



What geologists are looking for and finding in Belarusian depths



Vitebsk pensioner Larisa Navosha creates books with the help of a sewing machine



INTERNATIONAL

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BELTA

Nezavisimosti Avenue is the main street of the Belarusian capital

## Happy holidays, Minsk!

Cities are like people: each has its own character, its own features, habits and, definitely, its own history. Minsk is a cozy and hospitable city which now looks very young — though it can be proud of its age: after all, it is older than Moscow, St. Petersburg, Warsaw and Vilnius. Recently, Minsk celebrated its 953rd anniversary! Almost built anew after devastating WWII, it's now a modern

European megapolis: a city with wide streets, beautiful architecture, many good places to relax and very friendly people. From the first moment, the Belarusian capital fascinates visitors with an abundance of greenery and, unusually for a large city, a large number of parks and squares.



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# Honest answers to sensitive questions

**For the first time in 25 years, Belarus' domestic agenda has become an international news event occupying the top position in all the world's news agencies. This opinion was voiced by the representatives of the leading Russian media who interviewed the Head of State. During their long talk, the most acute topics were discussed — including the future of the Union State, the degree of integration within it, the political situation in the country and possible changes to the Constitution. As always, Aleksandr Lukashenko was open and did not gloss over the issue. Speaking about what is happening in the country, he stressed, "Don't relax. This is — as I often tell my people — only the beginning. These are not Poles. You know what forces have taken over, for Belarus (and through Belarus for Russia). Nothing must be simplified."**



By Yevgeny Kononovich

## On external factor

The Editor-in-Chief of Russia Today, Margarita Simonyan, started the interview with the Belarusian Head of State with her impressions of Minsk. "We are amazed at what a clean, modern and European city Minsk is," she said.

The President replied that cleanliness, neatness and calmness are a brand of Belarus; this has not gone away. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that although, on Sundays, some people are sometimes going out into the streets, there is no destabilisation in the country. If it was not for external factors, expressed in the management of the protests, there would be no provocative street protests in the country.

"Both we and the Russians know who controls them and from where. It is run by Americans from the centre near Warsaw, through well-known Telegram channels. The second centre is the Czech Republic. Then Lithuania, and unfortunately, in Ukraine, they set up centres to influence Belarus as well. A certain square was shown, encouraging people to go there, so they went. Then, another square was pictured and then the Palace of Independence. This is the way they control it. This is just one way of influence," the Head of State said.

"As for the second method, they tried to irritate and unsettle us, I now realise, with different kinds of exercises near the borders of Belarus, near the borders of the Union State: we will need this defini-

tion for the future. I had to mobilise half of the Belarusian army to counteract it," Aleksandr Lukashenko added.

## On dialogue with civil society

The Head of State was asked with whom he's ready to discuss the reform of the social and political life in the country. Aleksandr Lukashenko responded that such a dialogue should begin from below. "I should engage in a dialogue with students (which is topical now), labour collectives and representatives not only of the authorities, but also of the civil society in Brest, Grodno, Vitebsk, Mogilev, Minsk. There are veteran, trade union organisations (of various kinds), there are women's, youth organisations and parties. The society is well-structured. Their representatives, including those with a different point of view, should be able to talk to the President," he stated.

This also refers to amendments to the Constitution. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that a group of specialists is already working on the third version of the Constitution and will soon issue proposals taking into account the current times. "We should discuss this Constitution and make proposals in each region, forming councils (let's call them that) including representatives of our civil society and government bodies," he said.

## On political parties

Speaking about the proposals to introduce a party system or a majority

voting system, it's primarily necessary to create genuine parties, the President believes. "We didn't indulge in party construction because the nation had no need for parties. It has no need of them now. Some people are shouting in favour of political parties, and the rest. I can assure them: if we go to the polls and political parties nominate candidates or candidates are nominated via majority lists, people will vote for majority parties even if they don't know the representatives because they understand that a majority party represents the nation," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

According to the President, before passing a new Constitution, it's necessary to once again brush up the law on political parties. "At least we have to decide how many members a political party has to have. Because right now everyone is talking about political parties, parties have been registered, while virtually none have membership cards. And if a party has party cards, the number of members is low. We will have to streamline all these things and then proceed with the elections," he explained.

Aleksandr Lukashenko did not exclude the organisation of a pre-scheduled Presidential election after the new Constitution is passed. "I cannot specify the dates. We have to pass the Constitution and arrange elections of municipal authorities. If an early Presidential election is needed, we probably should organise it before

parliamentary elections. After all, Parliament has to stay in place until the new President is elected. Then we will use the new Constitution (it will be passed beforehand) to hold the parliamentary elections," he outlined.

## On the negative influence of Telegram channels

The Head of State noted that many events happened in Belarus after the Presidential election partially because of the influence of certain Telegram channels. "Some things happened totally out of the blue. But not due to negligence. We just didn't expect it. How can one expect it when the Internet and Telegram channels go so deep into people's brains? People are mad. Some people are totally crazy," he stressed.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, young Belarusians are particularly susceptible to this kind of influence, "We can resist it but what about the young ones? Their brains have been befuddled. We have stopped reading, exploring genuine culture, music, books, and the rest. What do we read? Only headlines. We don't read even brief amounts of text. But we [adults] don't read because we don't have time for it, the amount of information is massive. What about kids? Youngsters? Even school students? A new generation has risen, which we've lost, they say. We didn't lose them. Life is simply totally different."

## Personnel appointment decision

Andrei Shved, who previously headed the Belarusian State Forensic Examination Committee, has been appointed Belarus' Prosecutor General — following the President's personnel decision

Aleksandr Lukashenko explained the reasons for the present and some other recent personnel related decisions. "I would like to remind some of those 'intellectuals' who want either to join the bandwagon or just post something on the Internet about my new appointments: this [personnel appointments] is a natural process after the election — just like in any other state. We had formed the backbone of the staff, especially in the Government, before the elections, so that people could see with whom the President was going to work afterwards. Of course, this process usually continues after the election," he noted.

The Head of State added that Aleksandr Konyuk has held the Prosecutor General's post for nine years. "Moreover, he is a reliable man, a proper

statesman, a military man, he was in Afghanistan during the war, as we know. He knows foreign languages and would like to join the diplomatic service. I do not oppose this. I will talk to the Foreign Minister and ask him to look at the options," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President mentioned that Andrei Shved might be the most qualified person for this post, because he has worked in various positions in law enforcement agencies and in the public prosecutor's offices.



Andrei Shved

Based on materials of belta.by

## Preserving positive dynamics

**Belarusian-Russian relations have been among the key topics in recent months. However, the time has come when Belarus is witnessing an acute political situation — encouraged from the outside. Against this, our closest allies have clearly shown that we are together. This gives reason to believe that other topics will be clearly presented in the foreseeable future. This has become the background for the President's meeting with the Russian Ambassador to Belarus, Dmitry Mezentsev.**

The current state of bilateral relations was primarily discussed at the Palace of Independence, with Aleksandr Lukashenko stating, "I think we have made significant progress, in the last few days and weeks, in solving the problems and issues that have accumulated between Belarus and Russia. I would like this dynamic to be preserved."

The Head of State noted the effectiveness of the recent visit of Russia's Prime Minister, Mikhail Mishustin, to Belarus, "We made very good agreements during the visit. We are working on their development."

Aleksandr Lukashenko also drew attention to the fact that various issues always arise in co-operation, but they are absolutely solvable. "Of course, there will

be many more questions. When there is co-operation, there are many issues which definitely need to be solved. With this in view, the Forum of Regions — which we are going to hold at the end of September — will also be an economic stage, a springboard for bringing together our positions on a number of issues in the economic sphere. I believe that this will be a very strong step in implementing specific agreements at enterprise level," he said.

The Head of State personally thanked Dmitry Mezentsev for the constructive organisation of the Russian media's work which, for the most part, now objectively cover the situation in our country.

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# Support of true friends

The presidents of Belarus and Russia met in Sochi. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin discussed the state and prospects for developing bilateral co-operation in various fields as well as Union State relations, also focusing on the international agenda, the situation in the region and issues related to the joint response to emerging challenges.

