded and T-shirted, they look out of place on UT-1, which was basically a tool of government propaganda after the breakup of the Soviet Union.

But the changes, hopefully, will run deeper than simply introducing new faces. Ukraine's parliament approved a law earlier this month to turn UT-1 into a public corporation. The company will have a transparently elected supervisory board of 14 members representing all political ideologies, coming from civil society, academia, human rights and other groups. The law earmarks 0.2 percent of the national budget to finance the station to ensure its independence from private interests. It will also be able to sell some types of advertising, but commercials will not be allowed to occupy more than 5 percent of air time. This law is a huge step towards transforming the company to better serve Ukrainians and their information needs, particularly at a time when misinformation and propaganda from Russia are contributing to the erosion of Ukraine's sovereignty.

Viewers are already hailing the changes as a step in the right direction. Last weekend the channel ran a Polish documentary in its original language, allowing the Polish-speaking minority to exercise their rights to get information in their native language. This is a commendable development, and we hope the new management keeps up the good work.

Free hostages

On April 22, Simon Ostrovsky, an American journalist for Vice News was abducted in the Donetsk Oblast city of Sloviansk. We are delighted that he was freed on April 24. Upon his release he said he was beaten and blindfolded at first, but fed and cared for most of the time in captivity.

Ostrovsky's brave, unapologetic brand of journalism that fuses on-the-scene videography with in-depth analysis, has offered the public a new way to experience and understand conflicts, particularly the complex one unrolling in Ukraine.

Ostrovsky, unfortunately, was not the first journalist to be kidnapped in Donetsk Oblast, and we fear he might not be the last. Over the past week, at least 16 people have been kidnapped by the gangs of pro-Russian separatists and militants in Ukraine's troubled east. They should all be set free immediately.

On April 24, a Russian Twitter propagandist told former U.S. Ambassador to Russia Michael McFaul that Ostrovsky was not a hostage but rather a prisoner of war. But this is sick and twisted thinking. Like medical workers, journalists and photographers go to the hot spots to do their jobs, and should be treated as non-combatants.

But in what is increasingly being recognized as a war between Ukrainian troops and Kremlin-backed separatists in eastern Ukraine, journalists are being portrayed as militants.

Journalists like Ostrovsky have fought the Russian propaganda machine with crucial and unbiased dispatches from the scene; they have sought truth in the fog of the information war.

That insurgents have brought journalists into their delusional quest for whatever Moscow is telling them is abominable, though not unexpected. For the Kremlin, journalists are a tool to spread lies and disseminate fear to keep the population zombified. This is why independent popular bloggers have now been outlawed in Russia and social networks are under threat. And why only Russian media outlets – the Kremlin's mouthpiece – are given open access in the area.

It would be unreasonable to expect a different attitude towards journalists from separatists in the east, some of whom are Russian or on its payroll and even carry badges of Russian special forces.

But taking journalists hostage is a clear and detestable violation of the Geneva Conventions and Additional Protocols, as well as the Rome Statute of the International Court, both part of international humanitarian law protecting journalists.

Those responsible for the attacks against journalists in Donetsk Oblast – and those calling the shots in Moscow – should be tried at the International Criminal Court.



NEWS ITEM: After a highly-questionable shootout early Easter morning in Sloviansk, Donetsk Oblast, that left at least one dead, Kremlin-backed news outlet Life News reported that the business card of Dmytro Yarosh, the leader of the far-right nationalist political party Right Sector was found on the scene, along with weapons and ammunition. The red-and-black business card listed a telephone number and e-mail address for Yarosh, who recently announced his candidacy for the presidential elections scheduled for May 25. The card promptly became an Internet meme. In the meantime, Ukrainian media on the scene, including the Kyiv Post, said that the shootout looked staged by the Russian-backed separatists.



NEWS ITEM: On April 17, billionaire and Dnipropetrovsk Oblast governor Igor Kolomoyskiy announced that he would pay \$10,000 for any captured armed separatist from the east of Ukraine who will be handed over to the nation's special forces. In an interview to Liga.net website, Kolomoyskiy's friend and deputy governor Borys Filatov specified that the men don't have to be Russian citizens and that the money is donated not just by Kolomoyskiy, but other businessmen. There are no confirmed reports of any separatists captured so far, but Filatov said there is "good cooperation" with special forces. "We guarantee that if the special services confirm to us that certain measures have been implemented, the money will be paid out on the conditions of anonymity and confidentiality," Filatov said.

KyivPost

Published by Public Media LLC

Jakub Parusinski, Chief Executive Officer

Brian Bonner, Chief Editor

Editors: Katya Gorchinskaya, Christopher J. Miller,
Mark Rachkevych, Olga Rudenko, Ivan Verstyuk

Staff Writers: Anastasia Forina, Olena Goncharova, Oksana Grytsenko,
Vlad Lavrov, Evan Ostryzniuk, Nataliya Trach, Daryna Shevchenko

Photo Editor: Pavlo Podufalov. Photographers: Kostyantyn Chernichkin, Anastasia Vlasova

Chief Designer: Vladyslav Zakharenko

Sales Director: Alyona Nevmerzhytska

Sales Managers: Elena Symonenko,
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People hold up the Ukrainian flag during a pro-Ukraine rally in Donetsk on April 17. The nation has a crucial presidential election to conduct on May 25, and has to address many risks associated with this election. (Kostyantyn Chernichkin)



VOX
populi

WITH ISAAC WEBB



Do you support the government's anti-terrorist operation in Donetsk Oblast?



Mykola Kokhanivsky,
Maidan self-defence

I support the operation, but it should have ended already. The buildings should have

been vacated. Because of the delay, we have lost Crimea and are slowly losing Donbas.



Olga Ryzhoi

I am worried that there will be a civil war. I think that the situation must be decided peacefully. I think that there should be a peaceful

discussion between Russia, Ukraine, and Europe. The problem is that there isn't access to information [in the east]. I have friends in Sloviansk, and they are convinced that Russia is a better place to live.



Ivan Levchenko,
driver

The government's response [to separatism] in eastern Ukraine hasn't been sufficient. We need

to continue the [anti-terrorist] operation and get tougher with these bandits. We should send the police and the army to eastern Ukraine. When people were on the Maidan, they fought for justice, against the mafia. There [in Donetsk Oblast], they are fighting to betray the motherland.



Mikhail Tsygan,
pensioner

Well, the response should be much stronger. They need to do more and talk less. There should

be a carefully planned and executed operation.



Natalya,
musician

I don't support it at all. I support order and stability. The operation has not been professional at all: it hasn't

brought order or stability. If there's going to be an official action, there should be a result. Our problem is that there is a low level of professionalism in every sphere [of government] of every oblast. Politics should decide all of these questions.

Caution: Elections



OLGA AIVAZOVSKA

→ We cannot be too careful in a situation where the election is almost equal to preservation of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The upcoming May 25 presidential election is classified as "dangerous." Today, all eyes are glued to the separatist attacks in the east, the number of Russian soldiers at Ukraine's borders and the courteous exchanges between diplomats of Ukraine, Russia, America and the European Union. Uncertainty about the ability of Ukraine to organize the election process only increases the tension, and is compounded by the irresponsible attitude of some candidates, public anxiety and expectations of what tomorrow will bring.

The National Security and Defense Council and the Foreign Ministry have stated that Russia is bent on disrupting the election process, or to completely de-legitimize it. Throughout its post-Soviet history, Ukraine has had no practical experience in dealing with such a high level of security and foreign invasion threats. However, there is enough time for all citizens to adopt the right behavior tactics and security measures to be able to vote.

Gentle reminders from U.S. and European partners on the need to elect a new president and receive much needed technical and financial assistance attached to this event put an end to discussions on declaring a state of emergency.

Chances to quell the terrorist actions by enacting any kind of heightened state is doubtful, but the organization of the electoral process would be jeopardized.

Postponing the election date would give the Russian Federation additional time to implement a full-scale intervention, allow corruption to permeate at the local government level, and destabilize the situation.

However the situation develops in Ukraine, the election is the only way out of the crisis. But only under the condition that everyone in the entire territory of Ukraine gets a chance to vote, including voters in temporarily occupied Crimea.

It's worthy to identify five major election threats: safety of voters and members of election commissions, polling stations, public election documents, candidates and information security.

All government bodies, the state apparatus, pres-

idential candidates, pro-Ukrainian citizenry and the media are obliged to counteract these threats.

Before the vote, the sources of threats should be effectively localized. A sober assessment should be made on the percentage of territories that won't be able to hold elections in a civilized fashion.

By no means should voters in the eastern regions be excluded from the election process and be deprived of their constitutional right to vote. From a legal point of view it will not affect the legitimacy of the election, but it could become a source of political debate and manipulation.

Ukraine is obliged to legally defend everyone's right to vote for those who want to exercise it. Security at polling station must be strengthened in the regions where it is rational to do so.

Intelligence agencies and law enforcement officials must implement regular inspections of premises for explosives, illegal weapons, and unauthorized persons.

District election commissions, which will determine the results within the district and receive protocols from polling stations, should be heavily guarded with police and be under video surveillance and be the target international observers and media.

The security of election documents, ballots, maintenance of voter lists, protocols from election precincts should be strengthened by additional convoys and guards.

This process cannot be supervised only with local police, in fact, the latter were sometimes idle on keeping public order during the separatist speeches, protecting activists at public events for the unity of the country, government buildings, etc. The best and finest officers should be mobilized to the east and south.

The need to transport documents to the district election commission in armored vehicles should not be excluded. We cannot be too careful in a situation where the election is almost equal to preservation of Ukraine's territorial integrity.

The main international principle that is used in the evaluation of democratic elections is for them to be free and fair: no threats, intimidation, bribery or pressure to voters.

Thus, one of the key problems is the safety of citizens who should be able to vote freely at the polls on May 25. It's no secret that the key to these issues will be the effectiveness of counter-terrorist operations, the work of Ukrainian intelligence services and border guards.

Despite the laxity of the election campaign, the safety of candidates, who have to clearly operate within the law and the constitution and not use provocative slogans and appeals aimed at inciting inter-ethnic, inter-regional strife, is another key issue.

Candidates should also refrain from slogans that could be interpreted as calls to change the boundaries and borders of the country, to overthrow the government and the like.

However, the central government should not act selectively while protecting the life and health of candidates and provide them with adequate protection. It should immediately respond to cases of pressure, threats, or beatings.

So far Ukraine is losing the biggest war with Russia, the information war. Russia's propaganda affects not only the voters of Vladimir Putin, or citizens near Russia's border areas, but also in the globalized world.

We do not have the resources to fight propaganda, but the Ukrainian media should behave professionally during the election, and this includes foreign media who sometimes struggle to distinguish between truth and fake propaganda pictures, or the extraordinary activity of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs when announcing key messages about the election.

Ukraine has a chance to win the election, but it can't do this unless it wins the security war with Russia.

Olga Aivazovska heads OPORA, a civic network devoted to public advocacy and monitoring of elections.

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Winds of change blow through Education Ministry

BY OLENA GONCHAROVA
GONCHAROVA@KYIVPOST.COM

Two months after a new government took over following the toppling of ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's criminal regime, most of the ministries have had work in crisis management mode. They've been dealing with Kremlin-backed militants in Ukraine's vulnerable east, and Russia's annexation of Crimea that was finalized last month.

Ukraine's Education and Science Ministry is no exception.

The ministry, headed by Serhiy Kvit, the ex-president of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy, has had to focus on the fate of nearly 15,000 students who studied in a number of Crimean universities.

Over the last month more than 300 students from annexed Crimea have transferred to mainland universities, according to Inna Sovsun, deputy education minister.

