



New National Library is soon to become the architectural showpiece of the Belarusian capital

NEW PERSPECTIVE

How beautiful Minsk must seem to birds flying overhead — or, alternately, from the observation platform, 72 feet above ground level, at the National Library. From here, the wonderful panorama is unveiled and rooftops and parks stretch before you.

The diversity of facilities at the new National Library makes it both the largest information centre in the republic and also one of the foremost social-cultural

locations. Victor Bondarenko, in charge of the site, tells us that, in addition to the original plan, low-rise buildings are now being built to host international summits and state forums. The library is also to have a presidential centre. These extended works have, accordingly, set back

the completion date to 2006 (rather than September as previously thought). Work is progressing at a satisfying pace; glass panels are being fixed in place over the facade of the library — incorporating the latest technology and materials.

The interior fixtures are being finished and the lift

system is being installed now. Before long, books are to be brought in to the lower floors (12 of the 22 reading halls are already finished). Sergey Kovalev, responsible for these final jobs, showed us the tele-lift system — by which books can be sent from the archives to reading rooms

— along with the other beauties of the library's interior features. The main entrance has been fashioned in the form of an opening book — symbolising access to wisdom and knowledge. More work is necessary but the builders are certainly on the home-stretch now.