At the beginning of their conversation, Aleksandr Lukashenko thanked his Russian colleague for his support after the Presidential election, “First of all, I’d like to thank you. It is natural, not only for honouring the treaties. You’ve acted very decently and humanly. This is why I personally thank you and all Russians who’ve contributed to support us in this post-election period.”

The Head of State noted that, in his opening speech, the Russian President openly and fully addressed the issues of their meeting in Sochi. “That’s right. Because as never before — due to certain circumstances, I now carefully monitor publications in various media — there was so much conspiracy on the eve of our meeting... With this in mind, everything you’ve said is very important. It generally responds to all those challenges and attitudes in the media,” he said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned his intention to inform Vladimir Putin in detail about what was happening, “It is, of course, not the same in reality, as it’s shown in the media. You are an experienced person, you know as well as I do how it works. Moreover, in our time of information confrontations and wars, you know how these things are presented. I will tell you in detail about what is actually



happening — not just in Belarus, but in Minsk.”

The President recalled a well-known truth: a friend in need is a friend indeed. “I say this sincerely. This is a lesson for us — not only for Belarus and Russia, but also for our post-Soviet republics. We will discuss this at the meeting of the EAEU and the CSTO. Within the CIS there is much to talk about. I think you will be interested in my statement... As we said on the phone at the beginning of these events in Belarus, lessons should be learned. For us, it’s also a very serious lesson, which I hope we have withstood,” he stated.

The Head of State emphasised the importance of reasonable interaction, saying, “We went along smoothly with the CSTO agreement and, taking into account the relations between fraternal peoples, actually one nation, we did so. We did not fight, shoot or even throw sticks. However, we demonstrated our determination that if there’s, outside Belarusian borders, people with itchy fingers, we can scratch them at any time. I am also very pleased and grateful to you for demonstrating that the Belarusian borders are the borders of the Union State. No one is allowed to rattle their weapons there.”

The President of Belarus also noted that, during the creation and development of the Union State Treaty, the parties proceeded systematically and gradually. “Our states and peoples will always be friendly,” he believes.

Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed the inviolability of Belarusian-Russian co-operation in the military sphere. “We should not ask anyone whether or not to conduct military exercises on our territory,” he said.

In his opening speech, Vladimir Putin drew attention to the need to make additional efforts to restore the pre-crisis level of trade turnover and create prerequisites for moving forward. He stressed that Russia views Belarus as a close ally and will fulfil all its obligations.

In addition, the Russian President said that Russia plans to provide Belarus with a \$1.5bn loan, stating, “We’ve agreed that Russia will provide Belarus with a state loan of \$1.5bn at this difficult time. We will realise this and our finance ministers are now working on the issue at a professional level.”

Vladimir Putin added that the loan is planned to be transferred in the near future. “I hope this will have an appropriate impact on the financial markets,” he said.

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## Development of science determines the future

The President of Belarus visited the National Academy of Sciences (NAS), talked with scientists, and viewed an exhibition of scientific and technical achievements. The NAS representatives informed Aleksandr Lukashenko of the practical use of developments in the space sector and peaceful nuclear energy, as well as laser and LED technologies.

The President asked about the work of the Centre for Cell Technologies at the NAS Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that it would be interesting to learn more about its activities. The Head of State was informed that 15 products based on stem cells have been created for the treatment of various diseases. In addition, a genetic testing system has been developed making it possible to ensure sports profiling and identify unfavourable gene variants to correct their effects.

After reviewing the scientific developments, Aleksandr Lukashenko met with Belarusian scientists — representatives of the National Academy of Sciences, higher educational establishments and branches of the national economy.

### Science to serve people

Real science should first of all serve people and improve their lives, believes the President. He noted that, thanks to scientists, Belarus is known around the world as a coun-

try that makes the world’s biggest dump trucks, extracts potash ore, produces lasers and optical electronics, micro-chips and electric vehicles, a country where information technology has made tremendous progress, where high-tech surgical interventions are conducted and modern drugs produced. Belarus also harnesses the energy of the peaceful atom and its scientists have set up their own research laboratory in Antarctica, taking part in the Large Hadron Collider project. The Republic of Belarus has joined the club of space powers.

The President added that, in Belarus, not a single important decision is made without the participation of representatives of the scientific sphere. He pointed out that Belarus is among the countries with a high level of research potential and is ranked 54th out of 153 countries in the Good Country Index in this regard.

### New points of growth

The President expects the scientific sector to develop and promote new points of growth for the country’s en-

tire economy. According to him, state resources will be concentrated on the development of the most important and significant areas of science, economy and the social sector. “We expect breakthrough developments and new solutions from you in various fields, including healthcare, agriculture, energy, construction, housing and utilities, mechanical and instrument engineering, production of modern materials, development of nano- and biotechnologies, and space exploration. Everyone here understands that science should set the trends of the future and develop and promote new points of growth for the entire economy,” he said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko believes the scientists’ proposals will become the basis of a new five-year state development programme.

### BelNPP: security and independence of the country

According to the President, the Belarusian nuclear power plant is an important security factor and part of our independence. The plant will enable the



country not to have to buy 4-5bn cubic metres of gas: the investment will be placed domestically on electricity — embracing daily life, development of electric transport and various technologies in industry. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that another nuclear power plant might be built in the country in the future and asked scientists to actively propose ideas for the development of nuclear energy.

The President emphasised, “We created this nuclear power plant primarily for people, for our nation — to make life better and more convenient. I, the President, want our Chernobyl people to eventually appreciate this construction site. It was not easy for me to make a decision on the construction of a nuclear power plant. I was alone on that path but, now, many people already agree that it is the right decision to build it. We’ll use the BelNPP in all spheres.”

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# Single entry point

Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ) plans to transform its trading houses in Russian territory in 2021 to create a single sales point in the Republic of Tatarstan

delivery of both spare parts and tractors throughout Russia, so that there is no disparity in prices: they will be the same for any point in the Russian Federation.”

In addition, MTZ-Tatarstan is expected to make a new line-up of tractors with power varying from 40hp to 200hp as well as 300hp and 350hp tractors. The tractors will be sold in Russia, CIS and non-CIS states taking into account participation in Russian export incentive programmes. Additional enterprises will be set up to make tools and accessories for tractors such as ploughs, trailers and seed drills.

Prospects for the development of Belarusian-Russian co-operation in the tractor industry

were discussed at a meeting between Vitaly Vovk, Vladimir Semashko — the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Russia, Industry Minister Piotr Parkhomchik and Konstantin Anisimov — the General Director of MTZ-Tatarstan. “The Russian Federation market remains particularly important for Belarus. At the end of last year, almost half of the goods produced in the country were delivered there,” the Ambassador said, adding, “In Tatarstan, an ideal base for trying to do what western companies do — organisation of complex sales — has been created. They sell not only tractors but also components. So far, our site is about a quarter full but we’d like to make it exemplary.”

“All the other trading houses will be reorganised by MTZ withdrawing from their capital. Other Belarusian industrial companies use the practice. The business direction of tractor manufacturing will be controlled by the parent company just the way it is done all over the world,” announced the company’s Director General, Vitaly Vovk, noting, “A central spare parts warehouse and branches in Moscow and Novosibirsk will be created on the basis of the MTZ-Tatarstan trade and production company. This is necessary to organise centralised

## Environmental solution



Gomeloboi, a branch of CBK-Consult, has launched a gas cleaning plant for vinyl wallpaper production, after renovation

The gas-cleaning plasma-catalytic unit was purchased in late 2019 to reduce emissions into the atmosphere. It consists of four parts: modules for ionisation, deposition, plasma destruction and final catalytic oxidation.

During commissioning, the equipment has shown its effectiveness. However, during operation, according to experts, they revealed nuances that initially could not be taken into account when drawing up the technical task.

Specialists of the manufacturer — NPP Ecostrada (Russia) — have modernised the unit for specific production and, in late August, it was delivered to Gomel.

“Modernisation has altered the installation body for greater sealing; the capacity of ionisation, deposition and other modules has been enhanced. For better condensate selection, the bottom of the case was modified. In addition, a visualisation panel has been added that reflects production processes and parameters: temperature, humidity and others,” Dmitry Sergeev, the company’s chief engineer, explains.