"The majority of Crimean students will continue their studies in Kyiv National Taras Shevchenko University and some medical universities," Sovsun, who previously headed the Centre for Society Research, a think-tank in Kyiv, explains. She says they continue to track all the Crimean graduates and students who want to enroll or continue their studies on the mainland. The ministry no longer finances Crimea-based universities.

Moreover, Kvit and his charges have drafted a 100-day strategic plan to tackle the problems left by their predecessors, complete with benchmarks and stated goals.

"After the discussions with experts and students, we decided to focus on some main issues and (then) try to report what we've done so far," Sovsun told the Kyiv Post. "We are the only ministry who did it."

Among the most sensitive issues is combating corruption in Ukraine's higher education.

"Currently we focus mostly on tracking fraudulent schemes of the former education authorities," Sovsun explains, referring to the former ministry head Dmitry

Tabachnyk, known for his pro-Russian view of history and antagonistic view towards western Ukrainians. Authorities have opened a criminal case against former Education Ministry officials, alleging that they embezzled state funds.

Tabachnyk could not be reached for comment for this story.

One way of stopping corruption is becoming more transparent, stated Sovsun. Expenses are being tracked and documents listing daily transactions are being uploaded to the ministry's site. They are open to the public.

Decentralization of management is also high on the agenda, because "the bureaucratic routine

needs to be reduced for more effective work," says Sovsun.

Sovsun also wants to increase the financial and academic autonomy of universities and cut the number of subjects students have to take each semester. Sovsun, who received her master's degree in Sweden, recalls she had two courses from which to choose during her one-year of study.

Artem Shaipov, a graduate of Kyiv Taras Shevchenko University, agrees that Ukraine's universities lack freedom and ability to change curricula because of Education Ministry bureaucracy. Given that Ukrainian students have 10-15 subjects to handle each semester, Sovsun says such a cumbersome academic workload needs to be "substantially reduced."

There are only three Ukrainian universities that made it to the United Kingdom's respected QS ranking of best universities. But Sovsun says it's not "a priority" for the ministry get more Ukrainian universities to the list. The focus is on quality of education.

"The society believes Ukraine's education is in a poor state. But measuring the quality of education is not easy. And we can't promise to improve it in 100 days," Sovsun says, adding there

are plans to create an agency that will assess the quality of higher education once a new law is passed to regulate it.

Academia is another field in urgent need of state support. This sector is also handled by the education ministry in Ukraine.

The previous government, led by ex-Prime Minister Mykola Azarov, planned to allocate Hr 2.6 million for scientific research this year. The new ministry says the sum is a tiny fraction of what is needed to make Ukrainian scientists competitive on the global market.

"We don't have money to sustain scientists, that's why it's impossible for us to hire Ukraine's top specialists who work abroad to come back. Ukraine has neither new laboratories, nor equipment to work," Sovsun complains.

One solution is to boost bilateral projects between local and foreign scientists outside of Ukraine.

Staff turnover at national academic bodies should also be encouraged. "It's a common practice in Ukraine when some officials hold (their positions) in scientific institutions for 30 years and more," Sovsun said. "It's impossible, because young scientists need to work in a competitive environment."

"I guess the new blood and a wind of change are the things Ukraine's education needs the most," Sovsun adds.

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Goncharova can be reached at goncharova@kyivpost.com.



A student of Kyiv-Mohyla Academy washes the Hryhoriy Ukrainian monument to philosopher, mystic and poet Skovoroda. (UNIAN)

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Many universities in the USA and UK prioritise their offers to IB Diploma graduates due to the rigorous academic nature of the programme. Dr Geoff Parks, Director of Admissions at Cambridge University confirms that "...because the IB Diploma differentiates better than the A-level, if we are hesitating about making an offer at all, we would be more likely to make an offer to an IB student than an A-level student."

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Western-educated members of Ukraine's government

BY VLADYSLAV GOLOVIN
GOLOVIN@KYIVPOST.COM

Ukraine might not have the technocratic Cabinet many had hoped for, but it still has the highest ever share of top- and mid-level government officials with western degrees and international business experience.

At least eight senior positions in the central government and national companies are held by people with impressive business dossiers and western education credentials. Some 20 hold mid-management positions. Most have zero experience in politics, and typically this is considered to be an advantage. But it can also be a hindrance, as they could have trouble navigating Ukraine's massive bureaucracy, they confess.

The biggest question the nation hopes to find the answer to is whether they will make a difference in turning a clumsy, dysfunctional government into a modern one, meant to meet the needs its people.

"This is a positive trend because a lot of people, who worked for state for last several years, were deeply corrupt. Ministries needs people with other values and business experience," says Glib Vyshlynsky, an economic expert from market research company GfK Ukraine.

Some of the Western educated or business-trained appointees were hired through a procedure that resembled a job interview. There were four contenders for the job of the chief taxman, including people who worked for the so-called Big Four global audit firms, says Ihor Bilous, deputy economy minister in charge of the tax office.

Bilous said that during the selection process "I had to tell the prime minister what I think needs to be done to change the country tomorrow." Bilous headed Renaissance Capital, an investment bank, in Ukraine and Central and Eastern Europe before coming to clean up the nation's tax collection system. In the past, he worked for UBS, a Swiss global financial conglomerate.

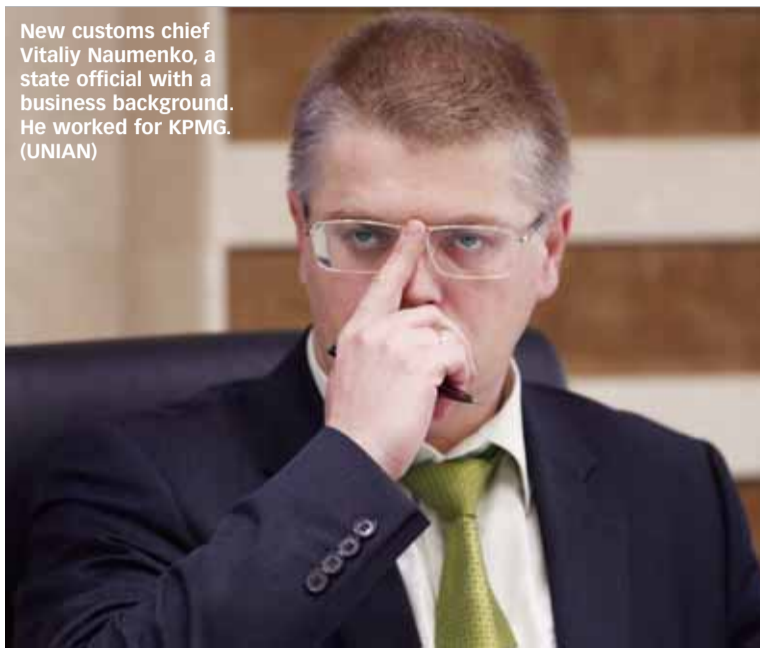
Yuriy Kobolev, the new chief executive officer of Naftogaz Ukraine, a state-owned energy monopoly, described a similar hiring process. He said lawmakers suggested several candidates for the position, including him, and he had to send in his resume. He was selected after an interview with Prime Minister Arseniy Yatsenyuk, which took place on a Sunday.

"It was a little unexpected, even though pleasant," Kobolev said about his appointment at his first press briefing. Prior to getting the job, he ran his own company, AYA Securities. Before that he worked at PricewaterhouseCoopers.

Other senior government members include Economy Minister Pavlo Sheremeta, who led the Kyiv School of Economics, advised the government of Malaysia and set up the prestigious Kyiv Mohyla Business School in the past. He holds an MBA degree from America's Emory University.

Vitaliy Naumenko, a former senior advisor for global auditing company KPMG, was appointed to head the Customs Service on March 12. Maksym Blank of Astrum Investments accepted the position of deputy chief executive officer at state-run railways monopolist Ukrzaliznytsya on April 9. He received his MBA from Graceland University in

New customs chief Vitaliy Naumenko, a state official with a business background. He worked for KPMG. (UNIAN)



the U.S. in 1995.

Moreover, former Alfa-Bank CEO Andrey Volkov now heads the State Commission for Financial Markets, while Astapov Lawyers partner Antonina Yabolnyk is nominated to head the Antimonopoly Committee, the government's anti-trust body.

Most people who come from outside the bureaucracy complain about the poor work environment in the Cabinet of Ministers. Political pressure, employees sabotaging decisions, office politics and loads paperwork are just a few problems they face. Surprisingly to those coming from the efficiency-driven corporate culture, all documents still need to be signed by the Cabinet and physically taken from one office

to another.

"It is not that much fun to work here," Bilous confesses.

Many of those appointed to government positions are getting paid much less than what they were making in the corporate sector.

But Yevgen Sysoyev, managing partner of Aventures Capital and ex-vice president of Concorde Capital investment house, says money is not an issue for those who worked in senior positions in investment banks. A good resume, he says, matters a lot to them.

But Vasyl Miroshnychenko, one of the founders of Professional Government Initiative begs to differ. The initiative was launched by Ukrainian graduates of top Western universi-

ties – such as Cambridge University, Harvard University, London School of Economics – to make themselves available for hiring by the ministries and state agencies.

Miroshnychenko says without a proper reward for their services, a professional government is unsustainable in the long term. But the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development clearly has the same understanding. The bank is designing a program that would allow Ukraine's Cabinet members to receive competitive salaries for their work, which would also reduce the risk of corruption.

In the meantime, the foreign university alumni community has been accepting jobs with low or no pay. On March 3, they sent a statement to the government that their services are available, and set up an email account for the government to send their staffing requirements, which the alumni said they would address within 24 hours.

Several of them have since received positions in the Ministry of Economy, Ministry of Education and the State Security Service, among other places. But the alumni themselves are not too happy with the achievements.

"On a scale of 10, I would give the program a six," says Miroshnychenko, an alumnus of the London School of Economics. He says because the government is temporary, recruiting good staff is not its top priority.

"They have to get more serious about it after the (May 25 presidential election)," he says.

Kyiv Post staff writer Vladyslav Golovin can be reached at golovin@kyivpost.com.



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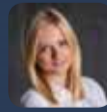
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BUSINESS ADVISER

ACCA member: To be or not to be? That is the question

What are the "pros" and "cons" of ACCA membership

If the title of this article caught your attention — you most probably are an ACCA student or you are contemplating the possibility of studying ACCA. You are the only one to know the right answer. However, we will present you with the possible "pros" and "cons" of this challenging decision.

For starters — let's look at some statistics. Nowadays there are 162 000 ACCA members and 428 000 ACCA students. The program is widespread, encompassing 173 countries. Surely you have noticed this abbreviation in the CFOs signatures of your local renowned companies. Obtaining this qualification or confirmation of the examination process becomes not only a sufficient but a necessary criterion to be eligible for a financial position of certain level.

An important particularity of the program is that its content and examination rules are the same wherever you decide to obtain it or to prove your knowledge and skills. When someone becomes an ACCA member, they continue to stay in shape, attending seminars, conferences and other relevant events. That is an official requirement of ACCA organization regarding the annual confirmation of your membership.

Are there any cornerstones?

The content of the program allows its participants to develop a complex approach to finance, as the list of disciplines includes all kinds of accounting, commercial law, financial and strategic analysis of a company. And even if something listed above isn't in professional competencies of a student, they still need to study it in depth. This is the way the examinations are composed. A pass rate of 50% seems easy only at the first glance. You will need to not only get acquainted with the topic, but rather dig into it.

