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INTERNATIONAL

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Vasilisa Ivanyushchenko, a student of Vitebsk State University named after P. M. Masherov, during the subbotnik in Vitebsk

## Creation vs anti-historicism

Holding nationwide cleanup days, commonly known as subbotniks, is a good tradition in Belarus. Young and old alike — schoolchildren, students, government officials, and members of the public — willingly participate in the events. The main dynamics and positive attitude are invariably set by the President of Belarus.

According to the results of the national cleanup day in 2024, Br14.5m have been raised. This is Br400,000 more than last year.

The funds will be earmarked exclusively for good causes:

- 35 percent — to the Gomel Regional Executive Committee for the reconstruction of the Children – Victims of War memorial complex in the settlement of Krasny Bereg, Zhlobin District;
- 35 percent — to the Brest Regional Executive Committee for the creation of the Republican Centre for Patriotic Education of Youth on the premises of the Kobrin fortification of the Brest Fortress;
- 30 percent — for the reconstruction and restoration of memorial complexes and places of military glory located in the regions and in Minsk. → 2



# A good deed

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, laid out an apple orchard in his small homeland on the day of the nationwide subbotnik. The orchard will be placed under the care of local schoolchildren.



Subbotnik at the memorial complex Police Battalion under the Command of Konstantin Vladimirov in the village of Gai, Mogilev Region

In total, the orchard consists of 411 apple trees. Before the cleanup day, 186 trees were planted — 93 of Belorusskoe Sladkoe variety and 93 of Syabryna variety.

The remaining 225 trees of five varieties have been planted with the participation of the Head of State. Most of them include the already mentioned varieties, as well as 25 apple trees of Kovalenkovskoye, Konfetnoe and Red Free varieties.

Aleksandr Lukashenko invited all participants of the event, including journalists, to join in the work. The President sticks to his principle — those who work close to him every day need to change their microphones and cameras for rakes and shovels on a cleanup day. After planting trees, the Head of State considered that the journalists had not worked enough, and invited everyone to chop firewood. Thus, a real master class took place, and everyone worked hard.

During a conversation with journalists, the President noted that the apple orchard would be placed under the care of local schoolchildren. “We are doing this in order to pass it on to schoolchildren later, to enable them to look after it and enjoy the results of their work. As I said, every school should have its own garden plot, where youngsters can dig soil and walk on the ground, touch it with their hands. This will help blow away all stupid thoughts from their minds. The schoolchildren will get this apple orchard to work here,” the Belarusian leader pointed out.

Aleksandr Lukashenko explained that there used to be peasant plots on the area under the laid out orchard. Now, however,



Vitebsk. Bilevo-3 microdistrict

village houses are used mainly in summer while their current owners and heirs use only a small part of the land for vegetable gardens. “It was a wasteland. We cultivated this land and decided to plant different apple tree varieties so as to put this land plot to good use,” the President clarified.

One of the participants of the President’s cleanup team was Igor Abramchik, head of the Spartan-Agro peasant farm in Molodechno District. “He is a farmer, a hard worker. By the way, he is not an agrarian,” the Head of State introduced the man to the journalists.

“No, I am not an agrarian. I am an engineer-economist by education, I graduated from the Belarusian State University of Informatics and Radioelectronics. But still I work on the ground,” the farmer confirmed.

“An IT specialist,” Aleksandr Lukashenko noted and asked whether the



The President and his team during the subbotnik in his small homeland



Belarus Segodnya Publishing House staff at the subbotnik at the Military Cemetery in Minsk

there are some. The lands are not bad here.”

“To be honest, I have never done gardening before. I began to slightly delve into this field after I had become a president because we import apples, especially from Poland. Meanwhile, farmers’ apples are better than any Polish ones. Most importantly, they are purer. This is because Belarusian farmers know that if they supply products of poor quality to the market, we will hold them accountable. And how can we hold Poles accountable?.. The situation is exactly the same in healthcare and education. If a doctor takes a scalpel in hands, they know they must do their best, since they bear great responsibility and will be accountable for everything they have done,” the President summed up.