This type of equipment has been delivered to the Pinsk Experimental Mechanical Plant, a facility of Great Stone, Novopolotsk’s Oil Refinery, and Logois’s Polyprint Printing Factory.

The investment project aims at produc-

tion of a full range of vinyl wallpaper — including both top class and cheaper — at the enterprise. It was assumed that when the new equipment reaches its full capacity, profitability will be about 15-20 percent.

At Gomeloboi, 310,000 Euro-rolls of paper wallpaper and 225,000 vinyl are produced monthly. The range of vinyl products includes over a hundred patterns. The design centre is working on updating products, producing over 10 new patterns monthly. In September, 20 more are likely to be added: virtually, one per day.

The company is increasing its production and plans to switch to round-the-clock operation.



## Sun to help

Free economic zone Vitebsk (FEZ Vitebsk) realises a business project to build photovoltaic power stations

A new resident company — set up with the help of an investor from Ireland — has been registered at the FEZ: Solargamma JSC. It aims to implement a project to build photovoltaic power stations on the premises of the free economic zone, and later in Orsha, Polotsk and Novopolotsk. The energy generated by these power stations will be used to meet the energy needs of the existing FEZ Vitebsk resident companies — enabling them to cut their production costs dramatically by diversifying electricity sources and to use environmentally friendly solar energy, the FEZ administration noted.

The Irish investor showed interest in the FEZ Vitebsk in early 2020. Subsequently, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the negotiations continued online and organisational issues were also addressed remotely.

The first stage of the project provides for the commissioning of two stations on the main site of the FEZ where the former military airfield in Vitebsk is located. In line with the project, the aggregate design capacity of the photovoltaic power stations will be 1MW by 2022 and 7MW by 2024.

Solargamma JSC has become the sixth FEZ resident company registered in 2020. All in all, 54 investment projects are in progress in the FEZ Vitebsk — run by investors from 16 countries, including Germany, the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, the UK, the USA, Israel, Cyprus and Estonia.

## Image enhancement



One of the largest manufacturers of road, airfield, forest and agricultural machinery in the CIS — Belarusian machine-building company Amkodor — included in the Eurasian Register of Industrial Producers

Inclusion in the register, among other ten Belarusian companies, will enable Amkodor to take part in state and municipal procurement orders in Russia. Apart from enhancing its image, the company will also get a certain share of the Russian market. “Amkodor supplies its products to more than 30 countries, but the Russian market is one of the key areas of business, accounting for up to 80 percent of the Belarusian company’s foreign supplies, or more than 30 percent of its industrial output,” the company staff note.

Universal and frontal loaders as well as vehicles for the timber indus-

try are popular on the Russian market. These two areas are a priority for Amkodor. The modernisation of Amkodor-Bryansk and Amkodor-Onego plants is underway in Russia.

Belarus and Russia have close links. For example, Amkodor buys rolled metal products, castings, forgings and other products of about 60 Russian companies for its production. This is quite an impressive volume of the total number of components which include radiators, some types of tyres, wheel disks, bearing products and products for electrical engineering. According to the company, Amkodor’s inclusion in the Eurasian

register will have the most favourable effect on its activity: the sales volume will increase, the market of spare parts and services will be expanded.

“It can be said with confidence that Amkodor’s entire product line is the product of the Union State — focused on import substitution of similar type of industrial goods from third countries. Enterprises both in Belarus and Russia are interested in increasing the development of existing competencies in the Union State in order to further improve the design school and science in general,” added the company’s press service.



# Business investments



Denis Korzhitsky and Andrei Zhishevich

**The Development Bank of Belarus and Belarusian Innovation Fund have concluded an agreement on co-operation — signed by Chairman of the Board of the Bank, Andrei Zhishevich and Director of the Fund, Denis Korzhitsky — which envisages the support of innovative and venture activity in Belarus**

“The State Science and Technology Committee and the Belarusian Innovation Fund are very important institutions in the country. They work with the financing of new innovation projects, which often require significant financial resources. The Development Bank, as the largest institution that helps attract investment loans to enterprises, will enable the State Science and Technology Committee and the Innovation Fund to finance more projects,” said Mr. Zhishevich.

In his words, the move is also promising for the Development Bank, as the recent changes in the bank’s mandate allow it to work not only with projects that are part of state programmes, but also with independently selected projects. “That is why we are now also interested in finding and obtaining promising and interesting projects for our own portfolio. It is important that this document does not remain in the form of a mem-

orandum on paper but becomes a basis for practical steps,” he added.

According to Mr. Zhishevich, they will co-operate as two independent entities, uniting their potential in financing projects if necessary. “Apart from joint participation in project financing, the agreement also envisages information exchange and joint work to improve legislation. The Development Bank is looking into the possibility of financing venture activity. The Belarusian Innovation Fund is a unique institution with direct experience within the Belarusian-Russian Venture Investment Fund. Today this is the only platform with practical experience of working with venture investment, and it is very important for us,” he said.

In turn, Mr. Korzhitsky said that the Innovation Fund and the Development Bank had implemented joint projects before. Those projects were financed by both

institutions. “The two entities, however, had no system of co-operation as development institutions. With signing the agreement, we plan to start working differently and establish an exchange of expertise. The Development Bank has high-quality financial expertise, our Fund boasts sci-tech expertise. The Fund has been set up to develop innovative ventures in Belarus, and I think our co-operation will contribute to their further development,” he said.

The Belarusian Innovation Fund uses resources of the national centralised innovation fund to finance projects on a repayable basis. As a rule, the annual volume of the fund amounts to some Br20m. “Work is underway to increase financing of innovative projects as innovative ventures are considered one of the key areas of activity. This activity creates added value in the country,” Mr. Korzhitsky said.

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## Support in extreme conditions

Six 45-tonne haul trucks made by BelAZ will soon arrive at the new gold deposit Sukhoi Log of SL Zoloto JSC, a joint venture of the state corporation Rostec and Polyus JSC (Russia), in Eastern Siberia



belaz.by

By Igor Svetlov

BelAZ-7547 haul trucks are designed to work in Siberian climate conditions as per the customer’s specifications. “These are very important for working in extreme conditions natural for Siberia. Local temperatures often drop to 50 degrees below zero in winter while summers are short and hot. Even when torrential rains and blizzards turn roads into seemingly unpassable mud, the Belarusian 45-tonne haul trucks will keep working,” state BelAZ representatives.

BelAZ’s official representative in Russia — BelTransLogistic JSC — will take care of delivery, assembly and commissioning of the trucks.

The gold deposit Sukhoi Log is one of the world’s largest untapped field deposits of gold. Its resources are estimated at 63m ounces of gold (962m tonnes of ore with gold content at 2.1 g per tonne).

BelAZ JSC is the managing company of BelAZ-Holding. BelAZ is the world’s leading manufacturer of haul trucks and transport equipment for the mining and civil engineering industries. It accounts for some 30 percent of the world market of haul trucks with an extremely large carrying capacity. The company makes the world’s largest haul truck with a carrying capacity of 450 tonnes.

## The smallest detail taken into account



Alexandr Gorbash

By Olga Korneeva

**European experts in the field of nuclear safety to come to Belarus to prepare a peer review of the national action plan on the results of stress tests of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant (BelNPP)**

“A national action plan was developed following the stress tests at the BelNPP in 2019; it contains more than 20 items — including not only recommendations of the European Nuclear Safety Regulators Group (ENSREG), but also our own conclusions and proposals from environmental organisations. Obviously, European experts have shown an interest in analysing this plan and its implementation. In July 2020, Belarus officially

announced its consent to the peer review,” Oleg Sobolev, a consultant with the Nuclear and Radiation Safety Department of the Belarusian Emergencies Ministry (Gosatombdazor), said.

European experts have already analysed the national action plan on the results of the stress tests at the BelNPP and formulated questions to Belarus. “Technical consultations will take place next. After that, experts will receive and analyse our answers. A group of European experts will then travel to Belarus to visit the BelNPP site. This work will conclude with the preparation of a report on the peer review,” the official added.

Several events have already taken place. In particular, as part of video conferences, European experts were

told about the current state of affairs at the site of the Belarusian nuclear power plant and the implementation of the national action plan on the results of the stress tests. Administrative details for preparing the peer review were also discussed.