Your advice to the potential students

If you decided to become an ACCA student — think again. Measure thoroughly all your arguments. ACCA member — is not only a prestigious qualification. It is also two and a half years of considerable time and money investment. That is, if you pass all the exams from the first try, which happens not so often. Before each session there are around 800 pages waiting for you (theory and exercises) in order to prepare for each discipline. Your evenings and weekends, usually spent with your friends and family now will be passed in the company of your desk and calculator. While before, traveling or waiting for something you were thinking your own thoughts — now you will have a pocket book with formulas and important definitions, which you will be reading, re-reading and learning by heart.

What about the schedule? And the result?

You will be able to stop your studies any time and get your preliminary diploma already after having successfully passed three or nine exams. But if you reach the final, as a reward for your efforts you will get a Diploma, a small rectangular ensign and a pen. Your family, friends and colleagues will cheer for you. And you will be the one to know the value and price of those four capital letters in your CV and remember how it was — sometimes hard and frustrating, sometimes easy and enjoyable. And you will be the one to have a number of well-sharpened instruments of decision-making, tried and hardened in practice (as you will be working while studying), that will remain with you no matter what. The next goal now — to use them wisely.



Anna Grygorash
ACCA, Senior Tutor at EY Academy of business

EY Ernst & Young LLC
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Expats to Watch

Welsh principal takes international approach

BY DARYNA SHEVCHENKO
SHEVCHENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

A Brit from Wales Keith Jackson moved to Ukraine in 2012 to become a principal of British International School in Kyiv. With twelve years of experience in international education, Ukraine has become his 6th work destination after Asia, Portugal and Romania.

And though he ensures he does feel Ukraine's cultural uniqueness, this is the "conception of internationalism" he brought with him. "It doesn't matter where the children are from, we work with children on international basis," he says.

And as Jackson's understanding of education matched the concept of British International School, the principal says he is particularly proud of the progress the school makes now.

The British International School was founded back in 1997 "to serve the needs of a growing expatriate population looking for an International education for their children and aspiring Ukrainian parents seeing the value of such an opportunity," the school website reads. Within 17 years the school added two more campuses and has significantly increased the number of Ukrainian students.

The newest campus, in Kyiv's Pechersk district, was built three years ago, while the one in Kyiv's Nyvky and Dnipropetrovsk before that.

Now the school offers either international or Ukrainian certificate and hosts over 600 students age 3 to 18 in all three campuses. Even though school community includes students from Qatar, Israel, Latvia and many other countries, school statistics says around 70 percent do choose Ukrainian curriculum.

Jackson says the school is full and there is even a waiting list. However, the studying fee is high — \$18, 000 to \$23,000 per year.

The principal says parents choose British school for two main reasons, "they are not happy with Ukrainian

Keith Jackson

Nationality: British. **Age:** 50
Length of time in Ukraine: 2 years
Position: principal of British International School in Kyiv

Tips for succeeding in Ukraine: "You've got to embrace the culture. While working you can see things that are happening not the way you would do them, yes you can get frustrated, but that wouldn't solve the situation. Try to understand why something's happened and work out the solution. And when you understand you move forward."



education system, and they want strong English, which is the main studying language in our school."

It is also personal attitude and individual-based teaching that features the school. "This is a huge cultural difference between our system and the Ukrainian system. We group children according to their ability to learn," Jackson says and explains - such a system helps providing effective education for students, no matter what their English level is and makes sure students can join the school on any level.

The other principal's pride is his team of teachers. "All our teachers are professionals from Britain, Canada, Australia and America, they are international teachers," Jackson says. The only Ukrainians the school does have in teaching staff are assistant teachers for the youngest students.

However, students admit teaching team is school's weak point. "We have many teachers of not the highest level, I suppose that's because not many people want to come here now, no matter how much you pay," says school student Levon Barseghyan, 15. He studies to get International certificate and has already planned his career ahead - he wants to become a programmer in Google. Yet Barseghyan says he does like the system the school works in more than a regular Ukrainian one. "I wouldn't say though this school is different, the other schools are different

and ours is what a school should be like," he added.

Critical thinking is one of the main skills British School pedagogues try to develop in their students within the enquiry based approach, Jackson says. "Students here can disagree with the principal, they can say it is wrong what I've decided as long as the criticism is constructive and they are being polite," he explained.

As EuroMaidan revolution in Ukraine has started the children were reacting quite actively. Even though Jackson ensures teachers are not allowed to share their opinions, they did talk to students. "And I was amazed how well informed children were and how strong opinions they had," Jackson says.

However, neither students nor the principal were scared off by the situation in Ukraine. "After all Ukraine is a country waiting to explode, it has a lot of potential and it does have a good future," Jackson says.

And while he says his main job as a school principal is ensuring "health and safety of children" he claims those he takes care of are the ones to make the country's good future. "I am sure our students are your future politicians, diplomats, civil society leaders, prominent scientists, musicians and artists," he smiles.

Kyiv Post staff writer Daryna Shevchenko can be reached at shevchenko@kyivpost.com.

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Many still divided over value of MBA degree in Ukraine

BY VLADYSLAV GOLOVIN
GOLOVIN@KYIVPOST.COM

A Google search for "MBA in Ukraine" yields more than 100 various offers, yet the market leaders remain consistently the same: Kyiv-Mohyla Business School, Lviv Business School, International Management Institute, Edinburgh Business School in Kyiv, KIBIT Business School and International Institute of Business.

There is a newcomer is on the scene, however. The Kyiv School of Economics, Ukraine's major English-language business school, will launch

a master of business administration program on Sept. 1. It will be done in cooperation with U.S.-based Houston University.

"Thus, our students will receive internationally recognized diplomas," KSE newly appointed dean Yuriy Logush told the Kyiv Post.

"Besides, several state universities each year announce the start of MBA programs," says Volodymyr Pavelko, MBA programs director for Kyiv-Mohyla Business School. According to him, there are nearly 100 educational institutions that offer a range of MBA programs.

The menu of degrees is usually restricted to three items: General MBA, Executive MBA (for top-managers and business owners) and specialized MBA programs. They last from eight to 25 months and cost from \$5,000 to \$27,000 for an academic year. Standard MBA programs include courses in finance, management, human resources, marketing, public relations and other related subjects. Some schools offer specialized programs in the second year that provide immersed study in agribusiness, information technology, advertising or entrepreneurship.

MBA students usually are aged between 25 and 55. "We do not teach anyone without preliminary experience in business," explains Pavelko.

Nobody knows for sure how many MBA graduates Ukraine has got. "Lots of institutes or business schools do not disclose figures of graduates or people who left the program," says Dmytro Bondar, head of MBA Strategy, a preparatory center for MBA applicants.

Last year KMBS had 65 students graduate. Meanwhile, the International Management Institute, established in 1990, states that it had some 1,500 graduates in 23 years.

When choosing a suitable MBA program in Ukraine, aspiring participants typically pay attention to the academic brand and certificates issued by such organizations as Association of MBAs, an international certification body. Word of mouth is a powerful force on the market, too.

"A person whom I trust advised me to study at the Kyiv-Mohyla Business school. Afterwards I attended the MBA Open Day event and was really impressed by the lecturers," says Yuriy Senchuk, director of Olam International agribusiness company for Ukraine, Russia and Belarus.

KSE's Logush preferred hiring job applicants with MBA degrees when he headed Kraft Foods Ukraine and when he worked at Myronivsky Hliboproduct agriculture giant.

Ukrainian entrepreneurs and managers usually gain their experience in an uncompetitive environment, so when they face real competition, they



Pavlo Sheremeta, now minister for economic development and trade, teaches a class at the Kyiv School of Economics on Sept. 12, 2013. (KSE/facebook)

clearly lack knowledge, he adds.

Yuriy Shevchuk, a KMBS graduate, admits that business education helps a student prioritize values. "You may have great professional experience, but if you do not have your own values, that is a big disadvantage," he mentions.

Journalist Oleg Gavrysh is currently enrolled in the MBA program at Edinburgh Business School in Kyiv. The program cooperates with Heriot-Watt University in Edinburgh. "The MBA degree allows you to systemize your knowledge and apply for better paid jobs. According to the research data, 70 percent of MBA students get promoted after receiving their degrees," Gavrysh says.

Edinburgh Business School provides an opportunity to study in English and Russian which is seen as an advantage.

"I have a degree in finance from Kyiv Polytechnic Institute, but with an MBA degree I can apply for a job not only in Ukraine, but in any European country, U.S. or Canada," the Edinburgh Business School student says.

However, there is probably as much skepticism around about MBA as enthusiasm. "An MBA gives you the opportunity to get fundamental knowledge about business, but it is not a

magic pill," says Leonid Bershidsky, a Russian journalist and media manager, who founded several projects, such as Vedomosti, Forbes Russia and Slon.ru.

MBA programs are too expensive and will never pay back, says Hlib Vyshlinsky, deputy managing director for GfK Ukraine, one of the country's leading marketing and sociology research organizations. "I think, you're simply wasting your money if you enroll in an MBA program," he says.

But if your employer pays for your MBA, then go for it, says Vyshlinsky.

It is still difficult for Ukrainian MBA programs to compete with analogous Western programs. Anybody with a Western MBA degree can find a six-figure job, while it is absolutely impossible to find such a job in Ukraine, says Kostyantyn Magaletskyi, Horizon Capital venture fund partner. "That is why a lot of Ukrainian graduates of Western programs never return to their home country," he says.

Around 200 Ukrainians have already received their MBA degrees abroad, according to Dmytro Bondar, head of MBA Strategy, a preparatory center for MBA applicants.

Kyiv Post staff writer Vladyslav Golovin can be reached at golovin@kyivpost.com.

→ On the move

PAID ANNOUNCEMENT



DR. GEORGE LOGUSH was appointed to be the President of Kyiv School of Economics (KSE). The KSE, founded in 1996, is a world-class academic institution with a reputation for excellence both in Ukraine and internationally.

"George is uniquely qualified to lead KSE as a world class institution in economic education and research and in providing excellent business management education and economic policy advice" said Regina Yan, Chair of the KSE Board of Directors.

George Logush was Senior Advisor to the Board of KSE, Vice-Rector at the Ukrainian Catholic University, Chair of the Supervisory Board of the Lviv Business School, member of governing board of the International Management Institute.

In the US, George was at Fordham University in New York City where he was an Associate Dean and Director of the Institute of International Business.

George's academic experience complemented by his extensive business experience. was Vice President of Kraft Foods (1995-2011) where he was also Managing Director for Eastern Europe and Ukraine as well as member of the Kraft Management Board for the CEEMA region. In Ukraine he was also VP at MHP and founding managing director of RJR and KPMG.

George holds a PhD in Mathematical Economics/Econometrics and MA in Economics from New York University and BS in Engineering Science and Economics from the City University of New York. He completed the Corporate Executive Program at the Kellogg School, Northwestern University.

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World in Ukraine

Editor's Note: World in Ukraine takes a look at Ukraine's bilateral relations with different nations. To sponsor this news feature, please contact the Kyiv Post's sales team at advertising@kyivpost.com or call 591-7788.

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Indian culture gains popularity in Ukraine through food, yoga

BY EVAN OSTRYZNIUK
OSTRYZNIUK@KYIVPOST.COM

Ukrainian interest in Indian culture has been growing by leaps and bounds in recent years, from the proliferating schools of yoga to the intensification of academic exchanges. The Indian community in Ukraine might not be very large, but it has an outsized impact here.

