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Belarus' Central Bank Selling Cups, Suitcases, TV

By The Moscow Times

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People in Belarus have taken to selling second-hand items at flea markets to increase income during the crisis. **Vasily Fedosenko**

The Belarussian central bank, which charges a world-leading 35 percent interest rate on the money it prints, is seeking to raise $16,000 selling office supplies and household items from coffee cups and suitcases to a used television and stereo.

The bank is offering more than 500 items ranging in price from 480 rubles (8 cents at the official exchange rate) for a cardboard box to 37.2 million rubles for a tapestry featuring the medieval city of Pinsk, the bank said in a statement on the Minsk city council's web site.

Unused items put up for sale include a pack of 30 paper bags for 1,295 rubles, a sugar bowl for 4,270 rubles and two suitcases for 44,928 rubles apiece. Used items include an Aiwa dictaphone for 591,429 rubles, a Horisont television for 417,958 rubles and 10 safes ranging from 8.8 million rubles to 11.2 million rubles.

"This doesn't have anything to do with the situation with the country's economy or the central bank's financial well-being," central bank spokesman Alexander Timoshenko said Tuesday. "The bank is simply selling things it doesn't need." People interested in buying the items on offer had between Oct. 11 and Oct. 16 to apply, said Maxim Matrunchik, the official who organized the sale. He declined to say how much money has been raised.

Belarus will unify its exchange rates for foreign currencies on Thursday, the central bank said Tuesday.

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