The current partner review will be the second in a row. It was actually Belarus which initiated the stress tests according to the procedure of the European Union. During these tests, BelNPP assessed the availability of safety reserves above the requirements established by national legislation. At the same time, the requirements of Belarusian legislation meet the IAEA safety standards.

The process consisted of several stages: in 2016, a self-assessment of BelNPP was conducted and, in 2017, a national assessment under the auspices of Gosatombdazor took place. The latter resulted in a national report. The first partner review then followed (November 2017 — June 2018) — conducted by ENSREG experts. As a result, a report on the partner verification was prepared. The document contains recommendations from European experts on potential improvements in the context of the continuous enhancement of BelNPP safety.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

**Belarus and USA exchange views on military-political situation around Belarus**

At the initiative of the American side, the Chief of the International Military Co-operation Department, Aide to the Defence Minister for International Military Co-operation, Major General Oleg Voinov, met with the US Charge d’Affaires in Belarus, Jeffrey Giaouque.

The parties exchanged views on the military-political situation around Belarus. The Belarusian side provided up-to-date information about the political situation inside the country and expressed concern over growing tensions in the region and another wave of the arms race, also emphasising that external interference into Belarus’ domestic affairs is unacceptable.



**Belarusian Industrial and Investment Forum due in Minsk on September 29th — October 2nd**

The forum aims to help companies scale up the production of high-tech competitive products, implement new cutting-edge technologies and equipment, forge new international contacts and raise investment.

The concept envisages holding several international specialised exhibitions, including *TechInnoProm*, *Proweld*, *Chemistry: Oil and Gas*, and *Polymers & Composites*, as well as a business programme where the investment potential of Belarus will be discussed. There are also plans to hold a subcontract exchange in the manufacturing industry.



**BSU improves its position in the ‘Three Missions Rating (MosIUR)**

The University is part of the 301-350 group, making a breakthrough of 100 places. In 2019, it was among those in 401-450 position. The positive dynamic is due to an increase in the number of foreign students and in the number and quality of scientific publications.

Universities are ranked according to 16 indicators, including: students’ participation in international Olympiads, the share of international students, scientific publications and scientometrics, the number of distance courses on the Coursera and edX platforms, the popularity of the site and the number of subscribers in social networks.



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Aleksey Vyazmitinov

# Deep digging

## What geologists are looking for and finding in Belarusian depths

**Sand, peat, oil, sapropels... Specialists of the Scientific-Practical Centre for Geology know everything about the country's minerals and deposits — both already known and promising. To be honest, they know virtually everything and assert that Belarus boasts a rich resource potential. It simply needs to be used effectively. Our conversation about the prospects of the geological exploration industry begins right at the map of minerals.**

By Nadezhda Dekola

### Under the cover

First of all, the geologists introduce us to their field, explaining that Belarus primarily focuses on construction raw materials: sand, clay, chalk, crushed stone and fresh underground water. "These are now limited," adds the Deputy General Director for Geology, Galina Kachanko. "Older rocks — salts, oil, ores — are also present, though they are deposited deep under a strong cover of quaternary rocks."

Galina comments on the whole process of geological exploration with a pencil in her hands. To get the best result at the lowest cost, an accurate forecast is needed. Ms. Kachanko — born to a family of geophysicists — started her career with archived works. She tells us briefly about the conditions: there were two-week business trips in any season, accommodation in trailers without a shower or hot water, searching for a common language with the drillers...

"The most interesting time begins when the core is taken out of a well. It's basically a column of rock. Up to this point, we are, in fact, only guessing about what is at the depth," she says, noting that most Belarusian minerals are concentrated in the south of the country, within the Pripyat Trough. Some of the fields are being developed and some are at the planning stage. However, there are other regions that are less studied, especially at great depths. The task now is to increase the volume of geological exploration there as well. In the current five-year period, for example, work has been launched in the south-eastern part — as part of a state programme. To date, a large section has been developed: about 280 kilometres. Parametric wells have been drilled: Kormyanskaya and Bykhovskaya. Names are usually given after the neighbouring localities.

### Cherished dream

The more wells there are, the more information will be obtained about the deposit and the quality of the mineral. Therefore, at each stage of exploration, the network is getting thicker. However, experts note that drilling is expensive and, with this in view, only 10-15 metres of the upper layer have been well studied so far — if we are talking about the country's geological structure.

Not long ago, the Mozyr deep drilling expedition made a well in the area of the Petrikov mining-and-processing plant of Belaruskali JSC. Its specialists were investigating the rock for the possibility of pumping excess brine into it but, as a result, they discovered oil — which confirms the direction chosen by the geologists: Ms. Kachanko recalls lines from a song: 'Geologists have a cherished dream: to wash with the first oil from the fountain...'. She then turns her attention back to the map and says seriously: it shows the main



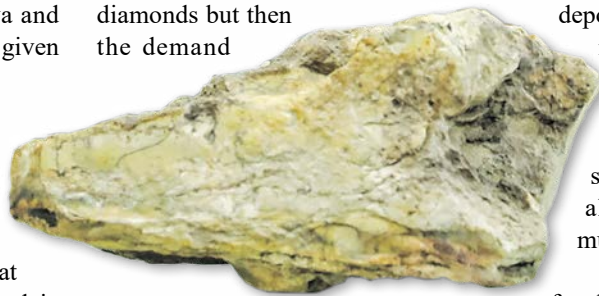
Svetlana Demidova with a sample of interbedding of potash and rock salt from the Starobinsky deposit

deposits that were explored back in the 1960s. Now, oil is mostly pumped here and we need to proceed deeper — developing the sites where it's more difficult to get it. Additional exploration is also required.

Geologists state that they mainly aim to maintain the raw material base of our enterprises: Gomel Glass, the Belarusian Cement Plant, Krasnoselskstroyaterialy. Manufacturers must be sure that they will have enough raw materials to last a long time. To ensure this, exploration of the existing fields and search for new deposits are needed.

### Fashion slates

Exploration of new types of raw materials is ground-work for the future. Geologists explain this simply: in the past, everyone was looking for gold and diamonds but then the demand



for uranium and rare earth elements — such as, for example, lanthanum, cerium or europium — was seen. Nobody knows what will happen tomorrow. Maybe it will be basalt that will enjoy demand. Deposits of this igneous rock were discovered in 2016 in the Pinsk District, near the village of Novy Dvor. Laboratory tests have now been conducted, while reserves and forecast resources have been calculated. A project has been drawn up for preliminary exploration of this field. To understand whether it is appropriate to work on it, the technology needs to be further studied as well as a feasibility study for each type of work that involves creating a quarry (so far, to a depth of 100 metres). Experts say that this raw material can be used, for example, for the production of



Oil from the Yuzhno-Shatilkovsky deposit

basalt continuous thread or stone casting.

"Along with basalts, we are working on tuffs which can be useful as a meliorant in agriculture (as a fertiliser that enriches the soil with magnesium).

We study glauconite and have conducted exploration of oil shale deposits in the Lyuban District. At the moment, it's unprofitable to develop the latter since we lack the suitable technology. However, this is a task for the future. Our aim is to study and record information about all the minerals in the country as much as possible," the specialist adds.

"Geology is generally a science for the future," agrees the Director of the Institute of Geology, Candidate of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, Svetlana Demidova. "Every field — including of building materials and oil — can be of practical significance, even if only preliminary exploration has been conducted there. Therefore, the task now is to create new geological maps instead of the old ones, taking into account the latest data and using modern technologies. On their basis, geologists will plan further exploration of the subsurface in order to develop the mineral resource base of our country."

### From Lyakhova Mountain to Versailles

The centre's Geological Museum, in turn, tells its visitors what other minerals were explored in Belarus in the past

and are being developed at the moment. One of the exhibits is Belarusian amber, which is still found by local residents in the Brest Region. Yelena Muratova, a researcher at the museum, tells us about limonite — a marsh iron ore of sedimentary origin which was previously extracted in Belarus by artisanal methods and used in village forges. Magnetite ore from the Novoselki deposit can be checked for iron content using a magnet.