India had a close relationship with Ukraine in Soviet times, as the neutral Asian state was allowed to send students to learn and Bollywood films to screen in the Ukrainian Soviet Republic. However, the collapse of the Soviet Union broke the chain, and Indian culture disappeared for several years until relative stability returned to newly independent Ukraine. Today, Indian culture is not only sponsored via government programs, but also through the initiative of Indian businessmen and the enthusiasm of Ukrainians themselves.

One of the earliest focal points

for this cultural revival centered on Himalaya restaurant. It was the first authentic Indian dining establishment in Ukraine. Since its foundation in 1997, Himalaya has served as a sort of community center for the expatriate Indian community, where holidays and life events of this small community would be celebrated. "Our businessmen would come for business lunches and meetings," Himalaya director Yashwi Tripathi says. "Also, the India Club would gather here, while the restaurant serves to keep children of Indian families close to their roots."

There are three Indian restaurants in Kyiv now. The popularity of Indian cuisine beyond the expatriate community is one of the factors that has led to greater exposure to Ukrainians at large. "What has surprised me in my time here is the interest of Ukrainians in participating in Indian culture," says the Indian Ambassador to Ukraine Rajiv Chander.

The Indian community's celebrations of its major religious holidays are often public affairs. Diwali, or → 11

Indian Hindu devotees participate in rituals for the Lathmar Holi festival at the Nandji Temple in Nandgaon on March 22, 2013. Lathmar Holi is a local celebration, but it takes place well before the national Holi day on March 27. (AFP)



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Rajiv Kumar Chander joined the Indian Foreign Service in 1983 after obtaining degrees in History and Law. He has held diplomatic posts in Moscow and St. Petersburg, Russia; Kathmandu, Nepal and Germany. He also served as India's deputy representative with the Permanent Mission of India to the United Nations in Geneva from 2006-2009. Ambassador Chander started his mission in Ukraine in July 2011. He is married and has one daughter. Ambassador Chander speaks English and Russian.



(Kostyantyn Chermichkin)

Indian ambassador bets on visa regime liberalization

BY EVAN OSTRYZNIUK
OSTRYZNIUK@KYIVPOST.COM

India's ambassador to Ukraine Rajiv Kumar Chander sees removing the obstacles for Indian companies willing to do business in Ukraine as his main mission. Simplifying visa procedures for Indian travelers could be a major step in this direction.

While a solid 200 Indian business families make up the local expatriate community, there have been a few bumps along the trade road that reflect Ukraine's not wholly friendly attitude towards foreign companies.

"Last year a number of Indian pharmaceutical companies here came under investigation by the Ukrainian security services," the ambassador said. "We took up the matter with the Ukrainian government, and it seems to be heading towards a happy resolution. We asked them to tell us about any wrongdoing, but no cases actually went to court."

As a result of the disruptions, Chander said Indian pharmaceutical yearly sale figures in Ukraine came down from \$300-350 million to \$250 million.

The ambassador suspects that the reason behind the unprecedented investigation could be to hurt Indian pharmaceutical importers. "The process was going for 7-8 months, during which our products were being held up, and this was giving unfair advantages to local companies," Chander explains. "We hope there was not more to it than meets the eye, but if there are no convictions, then the basis on which these investigations were launched was flawed."

India ranks second globally in pharmaceuticals by value after Germany, but is first by volume, the Indian Embassy states. India also has the largest number of U.S. Food and Drug Administration-approved pharmaceutical plants.

Not surprisingly, India's stron-

gest business interests in Ukraine are also pharmaceuticals, represented by 30 companies and the Indian Pharmaceutical Manufacturers Association based in Kyiv. Because of their low cost, these products compete with similar Ukrainian brands.

Bilateral projects

The Embassy of India in Ukraine wrote a letter to the Ukrainian government expressing an interest in bidding for the fertilizer terminal Odesa Portside Plant, when this state asset goes under the hammer. One of India's biggest Ukrainian imports is fertilizers.

Building sunflower oil pressing plants would be another investment possibility, the ambassador suggested, since India buys 25 percent of Ukraine's sunflower oil every year.

The successes of Indian economic exchanges with Ukraine can be partly attributed to links established in Soviet times. "India's first satellite was built in Dnipropetrovsk," Chander says. "The story begins here. And we are participating in the development of rocket engines, where Ukraine has leading technology."

In addition, India has contracted with Ukrainian companies to upgrade Antonov aircraft and Russian-built nuclear power stations.

Ukrainian mining experience has resulted in deals to tunnel in the Kashmiri Mountains and building a metro station in Delhi, Chander added. "These are non-traditional areas of cooperation."

Despite the challenging local business climate, Indians have been steadily increasing trade with Ukraine. "Bilateral trade was \$1.5-5 billion when I started," the ambassador stated, "and now it is up to \$3 billion. In 2005-2009 there was a lull in the relationship with the [President Viktor Yushchenko] government's emphasis on Europe."

"To be frank, the vast potential of

bilateral trade is not being tapped" the ambassador concluded.

The visa issue

However, one of the biggest obstacles to greater Indian economic interest in Ukraine is gaining physical entry.

"Around 4,000 visas are issued yearly by the Ukrainian Embassy in Delhi, mostly to students, and the procedure was lengthy and onerous," Chander explains. "This has an abysmal impact on relations. I can point to a specific example. A company in Kherson was interested in importing generators, and it found a joint German-India venture that was selling them at half the price of European equivalents. However, the deal could not go through because the Indian side could get a visa for only a few days, which was not enough time. Ukraine needs to make it possible for Indian businessmen to travel freely."

Ukraine recently removed India from a list of 90 countries to which a special visa regime was applied. "We are pleased with this, but we are still searching with our Ukrainian colleagues for ways to make traveling to Ukraine easier. We feel there is merit in people coming here. Ninety percent of the reason for the barrier to a higher trade turnover is the difficulty Indian businessmen have traveling to Ukraine," the ambassador said.

The situation is changing on both sides of the divide. By the end of October the Indian government will introduce for 180 countries, including Ukraine, an electronic visa regime, whereby application and payments are made online. The applicant will then receive authorization to visit India for a month. This should make a substantial impact on the number of visitors to India, according to Chander.

Kyiv Post business journalist Evan Ostryzniuk can be reached at ostryzniuk@kyivpost.com.

Himalaya eatery is unofficial community center for Indian expatriates in Kyiv

→ **10** the Festival of Lights, is one of the biggest Hindu festivals, signifying the victory of light over darkness. Taking place in the autumn, the local Indian community has coordinated its Diwali celebration with dance festivals, yoga demonstrations, and Days of Asian Cuisine.

Holi, or the Festival of Colors or the Festival of Love, meanwhile, has won widespread popularity on Trukhaniv Island in Kyiv. "We noticed that the festival last year had 1,500 Ukrainians queuing up to get in," said Ambassador Chander. "They were singing Indian songs and dances and painting each other with colors."

Normally held in the spring, because of its coincidence with local holidays, Holi has been moved to July.

The major national holidays the Indian community celebrates is Republic Day on Jan. 26 and Independence Day on Aug. 15.

The Indian community in Ukraine consists of around 4,000 students studying at institutes of higher education, mainly in Kyiv, Kharkiv and Chernivtsi, and about 200 families involved in business, according to the Embassy of India. They formed the India Club in Kyiv and more recently the Sanskriti Centre for Indian Culture. Founded by Rajesh and Kasturi Saraiya, a successful business family, Sanskriti is a non-profit charitable organization that organizes Indian dance lessons, festivals and cultural exchanges.

The Indian community has been active in the International Women's Club of Kyiv, for many years sponsoring a pavilion at its annual charity bazaar.

Bollywood is making its return to Ukraine. In March one of the latest Bollywood releases was screened at Oscar, a prominent Kyiv cinema, in conjunction with the Indian Embassy. Red Hat, an Indian film distribution company based in Kazakhstan, is dubbing recent Indian movies into Russian and releasing them through a local film distribution network throughout Ukraine. The company aims at four-five general releases per month. "We want to bring back the magic of Indian cinema to Ukrainians," Ambassador Chander said.

Days of Indian culture has been and will be held in September-October, which will include demonstrations of Indian classical, folk and Bollywood dance, yoga and, of course, food. "Last year we had 250 Ukrainian and Indian dancers performing on Khreshchatyk in downtown Kyiv," Ambassador Chander said.

There are more than 30 Ukrainian cultural associations/groups spread across the country, engaged in the promoting Indian dances. Most groups have learnt Indian dances

India at a glance

Territory: 3,287,263 sq km

Population: 1,236,344,631 (July 2014 est.)

Government type: federal republic

Country leader: chief of state:

President Pranab Mukherjee (since

22 July 2012); head of

government: Prime Minister

Manmohan Singh (since 22 May

2004)

GDP (purchasing power parity):

\$4.96 trillion (2013 est.)

GDP (per capita): \$4,000 (2013 est.)

Main industries: textiles, chemicals,

food processing, steel, trans-

portation equipment, cement, min-

ing, petroleum, machinery, software,

pharmaceuticals

Ukrainian-Indian economic

relations: Trade turnover:

\$3.0 billion (2013)

Exports from India to Ukraine:

pharmaceuticals, chemicals, ores

and minerals tobacco products, tea,

coffee, spices, silk, jute

Exports from Ukraine to India:

fertilizers, sunflower oil, engineering

technology, engines

Ukraine FDI into India: \$1.12 mil-

lion (2013)

on their own and are promoting the same through festivals and by running dance classes. In fact, Ukraine has its own Indian dance online portal.

Yoga has been a big hit in Ukraine, with its many schools well represented by the numerous studios. The Ukrainian Federation of Yoga, meanwhile, has affiliates in over a dozen Ukrainian cities. The Indian Embassy even issues visas for yoga tourism, according to Ambassador Chander.

Academic culture has been revived. Ukraine's oldest continuously operating institute of higher education, University of Kharkiv, has had a Department of Indology since Tsarist times. More recently, the All-Ukrainian Association of Indologists is engaged in organizing seminars, exhibitions on topics relating to India. A Ukrainian Hindi teacher of Taras Shevchenko National University was awarded the Vishwa Hindi Samman, an award for excellence in Indian studies, in 2012. With the help of the Indian Embassy, a Chair of Indian Studies at the Institute of International Relations at Shevchenko University was established. Two Indian lecturers have taught foreign policy and economics there. "We hope to have another lecturer in law teach there as well," Ambassador Chander said.

Kyiv Post business journalist Evan Ostryzniuk can be reached at ostryzniuk@kyivpost.com.



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Ukraine still Terra Incognita for many global brands

BY EVAN OSTRYZNIUK
OSTRYZNIUK@KYIVPOST.COM

Ukraine, with a population of 46 million, is still a huge blip on the radar of various multi-national companies looking to get bigger returns on their investments. However, their capital remains mostly at bay since market entry is a challenging task, even for the business world's giants.

"Foreign companies have had a notoriously difficult time entering the Ukrainian market because of the high level of corruption at all levels of government, the complicated tax and regulatory environment, unbridled corporate raiding, and weak law enforcement," explains Anton Usov, senior advisor at the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development in Ukraine.

"And without the rule of law to ensure property rights, companies are leery about doing business here," he added.

Usov believes the new government led by Prime Minister Arseniy Yatseniuk is on the right track to improving the business climate. Multinationals engaged in agriculture and food processing show the most interest in large-scale investments, along with such support industries as transport and logistics, noted EBRD's senior advisor. Due to banking confidentiality rules, Usov wouldn't name them. However, Kraft Foods and Nestle are already on the market, as are dairy producers Danone and Lactalis, among others.

Ryanair

The European Union transportation sector's announcement on April 14 that Ukraine could sign the "Open Skies" agreement before June 5 should clear the way for low-cost airlines to enter the market. Initially, the agreement, which liberalizes rules for the aviation industry, was expected to be signed on March 14, but the overthrow of ex-President Viktor Yanukovich's regime led to the postponement of this.