## Roots of tradition

The roots of social work go back to ancient times. Our ancestors lived in communities, where mutual assistance and team spirit played a fundamental role. The tradition continued during Soviet times. Since April 1919, subbotniks or ‘holidays of communist labour’ as they were called at that time, were initiated.

That was often a forced measure. It was necessary to quickly overcome the post-revolutionary devastation as well as the hard winter of 1919-1920 — there were severe frosts and people did not have enough firewood and coal to heat their homes. The Mogilev-based newspaper *Sokha i Molot* published articles about communist subbotniks and voskresniks [unpaid labour activities held on Saturday and Sunday, respectively] that set several goals — cleaning streets, repairing railway tracks and harvesting firewood. In Gomel, volunteer labour was also used for the airfield construction.



Youth Patriotic Centre

young farmer had village roots. It turned out that Igor Abramchik really has rural roots, and spent his first few school years in the village.

“If a person was born in a village, they always gravitate towards home ground, they want to touch it,” the President concluded and immediately turned the conversation to a practical aspect by inquiring how many hectares of land the farmer has.

“We have a hundred hectares for today. We are gradually expanding,” replied Igor Abramchik, who is engaged in gardening.

“We can give you a collective farm,” Aleksandr Lukashenko suggested. “I advise you to take a good farm now until

## The money raised during nationwide subbotniks in previous years were spent on the following:

- **2001:** construction and reconstruction of hospitals and polyclinics. Medical facilities in radionuclide-contaminated areas of Brest, Gomel and Mogilev regions were re-equipped.
- **2002:** construction of family-type houses for orphans and new medical and wellness facilities for children affected by the Chernobyl nuclear accident. Also, the House of Mercy was built.
- **2003:** construction of a new building of Belarus’ National Library.
- **2004:** reconstruction of the Great Patriotic War monuments and, above all, the Khatyn Memorial Complex.
- **2005:** reconstruction of the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial.
- **2006:** technical equipment of the Mother and Child Republican Scientific and Practical Centre.
- **2007:** renovation of the Zubrenok National Children’s Health Camp and purchase of buses for it, as well as publication of textbooks and teaching aids for children.
- **2008:** purchase of mobile intensive care ambulances and medical equipment for children.
- **2009:** landscaping of agro-towns, memorial complexes, places of military glory, graves of the Great

Patriotic War soldiers and partisans.

- **2010:** creation and development of infrastructure for agro-towns in order to improve living standards in rural areas.
- **2011:** rehabilitation and sanatorium treatment of children living or studying in the territory of radioactive contamination.
- **2012:** construction of a new building of the Great Patriotic War History Museum and creation of its museum exposition.
- **2013:** purchase of special ambulance (emergency care) vehicles with a complete set of medical equipment for them.
- **2014:** construction of the Republican Centre for Positron Emission Tomography.
- **2015:** purchase of artificial lung ventilation devices to provide medical care to children, and implementation of events dedicated to the 70th anniversary of the Victory Day.
- **2016:** construction of the Gomel Regional Children’s Clinical Hospital.
- **2017:** preparation of children’s health and sports camps for the summer season, as well as educational institutions.

- **2018:** purchase of medical equipment for the emergency care hospital, as well as reserve beds in case of emergency hospitalisation of participants and guests of the 2nd European Games 2019.
- **2019:** capital repairs and modernisation of the monument to partisans and soldiers and the Eternal Flame on Victory Square in Minsk.
- **2020:** completion of the National Art Museum restoration, and reconstruction under guidance of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee of the mass grave on the site of the burnt village of Ola.
- **2021:** restoration and renovation of historical and cultural values and places of military glory associated with the Great Patriotic War, as well as the Healthcare Ministry facilities.
- **2022:** financing of major repairs with upgrading and restoration elements of the Khatyn State Memorial Complex.
- **2023:** reconstruction of the memorial complex to the Ozarichi death camp prisoners located in Kalinkovichi District, as well as creation of the Republican Centre for Patriotic Education of Youth based on the Kobrin fortification of the Brest Fortress.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

# Belarus keen to increase trade turnover with Russia's Arkhangelsk Region



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met with Governor of Russia's Arkhangelsk Region Alexander Tsybulsky

Alexander Tsybulsky has come to Belarus on his first working visit as head of Arkhangelsk Region by the first direct flight launched between the two parties. The Head of State emphasised the significance of the event.