"Look at this unique exhibit: wax obtained from peat. Some time ago, a plant near Minsk provided this wax to all the republics of the former USSR," Yelena says.

Other exhibits include clay, sand, gabbro, granite, marble and others. Gold ochre from the Lyakhova Mountain deposit in the Loev District

was once used in the construction of Versailles. Ms. Muratova also shows us flasks of oil. Actually, only a sample of all the exhibits are presented in the showcases, as the storerooms keep many more (including even pre-war cores). The Scientific-Practical Centre for Geology staff hope to establish a fully-fledged museum one day in the future, in addition

to a core storage base to keep parametric material. The latter is priceless as it's a kind of the database about the geological structure of our land.

Potassium salt is also on show. It brings around 30 percent of all foreign currency to the country. However, there is no sample from the Petrikov deposit at the museum. "Interestingly, the Petrikov deposit was known about back in 1969, though its development began only recently. I'd say it's too early, since this field is incredibly complex. If we're comparing it to the Starobinsky deposit, it is of a different type. It would seem that the ore is easily-enriching but it's high in magnesium and new enrichment technologies are needed. At the same time, it is unique in geological terms. The salt is not red but multi-coloured. They are very beautiful," the expert adds.

Natalia Petrova, a leading researcher and a Candidate of Geological and Mineralogical Sciences, focuses on new technologies, reflecting on the prospects for the industry. In her opinion, the country should review its strategy for the development of minerals. "Do you know how they work in Germany? New types of minerals appear, and immediately technologists and chemists begin to consider what possibilities there are for processing them. We also need to follow this path — working side by side with technologists — since there are many minerals in the country. We're exploring them but need to look for possibilities to ensure a more efficient use of mineral resources: after all, this is our wealth," she believes.



# Useful recreation

The trend of the season in blue-eyed Belarus' health resorts is rehabilitation after COVID-19. Is it truly effective? How much is it in demand among Belarusians and Russians?



Yaselda Spa Complex

By Kristina Khilko

## Herbal tea to help against pneumonia

In addition to the 'gold standard' — including balneological procedures, electric light therapy or herbal medicine — many health resorts have special offers: speleotherapy, rejuvenating mud, weight loss and body cleansing programmes. Moreover, Belarusian nature itself heals as well as sanatorium procedures, inspiring a tired body with cheerfulness and energy. Anti-COVID programmes enjoy the greatest popularity now.

"Treatment programmes for patients who have suffered from pneumonia have been developed in 38 health resorts — all specialising in respiratory diseases," says Gennady Bolbatovsky, the Director of the Republican Centre for Health Improvement and Spa Treatment of the Population.

At Yaselda, the complex was developed with an eye to the international experience of treating patients with pneumonia. "We chose inhalations, magneto-, halotherapy, manual chest massage and above-vein laser blood ir-

radiation. Moreover, oxygen cocktails and herbal tea are offered," says Svetlana Turbalova, the Deputy Head Physician for Medicine at Yaselda.

## Light breathing in a pine forest

The Plissa Spa Complex, a two-hour drive from Minsk, makes anyone fall in love from the first second. Giant pine trees, sandy beaches with snow-white sun loungers, yachts gliding on crystal-clear water create an impression that these all are happening outside the country. However, it's not a Baltic spa but a Belarusian health resort. The parking lot is full of cars with Belarusian and Russian license plates.

"Last year, we had many guests from Russia at this time," explains Alesya Sokolova, the Head of the Sales Department. Coronavirus messed up all our plans. In the spring, we had about 30 people on vacation, although could accept up to 360. The demand is growing now but not as much as usual. Those who have documented grounds for entry — a job, close relatives or a need in medical treatment — are allowed to enter



Plissa Spa Complex

**In the spring, many Belarusian health resorts did not accept tourists. Some of them were open but vacationers weren't able to go outside the area, admire the sights, go shopping and have access to all the medical procedures they required. Two weeks had to be spent inside one's room in self-isolation and few were attracted by those conditions. From May 1st until mid-June, no more than thirty sanatoriums functioned; these were only open following their owners' decision. Since mid-June, the demand for travel packages began to grow and, currently, the occupancy rate is already 70-80 percent. Over 20,000 people recuperate at Belarusian health resorts, including about 2,000 from abroad — mainly Russia. It's not yet possible to talk about one hundred percent occupancy: in line with the recommendations for safe residency, some of the rooms cannot be occupied.**



larly popular. Local mineral water with a high bromine content helps treat nervous disorders and diseases of the vascular system. Other services include swimming pools, saunas, gyms, health treatments... The latest fashion trend is weight loss and body cleansing programmes. One of the most romantic programmes offers not only spa treatments but also dinner on a yacht, with a menu from the chef.

the country. A mandatory condition for recovery in Belarusian health resorts is a certificate of absence of coronavirus. Many have taken up a wait-and-see attitude, while there are also those who've decided not to avoid relaxing."

## A local prophet

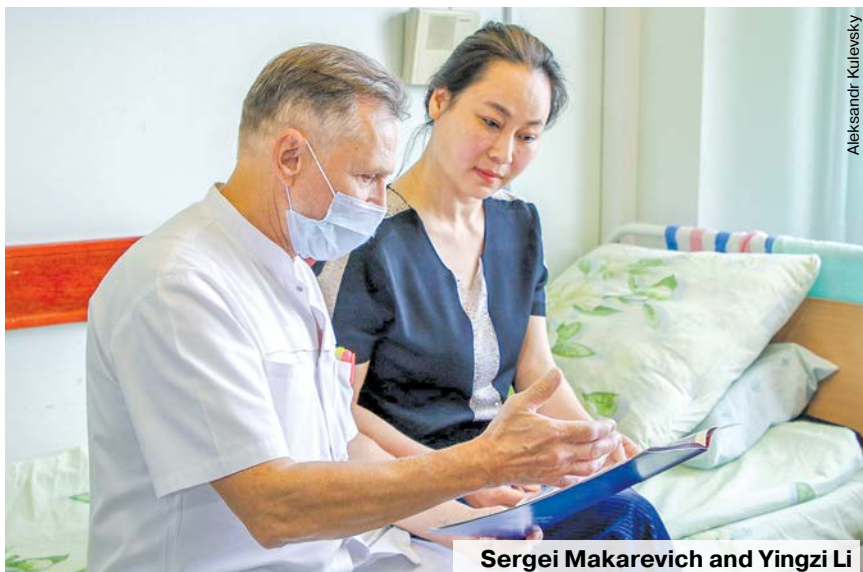
Obviously, Belarusians have refocused on holidays domestically. Guests from Brest, Mogilev, Kalinkovichi and other cities recuperate in the Vitebsk Region. As regards living conditions, some resorts are not inferior to European premium hotels but overseas resorts overshadowed our holidaying opportunities.

After the peak of the pandemic, the 'Easy Breathing' programme is particu-

larly popular. Local mineral water with a high bromine content helps treat nervous disorders and diseases of the vascular system. Other services include swimming pools, saunas, gyms, health treatments... The latest fashion trend is weight loss and body cleansing programmes. One of the most romantic programmes offers not only spa treatments but also dinner on a yacht, with a menu from the chef.

## Price issue

The average cost per night in a standard double room is just over \$20. The most expensive vacation is about \$61. So far, in many health resorts, prices for Belarusians are 10-15 percent lower than for foreigners and Russians. However, some are already beginning to move away from this practice and introducing a single price list.



Sergei Makarevich and Yingzi Li

By Marina Kuzmich

Yingzi Li has had back pain for a long time. When she asked for help from doctors in her homeland in China, it turned out that she needed an operation. She looked forward towards this day with great hope. After

Chinese orthopaedic surgeons conducted the surgery, Yingzi felt better, but soon she felt weakness in her legs and it became difficult to walk. What was she to do next? First, she applied to Ukrainian doctors for help. Unfortunately, to no avail. Then Yingzi decided to go to Minsk.

# Yingzi walks easy

In-depth examination by Belarusian doctors helped put a patient from China back on her feet

"In China, the patient underwent surgery on the lumbosacral spine," notes the Head of the Republican Spinal Centre at the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Traumatology and Orthopaedics, Doctor of Medicine Sergei Makarevich. "As a result of an additional examination, it was possible to identify the cause of the symptoms that appeared — a neurological condition. We carried out a comprehensive conservative treatment using modern medication, physiotherapy, acupuncture and massage. Now, after only a month and a half, our patient can already walk."

