



WORLD CHESS
THE BEST MIND WINS



OPENING CEREMONY OF THE WORLD CHESS CANDIDATES TOURNAMENT HELD IN MOSCOW AT PASHKOV HOUSE

On the 10th of March the opening ceremony and reception for the Candidates Tournament were held at the historical Pashkov House. The tournament is the penultimate part of the challenge cycle for the World Championship of the World Chess Federation (FIDE).

The Candidates Tournament is being organized by FIDE, Agon Limited and Tashir Group, the event's General Partner. The reception gathered political, athletic and business VIPs, competing grandmasters and high society. Russian Deputy Prime Minister Arkady Dvorkovich, FIDE's President Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, President of the Russian Chess Federation Andrei Filatov and Deputy Head of the Presidential Administration, Chairman of the Supervisory Board of the Russian Chess Federation Dmitry Peskov have given welcome speeches. Serzh Sargsyan, President of Armenia, who had come to Moscow to attend the opening ceremony, became the reception's guest of honor.

Naturally, the participants of the Tournament were in the center of attention. Chess masters Hikaru Nakamura and Fabiano Caruana (USA), the seven-times Russian champion Pyotr Svidler (Russia), the World Cup 2015 winner Sergey Karjakin (Russia), former World Champions Viswanathan Anand (India) and Veselin Topalov (Bulgaria), Anish Giri (Netherlands) and the three-times Olympic Champion Levon Aronian (Armenia) will play for the right to challenge the current World Champion, the 25 year-old Norwegian Magnus Carlsen, in New York this November.

Many of the guests were active supporters of chess events and lovers of the game. Entrepreneurs, public servants and, of course, grandmasters sat down for casual fast games at tables brought to Pashkov House's hall. After the Tournament's players and officials had been introduced and seeding results announced, Tatiana Arno and Nikolai Uskov, the evening's hosts, made way for a special performance of the famous pianist and minimalist composer Anton Batagov, called the Russian Terry Riley. Batagov's music, critics say, is a "life-changing experience." This was followed by Anna Abalikhina's "chess-themed" choreographic performance.

The Tournament's VIP program, sponsored by Beluga Hunting, offered all visitors to the bar new bitters Beluga Hunting Herbal and Beluga Hunting Berry, alone and in cocktails. Every guest also received the Tournament's VIP cards for free entry to the VIP Lounge by Beluga Hunting at the Central Telegraph building during the March 11-29th games. Another sponsor of the Tournament, BMW Group Russia, provided VIP shuttle service for the guests and long test drives of the newest 7-series BMW cars, as intellectual and innovative as modern chess.

The following is an incomplete list of the guests: President of Armenia Serzh Sargsyan, Kirsan Ilyumzhinov, Samvel Karapetyan (Tashir Group), Dmitry Peskov, Arkady Dvorkovich, Andrei Filatov, Alexander and Yekaterina Mechetin (Synergy), Gennady Timchenko, Alexander Zhukov, Ilya Merenzon, Mark Gerber, Gor Nakhapetyan, Vladimir Kramnik, Konstantin and Yelena Remchukov, Alexander Dobrovinsky, Alena Doletskaya, Eduard Boyakov, Olga and Charles Thomson, Anton and Victoria Borisevich, Anton Belov, Margarita Pushkina, Vasily Tsereteli and Kira Sakarello.

Event snapshots are available at: <https://yadi.sk/d/n08qrUslq4vd3>

Photographers: A.Temerina, L. Melina, A. Murashkin

For reference

FIDE

World Chess Federation (FIDE) is recognized by its members and the IOC as the international overseer of the chess sport and all international chess competitions. FIDE has exclusive rights to hold World Championships and Chess Olympics.

Agon Limited

Agon Limited is the official partner of FIDE, owner of the World Chess brand and commercial rights to organize all competitions in the championship cycle. The company's goal is development and commercialization of chess, making the most intellectual of sports attractive to sponsors, media and the general public.

The company received its commercial entitlements in 2012, in 2012–2013 it organized the Grand Prix series, in 2014 the World Championship game in Sochi, in 2015 the Fast Chess World Championship in Berlin. It manages official translation of championship-cycle events at worldchess.com.

Tashir Group

Tashir is a diversified federation-wide group of companies founded in 1999 and uniting over 200 companies in various sectors of Russia's economy, including construction, manufacturing, finance, energy, development, and retail. Its staff totals over 45,000 people. The company's geography covers 25 cities of Russia and neighboring states. Tashir's founder and President is Samvel Karapetyan; the company is headquartered in Moscow.

The Group's primary business is development and managing of commercial real estate, with a focus on retail and residential estate. Tashir is a leader in development in Russia and has so far built 2.5 million sq m of modern, hi-tech commercial and residential real estate.