"It is a good start for both businessmen and travellers, especially from remote corners of Russia. This is a good opportunity to get familiar with the country and recuperate in its health resorts. A lot of Russians visit us, and we compete for the first or second place among foreign destinations for Russian travellers. We have something to offer each other in the tourism sector," the President said.

Arkhangelsk Region is a long-standing and reliable partner of Belarus. However, the parties have not done enough yet to increase mutual trade, the Head of State noted. "I believe we have everything ahead of us. Mutual trade has been gradually rising since 2020," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

Five years ago the parties talked about reaching the then record-high \$46 million in the exchange of goods (\$45.7 million at the end of 2019). In 2023, a new record was set and the bilateral trade made \$85 million.

The ongoing year is showing positive trends. Trade has increased by 2.7 times, up to \$27.5 million. At the same time, import from Arkhangelsk Region grew at a faster pace — 4.6 times, to almost \$22 million. Belarusian export is growing at a more modest pace — only by 7.7 percent. "We, of course, are determined to do more and I believe that very soon we will catch up with you," the President noted.

"What drew the criticism of Western countries not so long ago is now producing remarkable results. Against all the odds, Belarus has preserved all the key economic sectors that it specialises in," Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

Belarus is developing its production using its own resources, and is modernising its agricultural sector. But the main thing, the President underlined, is that priority sectors have the necessary personnel and scientific potential.

The Belarusian side has thoroughly analysed the joint opportunities. Mechanical engineering and the supply

of Belarusian mechanical engineering goods remain the backbone of bilateral co-operation.

Thus, BELAZ dump trucks have proven their worth, including in the conditions of the Far North. Today, negotiations are underway to ship a batch of dump trucks for the First Mining Company.

The next item on the agenda is passenger transport. "We are grateful to you for choosing MAZ buses for a large-scale transport fleet upgrade programme in the capital of your region. We supplied 150 vehicles at the end of 2022 — the beginning of 2023. Warranty and post-warranty service is a priority for Belarusian manufacturers. Please rest assured that all the shortcomings that may be identified during the operation will be fixed immediately," the Head of State said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that Belarusian enterprises are ready to participate in the organisation of maintenance on the ground, "If necessary, we will maintain our vehicles ourselves. We can send engineers and recruit people locally. We will train them, and they will, under the guidance of our engineers, maintain the equipment that we will supply to you."

The supply of logging machines is also relevant for Arkhangelsk Region since the region is one of the major woodlands in Russia.



Arkhangelsk. Seaport

One of the promising areas of co-operation that was named by the President during the meeting was the modernisation of industrial enterprises specialising primarily in timber processing, shipbuilding, and ship repairs. "Today, fortunately,

Belarusian producers of modern machines and equipment have orders till the end of this year. But we have reserves," the Head of State remarked.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, the construction of ice-strengthened vessels is also worth considering. The Russians need them in the face of a significant uptick in transportation along the Northern Sea Route. The country needs at least 90 vessels, although no more than 30 are being produced.

The President emphasised that Belarus is very interested in developing the Northern Sea Route, along which tens of millions of tonnes of cargo can be shipped. This route has become even more relevant after the introduction of sanctions by Western countries and the closure of their ports for domestic cargo. "We have tried to supply small quantities of our goods via this route to the People's Republic of China and the Russian Far East. Using this route makes economic sense to us. Therefore, we are genuinely interested in working with Arkhangelsk Region," said Aleksandr Lukashenko. A possible option is to ship directly to the ports of Arkhangelsk Region, bypassing the ports



Alexander Tsybulsky

find new ways to ship its export cargo," Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised.