"I feel much better," Yingzi Li admitted. "It's hard to imagine that if the Belarusian doctors hadn't identified a concomitant disease, then my condition would

have worsened every day. I will return home with a feeling of joy. I will definitely come to Minsk for treatment next year."

The Republican Scientific and Practical Centre for Traumatology and Orthopaedics is celebrating its 90th anniversary this year. A team of highly professional traumatologists and orthopaedists is proud to mark the date. As the Centre's Director, Mikhail Gerasimenko, noted, every year Belarusian specialists conduct about 30,000 consultations and more than 6,000 high-tech surgical interventions. The majority of the foreign patients are citizens of the Russian Federation. Patients from the countries of the Middle East, Central Asia and Scandinavia also turn to our doctors for help, as do those from Israel, the USA and Australia.

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# Historical Regatta

Venice has held the first public event since before the coronavirus lockdown on its famous Grand Canal

The Regata Storica is the highlight of the Venetian calendar with colourful boats and gondoliers in historical costumes re-enacting carrying the Doge, the elected lord and chief of state of Venice, and his wife along the city's main waterway.

The Historical Regatta is celebrated every September and attempts to recapitulate the splendour and wealth of Venice, once one of Italy's major maritime republics.

Four races are held throughout the day with the finish line located in front of the gothic Ca' Foscari palace, built for a 15th century Doge.

The event normally draws hundreds of people but since the coronavirus lockdown in Italy put a temporary end to mass tourism, Venice has become unusually quiet. But for some, this is a bonus. "I came because I've wanted to attend the regatta for a long time," Italian tourist Silvia Sacchi noted. "And I chose this year because unfortunately, because of COVID, there would have been fewer people and I would have enjoyed it more."

With masks, mandatory distancing and surveillance on the canal banks to avoid crowds it was a different regatta

from past years. "This year there were no organised stages with tickets to follow the races and parade, so fewer people came but there was the same enthusiasm from local people and there was a lot of people in the city," the spokesperson for the festival, Marta Moretti, said. "Everybody had to wear mask starting from early afternoon, before the start of the historical parade and then the races. Even the VIP stage welcomed half the number of guests than before. Police could also fine people from 25 to 500 Euros if they broke the rules."

# 'This coin is the Holy Grail'

A rare 1794 US silver Dollar, believed to be the first silver Dollar minted by a newborn United States, is going up for sale by a New Jersey coin dealer

"This coin is the Holy Grail of all Dollars," said Laura Sperber, the President of Legend Numismatics in Middletown's Lincroft section. The sale, by Legend Auctions, will be October 8th at the Venetian Hotel in Las Vegas and online.

Bruce Morelan, a Las Vegas collector, purchased the coin, nicknamed the 'Flowing Hair Silver Dollar', in 2013 for \$10m, the most ever paid for a rare coin. It features Lady Liberty ringed with stars on one side and an eagle on the other.

"Of the 1,758 silver Dollars the Mint delivered in October 1794, perhaps less than 130 are known to still survive,

and this particular coin is the finest known," said Brett Charville, the President of Professional Coin Grading Service, in a statement.

"It is believed to be the very first one struck," Ms. Sperber said. It is 'extremely significant'. It was presented to then-Secretary of State Edmund Jennings Randolph, who referred to it with a letter to President George Washington.



# Thirteen countries to 'Move the World'

EBU has announced that 13 countries will take part in Junior Eurovision 2020 Song Contest — all participants will perform in a studio in their home countries

Thirteen countries will 'Move the World' at Junior Eurovision Song Contest. A contest that will be very different from the previous contests, as all participants will perform in a studio in their home countries.

The show will take place in Warsaw, Poland on November 29th, 2020, after Viki Gabor won the contest on her home soil in Gliwice-Silesia last year.

This year, we won't be seeing a number of countries, but Germany will make their debut in this contest.

The 18th Junior Eurovision Song Contest will be hosted live from Warsaw in a studio with all presenters and necessary crew socially distancing. Interval acts will also perform live from Warsaw. It is noted that all the competing songs will be performed in a studio in each participating country.

"Travel restrictions and the ongoing issues relating to the COVID-19 pandemic mean regrettably we cannot bring all the artists to Poland to compete in person at the Junior Eurovision Song Contest this year," said Martin Österdahl, the contest's Executive Supervisor. "We are determined however that the show must go on and that this competition, held annually since 2003, must continue. Despite the changes this year, all the talented youngsters chosen to represent their countries will still have an equal chance to shine, and, as is tradition, families from around the world will be able to vote for their favourite songs online."

"Every year, the Junior Eurovision Song Contest unites young artists, their loved ones and music fans all over the world," said Jacek Kurski, the President of Polish Television (TVP).

# Futuristic Flying-V airplane makes successful maiden flight

Researchers have conducted a successful maiden flight of the Flying-V, a futuristic and fuel-efficient airplane that could one day carry passengers in its wings

The Flying-V's unique design places the passenger cabin, the cargo hold and the fuel tanks in the wings, and experts hope that the plane's aerodynamic shape will cut fuel consumption by 20 percent compared to today's aircrafts.

Experts tested a 22.5kg and 3m scale model of the futuristic airplane, developed by researchers at Delft University of Technology in the Netherlands and partner Dutch airline KLM, to take the highly anticipated aircraft along its next developmental steps.

A team of researchers and engineers tested the aircraft at a guarded airbase in Germany, where they worked with an Airbus team to test takeoffs, manoeuvres and approaches, and landing.

"One of our worries was that the aircraft might have some difficulty lifting-off, since previous calculations had shown that 'rotation' could be an issue," Roelof Vos, the Assistant Professor at

the Aerospace Engineering Faculty of Delft's University of Technology, who led the project, explained in a statement. "The team optimised the scaled flight model to prevent the issue but the proof of the pudding is in the eating. You need to fly to know for sure," he said.

Remotely controlling the aircraft, researchers managed take off at a speed of 80km/h, while the aircraft's flight speeds, angles and thrust were as planned, they noted.

Experts worked hard to optimise the plane: in order to improve telemetry, the team was forced to change the aircraft's centre of gravity and adjust its antenna.

There is still work to be done to refine the aircraft before it could take to the skies with passengers aboard: researchers said that the test flight showed that the aircraft's current design allows for too much 'Dutch roll', which causes a rough landing.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Grandma Larisa's lines

What are books made of? I heard that even rose petals, spices and herbs can be used to make paper. However, Vitebsk pensioner Larisa Navosha creates them with the help of... a sewing machine, making the pages from felt and adding multi-coloured buttons and laces... Masterpieces sewn by Larisa Navosha (and there is no other name for these books) are sold in stores and, of course, on the Internet where they are promoted by the craftswoman's five grandchildren.



Larina Navosha calls herself not a writer, but rather a psychologist

Anton Stepanishev

By Sergei Golesnik

## A sewing machine instead of a pen

Larisa Navosha recalls that it all began in 2016, when her daughter Tatiana asked her to sew a book for her one-year-old granddaughter Mashenka, "I'm not a seamstress by profession. I was born in Orsha. Back in my youth, I left for the all-Union construction site in the village of Belovezhsky, in the Brest Region, where I worked as a medical assistant in a rural dispensary. When I retired, I moved to my daughter in Vitebsk."

The needlewoman knew how to knit: sweaters, hats, scarves... but she had no sewing skills. It took her more than a month to create the first book, which can be compared to a house with many cupboards containing various girly outfits.

"Every girl dreams of similar toys. Dresses, jackets, coats... or, for example, a kitchen with pots and various dishes. There are such toy sets, but I've sewn a book with soft felt pages. A dress or refrigerator is attached to them with the help of buttons, snaps and touch fasteners. On some pages you need to thread a lace into a ring and on others it's necessary to insert multi-coloured squares and triangles in cuts in the page."

The details in the books are different to the touch. For instance, in the *Four Seasons*, the grass on which the snail crawls is fluffy, like a microfiber, while snowflakes are wooden. Buratino's key is metal, so, by touching them, a child learns to distinguish between soft and hard, thus developing tactile senses.