(From L-R) Ryanair airline company Head of sales and marketing Peter Bellen, Marketing Chief Kenny Jacob, Head of Communication Robin Kiely and Sales and Marketing Manager for Belgium and France Jonathan Brisly attend a press conference of Irish low-cost airline Ryanair about their new flights from Brussels Airport, on Feb. 13, 2014, in Zaventem. (AFP)

Irish low-cost carrier Ryanair back on Sept. 13 announced that it would begin operations in Ukraine after the country joined Open Skies. Ryanair had talks about flying routes to three Ukrainian airports in Kyiv, Lviv and Donetsk.

"We are in talks with many airports, and always keep the door open for future routes," the company said. While Ukraine has been on Ryanair's radar for some time, the airline has

only recently begun negotiating with local airports because of the government's stated intention to free up the air carrier market in Ukraine.

The Irish carrier's Vice-President Michael Cawley said that "many Ukrainians use the services of the company located near the border with the Polish city of Rzeszow. We know that these people like what we offer, they like our prices. We would like to make a direct flight connection from Poland

to Ukraine, but unfortunately cannot do that." Differences in the EU's and Ukraine's regulatory environment are quite a substantial obstacle for doing business in both of these directions.

IKEA

The experience of Swedish furniture giant IKEA reveals that one should have a long-term strategy for working on the Ukrainian market. According to Forbes, IKEA Group declared its interest to enter Ukraine in 2005 amid a construction boom in the capital.

Company founder Ingvar Kamprad flew to Kyiv to meet with then-President Viktor Yushchenko and announced that he was willing to invest \$2 billion in a Ukrainian project that would become the largest in Europe. Site conflicts with Kyiv mayor Leonid Chernovetsky in 2006-2009 caused IKEA to buy a 64 acre site near Odesa. However, local bosses wanted "incentives" to accelerate the granting of permits, the company said, which the company refused to pay. Then, the bottom fell out of the construction market and IKEA left the country altogether by 2010.

IKEA Group Media Relations Manager Ylva Magnusson told the Kyiv Post that "the IKEA Group has no immediate plans to open stores in Ukraine and we don't have any mail order outlets. We acquired a site in Odesa in 2009 with a long-term perspective of potentially establishing retail operations in the future. This is a normal procedure in our expansion process."

PayPal

The growing market for electronic transactions has led several international e-payment systems to carefully wade into Ukraine despite the under-

developed banking regulatory environment, on top of the usual challenges. California-based e-payment system PayPal is currently working on receiving all the necessary licenses for conducting business in Ukraine.

On Dec. 5, 2013 the global e-payment leader PayPal had enough permits and licenses to open a part of its system in Ukraine, according to head of Business Development for Europe, Middle East and Africa Corrado Tomassoni. "At the moment, Ukrainian users cannot withdraw money from their accounts in the payment system, but they can replenish them with a bankcard to pay for purchases on foreign online stores," he said.

PayPal told the Kyiv Post that a Ukrainian client must find a Ukrainian bank that has credit or payment cards that are accepted by PayPal for the system to work. However, the remainder should come soon, PayPal said. "Now, we just need to get a banking license for processing electronic payments and we are actively engaged. In the European Union and the U.S. licensing is easier," said Tomassoni, adding that Ukraine's accession to the European Union could accelerate this process.

The Ukraine experience for PayPal is not unlike that in Serbia and Egypt, which received full access to the system in stages that lasted several months.

Only two payment systems are recognized by the National Bank of Ukraine: Alfa-Bank's Maxi and Fidobank's MoneXy, according to the law firm Lavrynovych & Partners. In addition, many banks conduct operations with such non-National Bank of Ukraine-approved electronic money as Yandex and WebMoney.

Kyiv Post business journalist Evan Ostryzniuk can be reached at ostryzniuk@kyivpost.com.

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28 members of Kedr hunting club

At the table (clockwise)

Serhiy Kivalov, member of parliament. **Volodymyr Demishkan**, member of parliament. **Leonid Kravchuk**, former president of Ukraine. **Yuriy Boyko**, former vice prime minister of Ukraine. **Viktor Yanukovych**, former president of Ukraine. **Andriy Kluyev**, former head of presidential administration. **Mykola Prysyazhniuk**, former agriculture minister. **Leonid Kuchma**, former president of Ukraine. **Viktor Pinchuk**, businessman. **Serhiy Tulub**, former Cherkasy Oblast governor. **Mykhaylo Kulyniuk**, former culture minister. **Vadim Novinskiy**, businessman. **Kostyantyn Sapko**, police general. **Yuriy Samoylenko**, member of parliament. **Viktor Slauta**, former vice prime minister. **Oleksandr Moiseev**. **Anatoliy Radchenko**, official with revenue ministry.
 Back row (L-R)
Oleksandr Lavrynovych, former justice minister. **Volodymyr Kolesnichenko**, member of Higher Council of Justice. **Volodymyr Sivkovych**, former deputy secretary of Security and Defense Council Anton Prigodsky, businessman. **Dmytro Salamatin**, former head of state weapons monopoly Ukroboronprom. **Mykola Yankovsky**, businessman. **Anatoliy Prysyazhniuk**, former Kyiv Oblast governor. **Denys Bass**, former Kyiv city administration official. **Viktor Sivets**, former head of state forest resources agency. **Volodymyr Yevtushenkov**, businessman. **Mykola Demyanko**, member of parliament. **Oleksandr Yaroslavsky**, businessman.

Where Yanukovych and his rich hunting buddies hung out

Editor's Note: This is part of a series of investigative reports based on documents recovered from deposed President Viktor Yanukovych's Mezhyhirya estate after the Ukrainian leader abandoned the presidency on Feb. 21-22 and fled to Russia, where he is living in exile. The documents and stories are published by YanukovychLeaks.org website.

BY OLEKSANDR AKIMENKO, ANNA BABINETS, NATALIE SEDLETSKA

"We've survived, though we are outlaws."

This line from a Russian gangster song became the unofficial anthem of the presidential hunting club whose members included an elite collection of presidents, billionaires and others during the rule of overthrown President Viktor Yanukovych.

The Kedr hunting club occupies nearly 100 hectares of reserve forest adjoining Yanukovych's billion-dollar Mezhyhirya residence, which was returned to the state after the former leader fled to Russia, where he is dodging mass murder charges levied by the new Ukrainian government.

The land is being leased from a limited liability company named Dom Lesnika, which is closely connected to Mezhyhirya.

Ukraine's former president is still palpable in every detail here. Ostrov (Island), one of the hunting clubhouses, closely resembles Honka, Yanukovych's most posh mansion at Mezhyhirya, today a symbol of corruption and extravagance.

The list of Kedr's 28 members can be used as a case study of Ukraine's richest and most influential individuals during Yanukovych's era.

Ex-presidents Leonid Kravchuk and Leonid Kuchma, billionaires Viktor Pinchuk and Vadim Novinsky as well as a whole array of ministers, officials, members of parliament and businessmen were among those who joined Kedr's ranks to go hunting with Yanukovych.

Former secretary of the National Security and Defense Council Andriy Kluyev was the last public official to join Kedr. On Dec. 28, in the midst of EuroMaidan protests, he filed an

application form. On Feb. 10, 12 days before Yanukovych fled the country, Kluyev paid Hr 120,000 (\$15,000) in membership fees.

From the inside, Ostrov looks like a large sailing ship with the masts and interior balconies resembling captain decks. There is a massive wooden table for 18 persons in the middle of it.

"Club members used to dine at this table," Kedr's director Mykola Hordiychuk recalls. "They brought their personal chefs with them. We merely cleaned up after them. Even tablecloths were laundered in Mezhyhirya, as they were too large for us to handle."

Inside the house, there was a small swimming pool with a marble massage table. In one of the rooms, journalists of the Organized Crime and Corruption Reporting Project – a Kyiv Post partner – found presents they gave each other: branded bottles of alcohol and empty boxes for hunting knives with handles carved like the jaws of wolves.

According to the documents found in Mezhyhirya, the clubhouse was leased from Dom Lesnika at nearly \$75,000 per month.

The budget of Kedr, a public organization with most of its members being public servants, mushroomed in recent years. While it was Hr 9.6 million in 2011, in 2013 it reached Hr 36.4 million (\$4.55 million).

The budget consisted of membership fees, which in 2013 stretched to Hr 600,000 (\$75,000), or six-fold the amount that members had to pay in 2008, when the club was established. According to Kedr's accounting records, often the dues were paid in cash.

In addition to such generous cash injections by the members, Ukraine's state budget also took the group's hunting needs into consideration. According to a state procurement portal, in 2010-2012 nearly Hr 2 million (\$250,000) of taxpayers' money was spent on a large animals enclosure. Additionally, nearly Hr 7.3 million (\$1 million) was spent to build over 20 kilometers of state-of-the-art roads in the forest.

Czar's hunt

Hunting was a passion of Yanukovych's. He didn't begrudge spending money

on it – almost every building in use had a weapons locker, a separate wardrobe with equipment and, of course, trophies on the walls. A security group called Rubezh protected the

hunters and fishers from unwanted spectators.

Yanukovych had his eye on the hunting area since the 2004 presidential election fiasco, when the Orange

Revolution prevented him from taking power during a fraudulent election.

It is a place with vivid history. In 1967, it was a favorite area of the Soviet Union's Communist Party → 22

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- 3** **Kidlev Restaurant**
8th km Boryspil Road.
In 5 minutes from the Boryspil airport
- 4** **Massimo Restaurant**
15 Saksahanskoho str.
- 5** **Queen Bakery**
102 Saksahanskoho str.
- 6** **Sanskriti**
7D Lesi Ukrainki Boulevard (A-section)
- 7** **Sofyiskiy fitness center**
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April 16 – 23



Kyiv City Marathon

The Fifth Annual Kyiv Marathon this year will have in addition to usual 42-kilometer run, have a relay, half-marathon, street run and kids run. Participants are also welcome to run a special five-kilometer relay to commemorate the Heavenly Hundred. Some 1,700 runners, amateurs as well as professionals, took part in last year's marathon. Over 2,500 contestants have already registered for this year's race.

Kyiv City Marathon. April 27. 9 a.m. Kontraktova Square. For more information and to register go to www.kyivmarathon.org



April 26 – 27

Centaur 2014 festival

This yearly event showcases talent from all across Ukraine. The Centaur festival features professional and amateur stuntmen who display tricks and dazzle audiences with original horseback riding styles. Master classes on horseback riding and horse harnessing are on offer.

Festival of Horseback Riding Centaur 2014. April 26 – 27. 10 a.m. – 7 p.m. Park Kyiv Rus (Kopachyiv village). Hr 30-100. For more information on the event go to www.parkkyivrus.com

April 30



Jazz Day at the Caribbean Club

For one night only on April 30, Caribbean Club will glorify one of the most soulful of music genres – jazz. Starting in 2012, the world's jazz community has celebrated their day of musical devotion on the last day of April. Kyiv's own Dennis Adu Big Band will perform this night.

International Jazz Day. April 30. 7 p.m. Caribbean Club (4 Petlyury St.). Hr 50 – 120

Zelyonka Fest 1.4

This contemporary dance festival is a three-day event that includes a show and master classes from famous choreographers. This year the headliner will include performances by Israeli dancer and choreographer Eldad Ben Sasson, ex-soloist of the Batsheva Dance Company and Vertigo Dance Company as well as Polish Theater's Dada Von Bzdylow. For more information on the program and master classes go to www.zelyonka-fest.org.