The Arkhangelsk port infrastructure specialises in containers and general cargo. Thus, it is not fit to transship Belarus' key export cargo — potash fertilisers, the volume of which will be about 15 million tonnes in the near future. This port

may be of interest to Belarusian producers of timber and metal products, though. "Yet, the competition in this matter is intense, including in the north-west. The cost of transportation is the primary consideration. Therefore, we are ready to work together," the President said.

Arkhangelsk is traditionally one of the bases for shipping cargo along the Northern route. This region is a hub for transshipment of goods, in particular construction materials for large mining facilities in the Arctic zone. In addition, the Arkhangelsk transport hub will be expanded in the near future to be used more actively as part of the Northern Sea Route.

"Here we could also be useful to each other," noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

According to the President, Belarus and the Russian region should also consider collaboration in housing construction. Now Arkhangelsk Region is addressing an important social task — relocating people from dilapidated housing. Construction is going ahead of schedule by a year, although the amount of work is enormous. "I think that we could also consider the supply of construction materials and some form of assistance to builders," the Head of State believes.

According to the President, another promising area of co-operation is the development of peat deposits with the subsequent production of high-tech products, such as plant growth regulators, active feed additives, materials for agriculture, livestock, and oil production. Belarus produces all the necessary equipment for the extraction and deep processing of peat.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

## President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko signed decree No.150 on the Belarusian space system for the remote sensing of Earth on April 15th

## PROTOCOL

The document provides for implementing a Belarusian-Russian project in 2024-2028 with a view to developing the Belarusian space system for the remote sensing of Earth. The decree specifies Belarusian participants of the project and terms of their work.

Once the project is completed, a Belarusian-Russian satellite for the remote sensing of Earth with an extremely high resolution and the service life of at least seven years is supposed to be put into orbit. The satellite will greatly improve the effectiveness of

accomplishing tasks relating to ensuring national security, the promptness and quality of space data available to consumers. It will also become a driver of development of science-intensive manufacturing facilities and technologies in the space industry in addition to attracting

talented young citizens to it. The decree's implementation will help secure Belarus' positive image as a space power and a high-tech state. It will be instrumental in the propaganda of Belarusian knowledge and competences in the area of peaceful uses of outer space.

# Top priority issues

## DIRECT SPEECH

At the meeting convened to discuss the country's industrial development and the tasks ahead, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has outlined a number of areas that require special attention

### FIRST. PRODUCTION

In general, the Ministry of Industry has been providing consistent growth in production volumes over the past few years — they have grown by almost 40 percent in three years. Significant results were demonstrated last year, as well. Industrial products were manufactured for nearly Br30 billion, while the growth rate reached almost 113 percent.



### SECOND. PRODUCT SALES

Manufacturing is all very well... But the major task is to sell the products and get revenue. The foreign trade of the Ministry of Industry enterprises in recent years has been characterised by increased export supplies on the one hand, and by forced withdrawal from Western markets on the other hand. In 2023, the industry ensured a record \$6.5 billion in exports over the past decade. Despite the fact that more than 90 percent of products go to the Russian market, Belarusian manufacturers are losing positions in traditional goods there.



### THIRD. IMPORT SUBSTITUTION

It is required to take measures to ensure maximum technological independence and create conditions for a sustainable economy that does not depend on any sanctions. This is a strategic task for our industrial complex. Projects to achieve technological sovereignty should become a driving force for the renewal of Belarusian industry.



### FOURTH. DISCIPLINE

Officials will not be punished for making a mistake. They can reach out to the President and explain the mistake. Yet, if anyone steals and worsens the financial situation of labour collectives and flagships of Belarusian industry, there will be no forgiveness.



### FIFTH. QUALITY

In the Year of Quality, as well as at all times, the products manufactured must be at the highest level, and no other way. It is not a whim but a harsh necessity of life. It is the question of the future of the country and its people.



### SIXTH. PERSONNEL

Everything is important — investment, technology, discipline, product quality. Still, the most important thing is personnel. Cadres decide everything and deal with all these issues. A highly qualified specialist will solve any problem, whereas an underachiever will fail the task.