Larisa's granddaughter greatly enjoyed the 'dolls house'. The artist herself was pleased with her own creation, "I was getting bored sitting around, so I began to order cotton fabrics and Korean felt on the Internet while the drawings printed on gabardine are from Russia. I order acrylic and wooden buttons on Chinese sites. I turned my favourite occupation into a handicraft. But all this is not to make money. In order to make profit on such books, I'd need to open up a shop and hire people. I work for the soul. I have seven books on display in a Vitebsk store. There are pages on social networks. My daughter and grandchildren help me record videos. If I had been told 5-7 years ago that, at 61, I would do such things, I wouldn't have believed it!"

## Theatre on the bookshelf

On the Internet, artists post videos with master classes and give each other advice about mistakes

while sharing ideas for new books that can be sewn. We have already talked about the 'dolls house' for girls. Larisa Navosha also has an 'ABC' with letters on clasps while there's a soft book about space robots with zipper locks and a detachable control panel for boys. There's also a fishing book for sea creatures with sewn-in magnets. In order for a child to catch a fish, they need to have a certain skill and develop co-ordination of movement. One book makes a special impression as it's a kind of puppet theatre. The book acts as a screen, and inside there are eight Russian folk tales.

"In *Kolobok (Roly-Poly)*, for example, there are many characters:



Details of the books are attached with buttons, snaps and touch fasteners

## My key task is to form an interest in reading among children



Some books turn into... a mini-puppet theatre

Bunny, Fox, Wolf, Bear... The whole family can put the sewn dolls on their fingers and play, letting their imagination run away with the stories. Undoubtedly, such games played together, bring children closer to their parents," the master says.

## Not just gadgets

The sewn books are not cheap, but the owner of the bookstore, Alla Spiridonova — a certified social

educational psychologist — is sure that such a product is necessary, "After all, they develop fine motor skills, and a person's hands are connected with the speech centre. In other words, a child who has such a book will accumulate vocabulary faster and start talking earlier. We, adults, also need such books — to educate future clients, future readers."

Larisa Navosha can judge that the stitched books really work by her granddaughter. "Previously, for example, she laid out fairy-tale characters from my books on the pillow and fell asleep with them while now reading before going to bed has become a habit. Children are like a sponge: what you put in, how you bring them up, so they will be. I've probably managed to debunk the myth that the only favourite toy of a modern child is a smartphone or tablet. No, my grandchildren can't do without gadgets either! However, their parents and I try to show that there are many equally interesting and curious things around us."

Larisa Navosha also reads a lot herself, preferring detective stories. In parting, *The MT* reporter asked her about whether she considers herself in some sense a children's writer. At this she only smiled modestly, "If it comes to that, then not a writer, but a psychologist. After all, the things that I create are not books in the usual sense of the word but they form an interest in reading among children, encouraging the grown-up kids to put a real entertaining book into their hands."



# Newly obtained shrines

A painter from Belynichi draws lost places of worship

**The Return series by Larisa Zhuravovich, from Belynichi, includes 30 works. These pastels and a few sketches are not just paintings but a true history. While investigating how churches that have not been preserved looked in the past, Larisa and her husband Vyacheslav Astafiev spent more than a year working with archival documents, travelling around the district in search of fellow countrymen who saw these churches while they were 'alive'. Their results have been eventually put together in an exhibition.**



div.belnovosti.by

By Olga Kislyak

## Spiritual and wholesome

Art historians call Larisa Zhuravovich's works 'an example of soulful painting'. Through her rural landscapes, still-lives and images of village life, the artist declares her love of the countryside. Larisa graduated from the Republican Boarding School for Music and Fine Arts (named after Ivan Akhremchik) and was taught by a People's Artist, Georgy Poplavsky. She left Minsk many years ago and returned to her small homeland. Since then, the painter believes that beauty can be seen in the simplest way, showing life as it is.

The idea of immortalising irretrievably lost treasures on the canvas was suggested to Larisa by her husband. In love with history, he has been collecting antique equipment for many years. Some of the rarities that he bought and restored were produced in the 1920s and the couple love to listen to records in the evening on an old gramophone. Among the musical pieces, there are unique pre-revolutionary melodies, with church chants by the Moscow choir of the Cathedral of Christ the Saviour, which was blown up in 1931 and restored only in the 1990s.

"Many churches were destroyed in the Belynichi District as well. Alas, many have not been restored," says Vyacheslav. "There are few archival documents and photographs to understand what these churches and chapels were like. Moreover, fewer countrymen who still

remember them remain. With this in mind, we decided not to lose any time and went on an expedition to our villages."

## Sketches approved by villagers

The couple recall, "In the village of Selyanskaya Klevka, we discovered the foundation of a chapel and a part of one wall. In Maly Kudin, we found the remains of the Church of the Holy Great Martyr, George the Victorious; it was not completely destroyed. The main part was moved to another place and later a club was built out of it. We were lucky: local resident Sergei Slukin, who is over 80, told us what the church originally looked like. A resident of the village of Esmony, Nina Ustinovich (about 90 years old) has a phenomenal memory: she described their church in detail, before it was wiped off the earth in the 1940s. The lady told us where the bell tower was, what the windows were like, bars, porch... Maria Stavicheva, a retired resident of the village of



Kryuki, also helped recreate the destroyed church."

Larisa Zhuravovich found old-timers — who remember what churches were like in the Belynichi District — in Mogilev, Minsk, in nursing homes. "Some were taken by their children, some were left alone in their old age and had to leave their native village. All these people helped us a lot. We talked to some people on the phone, some — on the Internet, and some — face-to-face. I showed sketches of my planned



**Larisa Zhuravovich is a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists, born in Belynichi. In the 1990s, she was awarded a bronze medal of the USSR Academy of Arts for her 'Autumn. Land and People' series of colour etchings at the all-Union exhibition of diploma works. In 2016, Larisa was given a badge 'For the Development of Belarusian Culture'. Her paintings are kept in the main museums and galleries of the country, in private collections of the CIS and beyond: Poland, the UK, Germany, Switzerland and Australia.**



*Return* series to the Carmelite Monastery in Belynichi, which has also gone. For more than a year, the restorers from Mstislavl — the Malinovsky brothers — worked on the miraculously preserved 18th century monastic fresco: Ascent to Golgotha. It is located on one of the walls of the Bialynitsky-Birulya Museum built recently in Belynichi, to date Belarusian Written Language Day.

"We searched for documentary sources in libraries, museums and on the Internet," says the painter. "Among those that have been preserved is the procession to the Carmelite Monastery. I depicted this story in one of my paintings. Based on archival documents, I also painted several chapels in rural cemeteries. At the same time, I didn't copy old photos but tried to look at them from a different angle, to make my own vision. I wanted my contemporaries, looking at the paintings, to feel the time and feel their involvement in what is happening."

paintings several times. They corrected them, suggested that the dome was not like that or the windows were not the same shape. I am very grateful to my fellow countrymen for this. Although it was not easy, I am happy with the result. After all, history is our roots, something that we should treat with respect and awe."

## Between the past and the future

Mrs. Zhuravovich has dedicated three works of *The*



## Skaters have taken part in unusual competitions

The DOSAAF car testing track near Minsk saw competitors running on roller skates. The programme covered the whole day while the main event was a three-hour race. However, among the participants were many familiar faces from speed skating, including Marina Zuyeva and even the head coach of the national team, Sergei Minin. Moreover, the organisers soon intend to bring the World Championship and half of the world's speed skating elite to Belarus.

By Dmitry Komashko

Until recently, skaters were the lucky ones compared to most sports. While skiers and biathletes were tormented by cancelled competitions due to the pandemic (it's better to keep quiet about summer sports), the skaters ran a full programme during the winter and even spent the summer without disruption. At the start of the new season, a surprise awaited them as the four starting stages of the World Cup were cancelled. The first was supposed to take place in November. Now winter has been postponed to a later time, but the skaters have found a way out: roller skates. Moreover, according to Aleksei Khatylev, a member of the ISU Technical Committee and Chairman of the Belarusian Roller Sports Federation, the idea is not new and has very serious prospects.