Zelyonka Fest 1.4. April 25 – 27. Kyiv Academic Youth Theater (17 Prorizna St.). Hr 100 - 300



April 25 – 27

April 26 – 27



Street Food

For the fifth time in Kyiv, the Street Food Festival is bringing together amateurs and professional lovers of the culinary arts. As always, the main goal of the event is to serve healthier food on the streets. Food lovers will get to not only try something new, but also speak to the chefs, discover their inspiration and recipes.

Street Food Festival. April 26 – 27. 11 a.m. – 11 p.m. Darynok Parking Lot (1 Belomorska St.). Free

April 29



Children of Bodom

Finnish death metal band Children of Bodom is set to hit the stage in late April. Founded in 1993, the band has released eight studio albums, and is bringing their 2013 album "Halo of Blood" to Ukraine. The producer of the band's last record was the leader of the Swedish band "Hypocrisy" Peter Tägtgren. The band is ready to present their new and old hits for their Ukrainian fans.

Children of Bodom. April 29. 8 p.m. Stereo Plaza (119 Krasnozvezdnyy Ave.). Hr 450 – 1,100

April 25



The Treasures of Mezhyhirya

The National Art Museum of Ukraine is opening an exhibition of items found in former President Viktor Yanukovich's residence in Mezhyhirya. The exhibition will include possessions of great monetary value as well as art pieces found in the residence. The famous golden loaf of bread will not be a part of the exhibition because the museum does not know its whereabouts.

Codex of the Mezhyhirya. April 25 – July 2014. 11 a.m. National Art Museum of Ukraine (6 Hryshevskoho St.). Hr 5 – 80

Kremlin restarts military drills

→ **1** military base that houses some 20 to 30 tanks and a weapons cache near Artemivsk.

Meanwhile, Ukraine's Interior Ministry said it took back the city council building in the southeastern city of Mariupol from Russian-backed rebels. There were conflicting reports as to who controlled the building when the Kyiv Post went to print.

The explosion of violence was the first since acting President Oleksandr Turchynov ended an Easter truce and ordered the restart of an anti-terror operation in the country's east, where pro-Russian separatists and masked gunmen have seized government buildings, set up barricades along roads and taken several persons, including journalists, hostage in the past weeks. Two people, including a local Batkivshchyna politician, were allegedly murdered by the separatists. Their corpses were found drowned in a river near Sloviansk with signs of torture.

The original military plan for Sloviansk on April 24 was to recapture the city from separatists, including all government buildings they had taken over, a senior security official told the Kyiv Post, speaking on the condition of anonymity. The operation, however, was apparently suspended after a morning offensive fell short and as the government worked to reformulate the plan based on their latest intelligence from the eastern border, which showed heavy Russian troop movements, the official said.

The risk of Russian troops crossing the border has increased dramatically, according to the senior security official, who said seven people were dead as a result of the morning anti-terror operation in Sloviansk. Meanwhile, the Interior Ministry confirmed that five had been killed. "The separatists are panicking," the official said.

Russian Defense Minister Shoigu confirmed that the situation in southeastern Ukraine had prompted Moscow to restart military drills along the border. Russia already has tens of thousands of troops stationed there. The war games will involve ground troops and air forces, Shoigu said before a ministerial meeting.

"We have to react to such developments. As of today, our battalion



Ukrainian special forces keep watch from inside an armored personnel carrier in the eastern Ukrainian city of Sloviansk on April 24. (AFP)

→ **An arms operation 'means one thing: a civil war.'**
— leaders of Donetsk People's Republic

tactical combined-arms groups from the Southern and Western military districts have begun drills in the areas bordering with Ukraine," Shoigu said. "The starting gun to use weapons against their (Ukraine's) own civilians has already been fired. If today this military machine is not stopped, it will lead to a large number of dead and wounded."

The minister added that the situation was not being helped by the "drills of NATO troops in Poland and the Baltic States."

The Pentagon announced on April 22 that U.S. troops would be sent for military exercises in Eastern Europe

to reassure its allies on Russia's border. They arrived on April 24.

While at an event in St. Petersburg Russian President Vladimir Putin weighed in on the April 24 events, calling Kyiv's counter-terrorist operation "a serious crime against its own people."

Separatist leader and self-appointed mayor of Sloviansk Vyacheslav Ponomaryov has appealed to Putin to send "peacekeepers" to eastern Ukraine to help protect it from "Kyiv fascists" of nationalist group Right Sector who he believes are responsible for the killing of three pro-Russian rebels in a gun battle last weekend.

Bolstering his request were leaders of the so-called Donetsk People's Republic, who have seized key government buildings in at least 10 eastern Ukrainian cities and according to Interfax Ukraine have announced a general mobilization of separatist forces in the eastern region in response to the anti-terror operation launched on April 24.

The leadership of the self-proclaimed republic told Interfax that "a combined arms operation has been launched in Sloviansk. This means only one thing: a civil war."

Kyiv Post editor Christopher J. Miller can be reached at miller@kyivpost.com, and on Twitter at @ChristopherJM.



Activists burn an effigy during a performance near parliament on April 11 organized by Maidan protesters to support the adoption of the law "on creating a national service for the fight with corruption." (Ukrainian News)

Foreign lenders mull supplementing civil servant salaries to decrease corruption

BY VLADYSLAV GOLOVIN
GOLOVIN@KYIVPOST.COM

Some of Ukraine's underpaid cadre of civil servants might get bonuses from international finance institutions to reduce the temptation of taking bribes. According to Ukrainian Tax Service chief Ihor Bilous, the European Bank for Reconstruction and Development is exploring the idea of setting up a fund that would provide officials with additional pay.

"Last week I had a meeting with EBRD representatives and they proposed to create a fund to pay money for people who serve the state in high positions," Bilous told the Kyiv Post.

This idea was successfully implemented in Georgia, he adds, "we need to change the system, state salaries are very low and this situation creates some kind of temptation."

However, EBRD spokesman Anton Usov said the idea is news to him.

"It is not a current program, it is just an idea that Bilous discussed with EBRD representatives and several other donor organizations, and he said that he is ready to support such idea," explained Bilous's spokeswoman Yaryna Klyuchkovska.

Usually salaries in the civil service are very low. A first deputy minister usually receives around \$870 a month, the same post that Bilous occupies in the Ministry of Revenues and Duties, which is being liquidated. Meanwhile, a senior manager at an investment

bank could earn more than \$10,000 monthly. However, this is not an issue for Bilous. "I have my own savings," he explains.

The idea to augment the salaries of state officials with outside money was implemented in Georgia in 2004-2006. Then, Billionaire Bidzina Ivanishvili, who Forbes says is worth \$5.3 billion, gave his support to newly elected President Michael Saakashvili. His money was used to pay state salaries for two years.

"Officially we used (money affiliated with foundations of George Soros), but mostly it was my money, Soros' investment was relatively small," Ivanishvili told Forbes Russia in December 2013.

The plan to augment salaries was designed to fight corruption. Earlier, Bilous said that an estimated 40-60 percent of the nation's gross domestic product remains hidden. "Last year, a quarter of the country's budget was stolen only through fraudulent (schemes) involving value-added tax," he says of the legacy his predecessor, Oleksandr Klymenko. Klymenko is now wanted for corruption and his assets have been frozen in the European Union.

According to a 2013 corruption perception survey conducted by Transparency International, Ukraine was ranked 144 among 177 countries. Ukraine is solidly positioned in the "high risk" group together with Cameroon, Iran, Nigeria, Central African Republic and Papua New Guinea.



Courageous Kyiv Post photographer Anastasia Vlasova goes to the front lines during a Dec. 8 standoff between police and protesters on Hrushevskoho Street in Kyiv. (Pavlo Podufalov)

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The Kyiv Post was on the front lines of the EuroMaidan Revolution, during rallies, beatings and gunshots that led to the toppling of Ukraine's former president. We remain in the thick of the action with the Kremlin's invasion and annexation of Crimea and now its attacks in eastern Ukraine. We will stay on the job 24/7 to provide trustworthy, independent journalism for our communities in Ukraine and abroad.

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Women step up to defend Ukraine



A woman demonstrates her skills in martial arts at a State Guard Service presentation in Kyiv in this 2009 file photo. While there is no female conscription in Ukraine, some women volunteered for army and National Guard service after Russia started military aggression against Ukraine. (Oleksandr Synytsya/UNIAN)

BY **OLENA GONCHAROVA** and **NATALIYA TRACH**
GONCHAROVA@KYIVPOST.COM,
TRACH@KYIVPOST.COM

For 17-year-old Anastasia Dniprovskia it's clear that Ukraine needs to be defended more than ever.

"I have wanted to make myself useful for my country since childhood," Dniprovskia says. Now, the Russia war in east of Ukraine that followed annexation of Crimea, made her feel certain in her decision to "pursue a career in the military."

Two years ago the young woman

became a member of "For the Future," a Kyiv-based patriotic militant organization. She has since undergone a number of drills and combat trainings. For a teenage girl, she is surprisingly weapon savvy and knows how to use various guns. The organization, Dniprovskia said, includes many young

women and helps "to take a look at Ukraine's army from the inside."

As Kremlin-backed militants started taking over Ukraine's east, seizing a number of key governmental buildings in Donetsk Oblast and demanding the region to join Russia, Dniprovskia said she "couldn't stay indifferent." → 19

Book Review

WITH SOLOMIYA ZINEVYCH

Five new books on Ukraine's troubled past, turbulent present and unknown future

It has been over four months since Ukraine's EuroMaidan Revolution became a leading story in international media. As separatist conflicts in the country's east escalate, Ukraine's story is now moving onto bookshelves worldwide. Recently, international publishing houses have released several books about Ukraine. Authors from the U.S., Europe, and Canada have explored recent developments in Ukraine and shared their opinions at length.

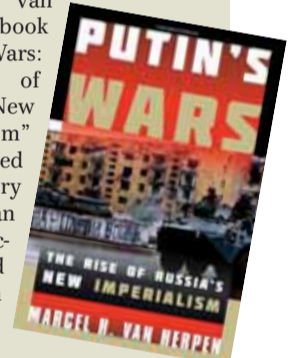
'Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism'

Marcel H. Van Herpen's book "Putin's Wars: The Rise of Russia's New Imperialism" was published on the very day Russian military forces invaded Crimea on Feb. 27. In this book, Van Herpen, a Dutch politician and specialist on defense and security issues in the former Soviet Union, predicts the Russian annexation of Crimea and further developments in eastern Ukraine.

"Van Herpen's work is incisive: he persuasively argues that the Russian Federation seeks to expand its control over much of the former Soviet empire," says Hall Gardner, author of "NATO Expansion and US Strategy in Asia."

Despite the book's success, the author is disappointed that his thesis was prophetic. "I feel very sad because I can foresee much more military Anschluss on the Kremlin's agenda," Van Herpen told the Kyiv Post.

Author: Marcel H. Van Herpen
 Price: \$ 27.95
 Published on Feb. 27, 2014
 Available to order at www.amazon.com



'Your Home and Mine'

"Your Home and Mine," an epistolary novel from Bethany Foster, is composed

posed → 18



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 Get temptation

American spreads word of Ukrainian songs in English

BY DARYNA SHEVCHENKO
SHEVCHENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

This man has a mission. It's nothing to do with being parachuted into the annexed Crimea for a Bond-style operation, but for him it's an important one.

An American of Ukrainian origin, Stepan Pasicznyk, 50, has translated into English and released a dozen popular Ukrainian songs. And it looks like he's developing quite a following.