## Technological sovereignty and import substitution are paramount tasks for vibrant economic development of Belarus

At the extended meeting on industrial development, the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has clearly exposed both the strengths and problematic issues of the manufacturing sector that require increased attention and prompt competent solutions. A frank and profound conversation touched upon the current trends and necessary steps to enhance the situation. Thus, what is to be done?



Vitaly Pivovarchik



By Piotr Petrovsky, political expert

### Basic principles

Some Western liberals criticise Belarus for limited market mechanisms arguing that the market will regulate itself what goods and services should be produced. Life has long refuted these superficial views.

In fact, the approaches related to import substitution and technological sovereignty appeared neither in the USSR nor in China, but in the heart of global capitalism — the United States. American sociologist and economist Jane Jacobs, who survived all the horrors of the Great Depression and as a visionary thinker wrote the book *Dark Age Ahead*, put forward the import substitution concept as a prerequisite for self-contained development of a certain territory. According to her, if the state or even the region wants to pursue stable and sustainable development, it should be provided with all basic industries.

Another American economist, Frank Graham, introduced the term 'technological sovereignty' as opposed to the technological colony concept, against the backdrop of the developing economic crisis in Western countries and the collapse of the colonial system in the 1970s. He claimed that the presence of enterprises and industries did not guarantee the state sovereignty since they can merely act like assembly shops whereas all the competencies and components for assembly are imported from abroad. In this case, the country and the people are only used for final assembly due to its location and cheap workforce, which makes it dependent on the technology owners. Only technologies and com-

petencies in the hands of the state are the guarantors of technological sovereignty.

### Towards new horizons

In Soviet times, Belarus was rightly referred to as the USSR 'assembly shop'. After the collapse of the Soviet Union, the country had to look for partners, including in the West. However, back in the 1990s, after the sanctions had been imposed against our country, import substitution tasks appeared on the agenda. The fact is that dependence on components makes it possible for unfriendly states to undermine the operation of Belarusian enterprises through a range of various restrictions. Therefore, back in those early days, the Belarusian leadership began to implement projects in the field of civil and military engineering, as well as other technologies. As a result, Belarus received its own buses, trolleybuses, electric buses, combine harvesters and even Polonez multiple launch rocket systems.

Today we are faced with the task of having basic competencies and integrated technological chains so that the flagships of the Belarusian industry do not depend on imports. The China-Belarus Industrial Park Great Stone can already boast positive cases of successfully created chains. Thus, the MAZ-Weichai joint project for the production of engines, gearboxes and assembly units for trucks has been implemented there. Previously, these components were purchased abroad. Another example is the release of electric batteries for Belkommunmash electric buses. Such facts point to the real import substitution potential and the achievement of technological sovereignty.

*In this aspect, it is imperative to strengthen co-operation between manufacturers and research institutions. At the meeting on industrial issues, the President of Belarus pointed out an insufficient level of co-operation in this area, which requires correction and intensified integration of science and production.*

Product updates are very slow in a number of areas, and each critical position reveals our weaknesses. It is against them that our competitors have slapped sanctions. "It is necessary to take measures to ensure maximum technological independence and create conditions for the sustainable operation of the economy. This is a strategic task for our industrial complex," Aleksandr Lukashenko urged.

### Technological ambitions

*Technological sovereignty cannot exist without manufacturing means of production. Aleksandr Lukashenko made a stern statement at the meeting emphasising the necessity to accomplish this task. Our own machines, robots, electronic computing equipment, Belarusian software must ensure not only technological sovereignty but also national security.*

Import substitution is not a matter of one year or even a decade. China has been moving towards the results it has today for almost a century. It is true that Belarus does not set such ambitious goals as China. However, the use of the potential available in Belarus as well as new institutions of the multipolar world should become a certain pillar for the implementation of our country's technological plans. Belarus will become a member of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation (SCO) in summer, and has also applied to join the BRICS group. The potential of these international associations should stand Belarus in good stead in terms of import substitution, technological sovereignty and exports. It all depends on the quality of products, service, our assiduity, performance discipline and prevention of corruption.