"All over the world, athletes combine performances on ice and asphalt. Some even manage to win medals in two categories at once. Before the appearance of Minsk-Arena, all the skaters in Belarus also trained on roller skates. This format has received worldwide recognition, world championships are being held and they are talking about inclusion in the Olympic programme," he noted.

Among those who started 'on wheels', in addition to Mr. Khatylev (who performed at the Olympics), is, for example, one of the current leaders



Sergiy Mitskevich

# With roller skates in the lead role

of the Belarusian national team — Vitaly Mikhailov. Marina Zuyeva — the winner of the last Speed Skating World Championship, also managed to skate a great deal and successfully rise to fourth place in the roller stages of the World Cup. She eventually won the current competition. After the successes of the past winter, the young girl was preparing seriously for the pre-Olympic season and eventually developed such a speed that over the last half hour she won back almost a minute lag by her team. After the finish, she lamented that among the cancelled stages, two in US Salt Lake City and Canadian Calgary were supposed to be held on ice that was considered 'fast' and might have allowed her to rewrite the records, at least for Belarus. The organisers of the Minsk 'marathon' don't have records in the first place. Races on the car testing track are an attempt to bring roller skating to a new level. Apparently,

they are gradually succeeding. Both professionals and amateurs, who decided to challenge the asphalt, gathered at the event. Nearby, right in front of the stands, an inflatable track for the youngest athletes was found. Seven years ago, there were no roller schools in Belarus at all while now there are seven, and the number of participants in competitions at any age goes into hundreds. Those who got into the first teams are already on the way to the youth speed skating national team. There are many familiar surnames among the participants in the younger age groups. The son of a well-known athlete in the past, a participant of the Olympics in Turin, Yulia Yelsakova — Vsevolod — climbed the first step of the medals podium. Anna Novakovich and Emilia Khatyleva also entered the track...

The head coach of the Belarusian national team, Sergei Minin, put up a whole team for the competitions: the



Yaroslav Klauch is one of the youngest participants of the competition

sons of Radomir, Yelisey and Miroslav, recalling that the idea of holding many hours of races in Belarus began in France. The Belarusian team got to the traditional 24-hour roller skating competitions in French Le Mans spontaneously. They decided: why not? As a result, the squad finished second and realised that the sport — outlandish at that time for the majority of Belarusians — has every chance of becoming popular.

## ARENA

### ● New head of BIHF

Dmitry Baskov was elected Chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation. The electoral conference of this organisation unanimously approved his candidacy. The former chairman of the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation — Gennady Savilov — resigned. In turn, Dmitry Baskov said that it was impossible to combine leading positions in the Belarusian Ice Hockey Federation and Dinamo Minsk. Now, he intends to focus exclusively on his work in the federation, leaving the post at the club.

"In my work, I have always considered the development of Belarusian hockey as a top priority, so today the part-time job will come to an end. In the near future, we will find a candidate for the post of general director of the club," said Mr. Baskov.

### ● Faster and higher

Maksim Nedosekov has won the World Athletics Continental Tour Gold in Czech Ostrava. The Belarusian jumper started his performance at a height of 2.15m, then took 2.20m and 2.24m. None of the rivals have managed this mark.



Three Belarusians at once went to the start of the World Continental Bronze Tour in German Dessau. Elvira German became the winner of the 'A' final at 100m with hurdles, with a result of 12.85 seconds. At the same time, only the Belarusian managed to run the distance faster than in 13 seconds. Long jumper Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova climbed to the third step of the medals podium. The athlete, who managed to show her best result of the season — 6.94m at previous competitions, jumped 6.72m on this occasion.

### ● Belarus Basketball Championship starts on September 26th

The men's championship of Belarus kicks off on September 26th, while the women's event will start on September 27th.

In the first round of the 29th championship among men's teams, the current gold medal winners — basketball players from Tsmoki-Minsk — will welcome the RGUOR squad at their venue. Grodno-93 will play with RCOP-SDU-SHOR. At the first stage of the championship, 11 teams will hold a two-round tournament while during the second, four-round tournaments will be held in each group. According to the results of the second stage, eight participants of the quarter-final stage will be determined:



the first six and the two best teams from the group.

The women's competitions will see: Gomel Lynx, Tsmoki-Minsk, Horizont, BDU-Tsmoki, Horizont-2, Olympia, Victoria, etc. At first, the teams will hold a three-round tournament, then they will split by two quartets, after which they will continue to compete for awards in the playoffs.

### ● Victoria Azarenko loses to Naomi Osaka in the US Open final

The Belarusian tennis player (WTA:27) failed to become a three-time Grand Slam singles winner: in an extremely tense final at the US Open, she lost to Japan's Naomi Osaka (WTA:9) — 6:1, 3:6, 3:6. The match lasted 1 hour and 54 minutes.

Back on the WTA tour after giving birth, Victoria has been searching for her best tennis for a long time. Many have already been quick to write her off but, in recent weeks, the Belarusian has convincingly proved that she is still among the top tennis players. Before the US Open, she took the title at the Western & Southern Open in the Premier 5 series. She also reached the final of the US Open where she could also have been a success but sadly lost to another former world number one.





## Photo of the week



Mushroom season in the Gomel Region

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

**On September 17th, 1920**, Mikhail Tikhonovich was born (Dubovlyany village, in the Minsk District) — full holder of the Order of Glory. During the Great Patriotic War, from 1941, he served on the Southern, Western, Voronezhsky, Central and 1st Ukrainian fronts. The commander of the sapper section, senior sergeant Tikhonovich distinguished himself in battles for the liberation of Ukraine, Poland and Czechoslovakia. In 1945, during the attack, he discovered a minefield; he was wounded but defused 14 anti-tank mines. He died in 2003.



**On September 17th, 1830**, the Grodno Regional Scientific Library named after Karsky was founded — an educational, cultural and information centre of the region. The pride of the library are editions of the 19th — early 20th centuries: reviews, memorable books of the Grodno Province and rare monographs. In 2001, on the basis of the library, a public centre for legal information was established, aiming to promote the improvement of the legal culture of the population.



**On September 20th, 1945**, the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum was opened in Minsk. Initially, the museum was located in several rooms of the Palace of Culture of Trade Unions. The founder and first director of the museum was the poet's wife, Vladislava Lutsevich. The modern building of the museum was built in 1959 on the site of a small wooden house in which Yanka Kupala lived before the war. The museum keeps items of spiritual and material culture associated with the life and social activities of Yanka Kupala, as well as all lifetime editions of the poet's books and newspapers with the first publication of the poems *Peasant*, *Our Fate*, *Belarus*, alongside newspapers and leaflets from the Great Patriotic War and periodicals from the post-war period which include Kupala's works.



**September 20th** is Customs Officer's Day in the Republic of Belarus. The peculiarity of Belarus' geographical position, with lack of access to the sea, as well as its borders with five countries, has contributed to the development and strengthening of customs rules and regulations in the country since ancient times. Having established this holiday in 1996, shortly

after the proclamation of independence by Belarus, the state emphasised the importance of the profession of the customs officer and the contribution of the customs service to the socio-economic development of the country.



**September 20th** is Day of Forest Workers in the Republic of Belarus. Forest is our greatest natural wealth, a guarantee of environmental safety, a priority component of the national economic complex and the basis of the country's economic stability.



**September 21st** is International Day of Peace. In 1981, at the 36th session, the UN General Assembly recognised that peacekeeping, both at international and national levels, is the main goal of the United Nations in accordance with the UN Charter, and decided to proclaim a special day dedicated to the celebration and



strengthening of the ideals of peace among all nations and peoples.

**On September 22nd, 2005**, the President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, signed a decree 'On the High-Tech Park'.



**September 22nd** is World Car Free Day. It's held in more than 1,100 cities around the world on the initiative of France, where the event was first held in 1998, aiming to reduce the use of cars for travel around the city and promoting walking, cycling and public transport.



**September 23rd** is International Day of Sign Languages. It was introduced by a resolution adopted by the UN General Assembly on December 19th, 2017 and has been celebrated annually since 2018 to raise awareness of the importance of sign language to fully realise the rights of deaf people.