Pasicznyk's English version of the famous Ukrainian folk song "Dearest Mother of Mine" ("Ridna Maty Moya") counts over 132,000 views on YouTube. The video features a middle-aged man dressed in a Ukrainian embroidered shirt and a straw hat playing guitar as he sits on a bench by the house. This is a typical setting for Pasicznyk's videos, and he stars in them himself.

Among his translations is the legendary Ukrainian song "Chervona Ruta," (Red Rue) written in 1971 by Volodymyr Ivasiuk, western Ukrainian folk song "Halychanochka," (A girl from Halychyna), and a few Ukrainian Christmas carols.

He says it was a Russian folk song translated into English that gave him the idea to translate Ukrainian ones. "Ukraine has such a great culture and I thought English is my first language and Ukrainian is my second one, so why don't I translate Ukrainian songs so a wider audience can understand them," Pasicznyk says.

His parents, both Ukrainians, moved to the U.S. during World War II, though Pasicznyk says he was brought up Ukrainian. Even though he works as a swimming teacher, his passion for music goes back to his young years.

"In 1990s I used to be in a band called The Ukrainians and in 1993 we even did a tour around Ukraine," he recalls.

Pasicznyk says he's been to Ukraine four times, as a single man, then with his family, on a cultural program of the Ukrainian government and as a musician. He even wanted to



Stepan Pasicznyk performs a Ukrainian song in English. (Courtesy)

move back to his homeland once.

"But kids got roots here and it appeared I am not such a free man," he says, laughing.

As a Russian invasion followed the EuroMaidan revolution in Ukraine, Pasicznyk says he and others

from the diaspora community even got involved in a propaganda war between Ukraine and Russia.

"We have been monitoring foreign media, checking how reliable the sources of their information about Ukraine were and stuff like that," he says.

Pasicznyk says U.S. Ukrainian diaspora has always tried to stay on top of Ukrainian events, helped spreading the idea of boycotting Russian goods. In his free time, Pasicznyk holds charity concerts with his two daughters, 12 and 15 years old. The money from the concerts is donated to various initiatives in Ukraine.

"We here feel kind of an obligation to get involved in what's happening in Ukraine," he says.

Pasicznyk is sure that music is not less important in the information standoff and ensures he is not going to give up on translations and singing.

"Once a musician, always a musician," the man says.

The newest one to be released is a translation of a lullaby by Ukrainian Poet Vasyl Symonenko.

"I almost got the words singable," he laughs and says his next plan is to translate a couple of popular songs from EuroMaidan.

Kyiv Post staff writer Daryna Shevchenko can be reached at shevchenko@kyivpost.com.

Dearest Mother of Mine (Ridna Maty Moya)

translated by Petro Pasicznyk

Dearest mother of mine tell me why you weren't sleeping,
Why you woke me to gaze at the stars up above.
Did you know I was leaving?

Tell me why, was that why you were grieving?
Was the cloth that you gave me a sign of your love?
Did you know I was leaving?

Tell me why, was that why you were grieving?
Was the cloth that you gave me goodbye and a sign of
your love?

In my dreams I still see there's a blossoming garden
And a meadow so green with birds full of song
And your smile never leaves me

Through your tears you had said you believed me
When I said I must go but I wouldn't be long
And your smile never leaves me

Through your tears you had said you believed me
Now I live in a far away land and I know I was wrong.

On this cloth I still gaze as my fate is unfolding
You still whisper to me through the grass and the trees

Though your heart was so broken
You insisted on making this token
Of your motherly love so important to me
Though your heart was so broken
You insisted on giving this token

Of your motherly love though you knew what was going to be.

Music by Platon Mayboroda

Original lyrics by Andriy Malyshko

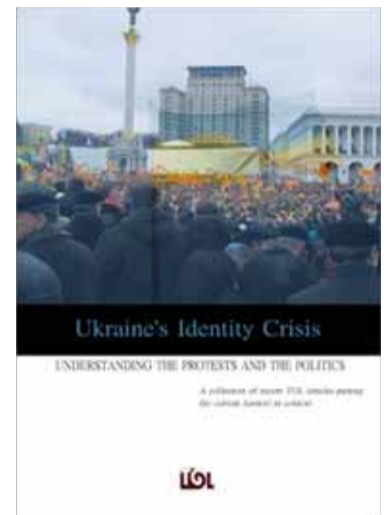
English lyrical adaptation: Stepan "Ludwig" Pasicznyk
England 07/2007

Book Review: Ukraine's protests and politics featured in recently published books

→ **17** of a series of letters written by Forster to her Ukrainian pen pal, Daryna L. Their correspondence details the EuroMaidan revolution through Daryna's eyes.

Forster, a 22-year old secretary at a publishing company in Oregon and a freelance writer, writes under the pseudonym Ruth H. Her Ukrainian pen pal's real name is Khrystyna. She is 15 and lives in western Ukraine. The girls met last July, when Forster visited Ukraine. "The pen names Daryna L. and Ruth H. were originally created to ensure Khrystyna's safety during Maidan protests," Forster said.

Author: Ruth H.
Price \$2.99 for a Kindle Edition
Published on Jan. 29, 2014
Available to order at www.amazon.com



'Ukraine's Identity Crisis: Understanding the Protests'

In "Ukraine's Identity Crisis: Understanding the Protests," professor Peter Rutland of Wesleyan University in Middletown, Connecticut takes a look at the roots of Ukraine's most recent revolution. In this book, the author argues that the search for a Ukrainian national identity drove the EuroMaidan Revolution.

Rutland's analysis takes into account the historical legacy of the Soviet Union in Ukraine, contemporary Russia's influence on Ukraine, as well as the role that nationalism has played in the formation of modern Ukraine.

Author: Peter Rutland
Price \$5.99 for a Kindle edition
Published on March 5, 2014
Available to order at www.amazon.com



'Rising for Freedom and Democracy in Ukraine'

Brine Books, a Canadian publishing house, has gathered pictures, thoughts, theories, and investigations of the EuroMaidan Revolution in an attempt to figure out what actually happened

→ Books get to bottom of events of EuroMaidan revolution



'EuroMaidan: 2013 Ukraine Pro-European Union Protests'

In another Ukraine-focused novel, EuroMaidan: 2013 Ukraine Pro-European Union Protests, American writer James Stryker attempts to understand the underlying impulses behind the EuroMaidan Revolution. The book analyzes the history of the Maidan, beginning with the first student protests on the night of Nov. 21.

Author and Publisher: Brine Books Publishing, Canada.
Price \$12-32
Published on Feb. 2, 2014
Available to order at www.amazon.com

Author: James Stryker
Price: \$22
Published: Dec 3, 2013
Available to order at www.amazon.com



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Ladies who don't shun the army

→ **17** It turns out that the Russian military invasion on the country's territory has motivated many Ukrainian women to take up arms.

On April 15 Ukraine's Interior Ministry started to call-up recruits for the National Guard, the state military unit aimed at defending Ukraine's sovereignty and territorial integrity.

"We receive nearly 300 calls every day. Up to three percent of the volunteers are women," National Guard spokesperson Viktoriya Kushnir says, adding that women are engaged mostly in medical service and press offices.

Mykola Malomuzh, the Ukrainian Army General who headed the Foreign Intelligence Service of Ukraine in 2005-2010, is certain that women are very effective military analysts who can predict an enemy's strategy.

"Women analyze information better than men. The use of a phenomenal combination of intuition and logic makes women more piercing about models of actions of enemies," Malomuzh says.

The general says that the first women's battalion trains near Kyiv these days. The unit consists of 350 members that come from all over the country.

"Very soon these brave women will show how talented they are, serving as radio operators, snipers and analysts," Malomuzh added.

Soon after the partial call-up was initiated by the government on March 17, Ukrainians crowded the recruitment offices of local military commissariats.

Viktoriya Sobchak, a 36-year old nurse from Ternopil, was among those



Anastasia Dniprovskaya learns to shoot at a training session organized by a Kyiv-based patriotic militant organization. Many Ukrainian women have volunteered to train to defend their country in the face of Russia's military threat. (Courtesy)

who volunteered.

"Russian aggression in Crimea motivated me and my husband to join the reserve army," she adds.

Sobchak says her family is very

supportive about the decision. Their 11-year-old son will live with his grandparents while his parents serve in army.

Sobchak admits that it would be

difficult for her to leave civilian life, her workplace and friends but "it's impossible to stay home while the enemy tramples your land."

Anastasia Melnychenko, 29, a jour-

nalist and a mother of two says she decided to get basic military training because she wants to be ready "if anything happens."

A resident of Kyiv, Melnychenko joined the Ukrainian Reserve Army in March. The non-governmental organization gives military training to civilians. She took a four-day training in Kapitanivka village near Kyiv, so now the woman knows how to shoot a SKS carbine and Makarov rifle. She also attended a course on how to survive in occupied territories and took medical classes.

Melnychenko recalls there were many women training with her and they were treated the same as the male volunteers.

"If some so-called masked 'green men' lose their Kalashnikov rifles, I will know how to fire with it," Melnychenko jokes.

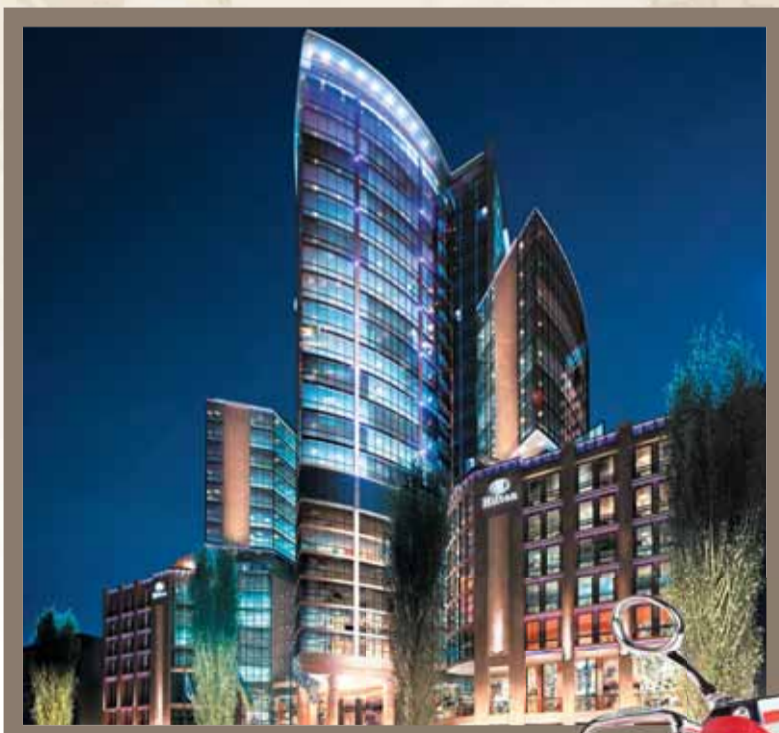
However, the woman has little confidence in Ukraine's army.

"My husband is in the army now. And most people in the army are demoralized. Many of those who really wanted to defend their country were rejected by the recruitment offices. We could have had a very motivated army if all those true patriots were taken in," Melnychenko says.

Dniprovskaya also admits the image of Ukrainian army is uncertain now, but still believes that "defending the people of one's country is the best vocation there is."

Kyiv Post staff writer Olena Goncharova can be reached at goncharova@kyivpost.com and Kyiv Post staff writer Nataliya Trach can be reached at trach@kyivpost.com

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Pripyat residents still grieve for homes they left behind

BY DARYNA SHEVCHENKO
SHEVCHENKO@KYIVPOST.COM

Natalia Nikolaychuk cannot say the name of her hometown without starting to cry, and simply refers to it as "the other life."