# They grind until it shines

New machines and joint projects with Russia — what the Orsha-based Krasny Borets Machine-Tool Plant puts a stake on

**In the context of the sanctions and trade restrictions faced by machine tool enterprises, increased efficiency of import substitution was the number one issue on the agenda. To this date, supply problems related to critical imports for the machine tool production have been solved both through the production at the Union State enterprises and thanks to supplies from friendly countries. The Belarusian machine tool industry has succeeded in adapting to the new realities, not only having maintained but also having increased the previous production volumes, and showed its readiness to cater for additional customer demand. The stake put on quality has yielded fruit. OJSC Krasny Borets Machine-Tool Plant, one of the industry leaders, has maintained its position in the market and is actively engaged in the production of high-demand high-tech products.**

By Vladislav Sychevich

## Meeting market needs

Krasny Borets is a dynamically developing enterprise today producing metal-cutting machines. It specialises in grinding equipment that encompasses a wide range of over 100 models. This is complex and high-tech equipment, with the share of innovative products as part of shipment making 50+ percent. Thus, the simplest modern grinding machine consists of 2,000 parts, whereas the nomenclature of the Orsha-based enterprise contains more than 100,000 items. The entire machine manufacturing process from development to production takes about a year. The demand for products is enormous, and 80 percent of them are exported. The major consumer is Russia. Belarus-made machines are also actively bought in Türkiye and Kazakhstan. Over the entire history of the plant operation, grinding equipment has been supplied to 115 countries. It is even used in Australia and New Zealand.

The key direction of production activity, along with the mass-produced range of surface grinding and milling machines, is the manufacture of customised grinding machines against the order designed for performing specific operations in small-scale, serial and mass production. The plant has also mastered the production of highly automated equipment with technological flexibility and accuracy regardless of the worker's qualification, which has made it possible to fully solve the tasks of modern production.

"The major sales market in 2023 and under the concluded contracts for 2024-2025 have been the enterprises of the JSC United Engine Corporation of Russia," noted Vitaliy Krutko, Director of the Krasny Borets Machine-Tool Plant. "The products of these enterprises include turbine engines for aircraft, sea vessels, and space rockets. Our turbine blade grinding machines are particularly in demand, they are used in large numbers in the manufacture of aircraft engines and gas generator units used in power plants."

Over the past two years, Krasny Borets has been actively stepping up co-operation with one of the world's largest developers and manufacturers of rolling stock for railway and urban rail transport. This company is the only developer and manufacturer of medium-speed engines in Russia, a major manufacturer of casting for railway transport.



Vitaliy Krutko

## For the common good

The director of the Krasny Borets Machine-Tool Plant has confirmed the fact that in the current geopolitical conditions, there is no point in counting on collaboration with western companies. Therefore, the stake is put on co-operation with Russia. His wristwatch with the flags of the two allied states on the watch face testifies to the well-established relationship between the countries. Let us remind that in September 2023, Belarus and Russia signed a roadmap for the development of machine tool industry. "Regarding this programme, co-operations ties between enterprises of Belarus and Russia engaged in the development and manufacture of critical imports are being worked out. Some of the positions are ball screw assemblies, linear guides, numerical control systems," Vitaliy Krutko pointed out.

In addition to the production of individual components and assemblies, the production of an 'allied machine' is envisaged. In other words, it implies the equipment consisting of the components manufactured on the territory of the Union State. The novelty will be unveiled at the Metalloobrabotka International Exhibition-2024 [the largest in Eastern Europe and the CIS trade show of global machine tool industry and state-of-the-art metalworking technology] in Moscow, in May.

"We are going to showcase a circular grinding machine made using Belaru-

sian and Russian components.

This will demonstrate that we can replace critical import components in mass production. The major basic parts will be produced in Belarus. It is a multi-purpose machine that is in demand at every medium and large enterprise. Thus, the entire workshops of plants such as Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ trademark) and Gomselmash [Belarusian manufacturer of agricultural machinery based in Gomel] can be equipped with these machines," the director shared the plans.

## High-quality approach to the matter

The Orsha-based enterprise has paid great attention to the quality improvement issues since its foundation. The plant leadership understands that it is impossible to successfully compete in the global market without high quality standards ensured. Therefore, they chose 'Quality is the key to competitiveness and flourishing' as their motto. Back in 1966, an ultrahigh-precision surface grinding machine model 3711 was awarded a gold medal, and in 1967 it was the first among metal-cutting machines in the USSR to be awarded the State Quality Mark. Since 2015, the company has used an integrated management system that combines quality management, environmental management and occupational safety management systems.

***"In the Year of Quality, we have focused on increased customer satisfaction with product quality, as well as on reduced level of defects in manufactured equipment."***

Our efforts are regularly rated high. Thus, we have recently become holders of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee award for achievements in the field of quality in 2023," Vitaliy Krutko emphasised.



**In 2023, OJSC Krasny Borets Machine-Tool Plant manufactured products worth Br33m. The growth to the level of 2022 amounted to 132 percent. The company supplied products worth \$8.5m to foreign markets. Exports to Russia account for 94 percent. The enterprise employs 580 people.**



## With confidence in the future

We asked the head of the plant to shed light on the company's future plans.

"If we talk about the short-term period, we have a development programme until 2025. It envisages growth rates for key indicators, including wages. We intend to introduce a new software product for efficient production management. In addition, an investment project will be launched this year partly implemented at the expense of the Russian state loan. It is aimed at increasing output. It is planned to purchase 32 units of equipment for the amount of \$7.5m in equivalent. Its investment part will be completed in 2027, while we expect to reach the design capacity in 2030. In general, we will annually earmark up to 10 percent of our revenue for investment purposes. It is also planned to develop new products," Vitaliy Krutko revealed the details.

# Nuclear question on the table

What stands behind the European Union's return to the widespread use of nuclear energy

After the Second World War, nuclear energy developed at an accelerated pace. At some point, Germany began to crowd out the United States and Great Britain in this area. In order to bring down the pace of development of the German economy, the United States persistently started to push forward the green agenda. Although wind turbines and solar panels are beautiful and environmentally friendly, they are not profitable from the cost perspective of electricity and final products of mechanical engineering and petrochemical industry. This is how European products began to lose their competitive advantages in the world.

By **Aleksei Avdonin**,  
analyst at Belarusian Institute  
for Strategic Research (BISR)

## Split benefits

As a result of targeted actions of nuclear opponents, the production of electricity by nuclear power plants in Germany decreased by almost one and a half times from 1991 to 2012. Over the next 10 years, the nuclear share in the country's energy sector dropped by half. This dynamic pattern was typical for the whole world.

Just ten years ago, nuclear power plants in Germany generated more than 25 percent of all electricity in the country, whereas now — only 12 percent. Power plants were forced to close under pressure from green activists after the accident at Japan's Fukushima Daiichi nuclear power plant in 2011, which was somewhat strange since Germany does not suffer from earthquakes or tsunamis which caused the accident in Japan.

All those steps were determined by the pan-European policy on the closure of nuclear power plants, primarily in the countries of the former Soviet Union as well as in the former member states of the Warsaw Pact. A striking example is the EU actions against the Ignalina Nuclear Power Plant located in Lithuania. The closure of this station was one of the pre-conditions for Lithuania's accession to the European Union.



**The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,**

*"Thanks to the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant, we have replaced gas consumption and have the opportunity to actively develop the electrical industry. Electric transport is a key component here. It is necessary to actively expand the production of traction electric motors and components for unmanned vehicles."*

**From the Address to the Belarusian people and the National Assembly, on March 31st, 2023**

## The revised decision

There were plans to build a new Visaginas NPP next to the shutdown Ignalina NPP by 2015-2021. Negotiations were held between Lithuania, Latvia, Estonia and the Japanese company Hitachi. The prime ministers of the Baltic States argued that there was no alternative to nuclear energy and the construction of a new power unit would contribute to energy security and economic growth in the region. Those plans did not materialise, though.