Pripyat, a city where thousands of Ukrainian families once happily lived, has turned into a ghost town after it was evacuated in 1986 after an explosion at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant, the deadliest civil nuclear disaster in history.

A product of Soviet urban planning, Pripyat was the closest town to the power plant. It was set up in 1970 to mostly house families that worked at the plant. In 1986, the town had over 45,000 residents – all of them evacuated the next day after the April 26 Chernobyl nuclear disaster. More than 2 million people in more than 5,000 cities and villages in Ukraine, Belarus and Russia were affected by radiation. But 28 years later, for many it is the psychological trauma that runs deeper.

On April 27, a day after the explosion, Pripyat residents were told to take

"some bare essentials" for a maximum three-day leave.

"Though somehow my husband knew we were not coming back," Nikolaychuk says.

Nikolyachuk, who is now 60, worked at the nuclear power plant's chemistry lab, while her husband Petro Nikolaychuk was the plant's electrician engineer.

"I remember regretting not taking the iron. But I did take a bucket, I thought it was necessary," the woman recalls with a sad smile.

Nikolyachuk's daughter Maryna, 36 now, was an eight-year-old back when the explosion happened. The most precious thing she left at her home in Pripyat was a stuffed raccoon. For her younger brother Semen it was a toy duck named Peek-a.

"He was reproaching my parents for that duck for many years," Maryna Nikolaychuk says.

But their mother's had to leave her husband behind.

On the day of evacuation Petro Nikolaychuk didn't leave with his family. He stayed to work with a liquidation team for two weeks, and then worked two-week shifts for three more years. Surprisingly, it has not affected his health. Many liquidators developed tumors, blood and thyroid-related diseases, as well as psychological disorders as a result of their work.

Petro Nikolaychuk knew the scale of the disaster, but didn't think much about his own safety as "there was so much work to do."

His daughter's strongest memory from the evacuation day is her mom crying and all the people in the bus trying to comfort her.

"Someone said something like 'Don't cry, we'll come back here soon' and she shouted 'We will never come back here, don't you understand!' and this 'never' actually made me feel the tragedy even though I was just eight," Maryna Nikolaychuk recalled.

This year is the first time when the mother does not sense that the sad



A child's sandal and stuffed bear are pictured at a kindergarden in the ghost town of Pripyat April 4, 2011. Pripyat was founded in 1970 and as of April 1986 the city counted over 45,000 people. All of them were evacuated shortly after the explosion on Chernobyl Power Plant. (AFP)



Petro Nikolaychuk, Chernobyl liquidator and a resident of now ghost town Pripyat, holds his daughter Maryna, 3, in Pripyat, in winter 1980. (Courtesy)

Chernobyl anniversary is coming.

"Maybe it's because we have this other grievance in our hearts – all the lives lost during EuroMaidan and the Russian invasion," says Natalia Nikolaychuk.

The family is happy with the state care they receive. Like other families from Pripyat, the Nikolaychuks got to choose among a number of cities of where to relocate. They picked Slavutych, a city in Chernihiv Oblast purposefully-built for the evacuated personnel.

Maryna Nikolaychuk says they also needed psychological help, but that wasn't offered.

"Even we, children, had to deal with

losing a home and even burying our

friends who died of radiation," she says. Kyiv-based psychologist Alla Dashko says home loss is a much bigger problem than it can seem.

"To lose a home means to lose the feeling of safety which is the basic need of every human. For some, this can lead to losing the value of life," Dashko explains.

Yet Nataliya Nikolaychuk's memories from "the other life" are pleasant.

"The town looked like a bird - with its central street, a square, and white houses on both sides just like wings," she recalls.

Her daughter's happiest childhood memories are also from Pripyat. The

young woman prefers wearing perfumes that have the scent of pine needles because they remind her of Pripyat, surrounded by lush forests.

"You know, I'll always be from Pripyat," she smiles.

Her mother is even more nostalgic. Sometimes she goes to the Chernobyl museum in Slavutych to see her old apartment's windows in one of the Pripyat photographs.

"Even after all these years it still feels like we lost our home and never got a real new one," Nataliya Nikolaychuk says.

Kyiv Post staff writer Daryna Shevchenko can be reached at shevchenko@kyivpost.com.



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Spring fun is on in Ukraine

People splash water at each other during Wet Monday celebrations in Lviv on April 21. Wet Monday is a holiday when people douse each other with water. It is traditionally celebrated the day after Easter. (UKRAFOTO)



A family awaits an Easter blessing at St. Nicholas church in Kyiv on April 19.



Boys and teenagers take part in Cossack-style celebrations of Easter at Khoritytsya island in Zaporizhyya on April 20. (UKRAFOTO)



A young girl walks on the hands of adults as part of traditional Easter celebrations at St. Michael's Square in Kyiv on April 20. (UKRAFOTO)

➔ As tension escalated in the east, Ukrainians still found ways to have fun and get distracted from the bad news over Easter, the holiday celebrated widely across Ukraine. The three-day weekend was rich in events, from Easter cake baking to Wet Monday – a special holiday taking place in the western Ukrainian city of Lviv every year on the day after Easter. This year, as usual, young people sprayed water at each other as well as random passerbys. The tradition roots in distant past and has little value other than entertainment. Getting wet on Wet Monday means good luck, so keep that in mind.



Believers light candles from the Holy Fire that was brought from Jerusalem to Kyiv Pechersk Lavra, on April 19. (UKRAFOTO)

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Declining invitation to elite hunting club was discouraged

→ **13** leader Volodymyr Shcherbytsky, who ruled from 1972-1989.

Everything needed for luxury recreation is here – 30,400 hectares of preserved forests, access to the massive Kyiv water reservoir, 800 tree stands, gazebos, wild ducks, hares, foxes, wild boars and deer. In 2006 a part of this territory started to be leased for free to Dom Lesnika, a company closely related to Yanukovich.

Very quickly Shcherbytsky's modest hunting lodge was replaced by a new wooden two-storied palace. It has its own name: Akatsia. A stuffed wild boar head greets visitors as they walk inside. A bit further, on the nightstand, is an owl. On the opposite wall is a moose head. The floor in the main hall is covered with skins of wolves. A bearskin hangs on the chair.

There are several guest rooms on the top floor. "Members of the club hardly ever stayed here. Sometimes they stayed up to 2 or 3 o'clock in the morning – and that's all," says Serhiy, a former worker who refused to give his last name out of personal safety concerns.

But one house was not enough for Yanukovich. In 2006, the construction of a second structure called Ostrov began.

A construction worker said that construction started with a banya, or bath house, presented to Yanukovich by Kharkiv billionaire Oleksandr Yaroslavskiy. "It was custom-made in St. Petersburg, then it was transported here and assembled," the worker said. Yaroslavskiy refused to comment for this story.

They picked a perfect place for the bathhouse, between the water reservoir and an artificial bay for boats. There is a helipad and a shooting range nearby. The bath house is big enough to fit two bedrooms with dressing rooms, showers, massage rooms, a kitchen and a karaoke room. Over the sound system in the hall stands a large framed photo of a singing Yanukovich, billionaire Rinat Akhmetov and iconic Russian singer Iosif Kobzon.

Ostrov belongs to Dom Lesnika. The firm leads to well-known Austrian lawyer Reinhard Proksch through several British offshore companies. He has denied any connection with Yanukovich and Dom Lesnika, however.

Both Ostrov and Akatsia were finished by autumn 2008. At that time, President Viktor Yushchenko, who by then had lost the people's trust, was



A Maidan self-defense member checks out a chess set at a hunting residence of Kedr, a hunting club set up for the pleasure of Viktor Yanukovich and his cronies. (YanukovichLeaks.org)

still in power. Meanwhile, Yanukovich was the main opposition leader gearing up for a clash with the former Prime Minister Yulia Tymoshenko over the president's seat.

"I'm doomed to go this way," Yanukovich said in September. In October the public organization Association of Hunters and Fishermen "Kedr" was founded at his actual residence address: NoviPetritsvi village, 19 Ivana Franka Street.

A strong union

The official entry in the national register shows three names of Kedr's founder: ex-Deputy Prime Minister Yuriy Boiko, the former head of Ukravtodor (State Agency of Roads of Ukraine) Volodymyr Demishkan and former head of the Cherkasy Regional State Administration Serhiy Tulub.

In its charter, the fishermen and hunters of the club wrote that the purpose of their activity is "to satisfy

and protect the social, economic, sport and other common interests of its members."

Viktor Pinchuk, a billionaire and club member, said that "banal as it may sound, the purpose of my participation in the hunting club was to hunt."

Pinchuk says it's his long-time hobby, and when he received an invitation to join this club, Yanukovich was leader of the opposition.

Despite the fact that Yanukovich's firm was a leaseholder of the hunting area for the club, he was neither the founder nor even a formal member. According to the director of Kedr, Mykola Hordiychuk, Yanukovich was invited to hunt by the club members, not vice versa.

But Pinchuk said it worked another way. "When the situation changed (Yanukovich got elected), a new rule kicked in that turning down the president's invitation was not to be done," he says.

According to its papers, Kedr's first official decision was to appoint Ivan Tokhtamysh as head of the organization. Even after leaving this post in a few years, Tokhtamysh continued to be the main organizer of the "royal" hunting. According to the club's register, he visited the residence almost every week. The last visit took place on Feb. 9. Kedr had a total of 94 employees. After Yanukovich's escape, Tokhtamysh disappeared and never appeared again in Sukholuchya.

Wolf hunt is ongoing

The hunters came mostly on weekends and usually without prior warning.

"It was also related to security. You never know what is on someone's mind," says Hordiychuk. "When there was a group hunt, opening or closing of the season, everyone tried to join."

Konstantin Kobzar, Yanukovich's chief bodyguard, was responsible for the president's safety and took



A view of a hunting lodge in Sukholuchya that was used by former President Viktor Yanukovich and his friends since 2008. (YanukovichLeaks.org)

tough security measures. All technical employees were isolated from the members and guests of the club. "Their personal security was first to arrive. In all the area, the staff was hidden," Hordiychuk recalls.

Club members came mainly with their own weapons, occasionally using the arsenal from Kedr. On the hunting grounds, there even was a full-time gunsmith. Yanukovich owned a large collection of arms. He left many gun boxes behind as he ran from his residence.

There were not only chic guns. To add charm to the hunt, club members indulged in expensive wine. For example, according to one document, in October 2011 the club members ordered exclusive bottles of 1989 Chateau Latour (\$1,225 per bottle) and 1989 Chateau Cheval Blanc (almost \$1,000 per bottle).

The last shot

"We rarely had time to be there

because President Yanukovich didn't have time. The hunting stopped when events on the Maidan began. And since the opening of the hunting season in the fall, the club didn't get together," said Boyko, the former deputy prime minister and presidential candidate.

But, according to guest books obtained by journalists, some club members celebrated the New Year on the hunting grounds, and staff were called in to serve them through the night. On Christmas Day, celebrated in Ukraine on Jan. 7, a Vertep, or puppet theater, was invited to the hunting lodge. The last celebrations in the restaurant took place between Feb. 6-8, just days after the first EuroMaidan protesters were killed, but before the massacre on Feb. 20.

According to the records, Yanukovich's cronies enjoyed fireworks displays on each of those days, set up by the Trade House Lomakin company, as well as flowers and musicians.



A bear chair is one of many exclusive furniture items created for Kedr, an exclusive hunting society associated with former President Viktor Yanukovich. (YanukovichLeaks.org)

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