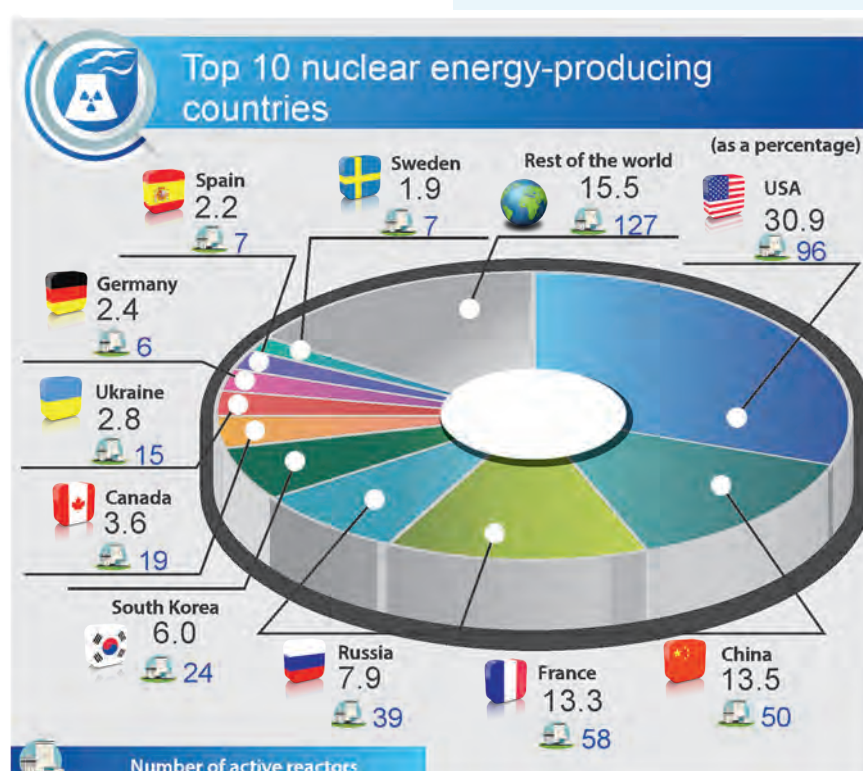
Still, at the opening of the Nuclear Energy Summit in Brussels in March 2023, President of the European Council Charles Michel made a fateful statement about the European Union's return to the widespread use of nuclear energy to ensure its energy sovereignty. However, the European official was disingenuous having named the conflict in Ukraine as the root cause of the European energy crisis. It should be understood that the shortage of energy resources in the EU arose solely as a result of sanctions against Russia imposed by the European Union, which included an embargo on purchase of Russian oil and coal. Most EU countries also refused to pay for gas supplies in Russian roubles, which led to their sharp reduction.

## Modular prospects

Belgian Prime Minister Alexander De Croo, who co-chaired the summit, stated that his country was actively engaged in the development of small modular nuclear reactors (SMRs), which in his opinion represent a bright future. He reminded that Belgium's government had already invested €100m for research and considered SMRs to be the main focus in the field of nuclear developments.

Executive Vice-President of the European Commission Frans Timmermans called on Bulgaria to phase out coal production and purchase, promising that in return the EU would provide support if Bulgaria resumed the construction of the Belene Nuclear Power Plant. Interestingly, coal still occupies the main share among energy carriers there.

It is clear that time has been lost. While Germany was destroying its nuclear power plants, the United States was actively ramping up their number. Now it is the United States that boasts the largest number of nuclear power plants in the world.



**FORMULA FOR CO-OPERATION**

As part of further development of nuclear energy, Belarus is raising its competence in collaboration with the Russian Federation. Thus, a comprehensive programme of Belarus-Russia co-operation in the field of nuclear non-energy and non-nuclear projects was signed on the sidelines of the ATOMEXPO-2024 International Forum in Sochi. It is planned to explore the possibility of creating a multi-purpose research nuclear reactor, a complex of laboratories, a multifunctional radiation centre and a nuclear medicine centre on the territory of our country. In particular, the programme sets out the possible construction of a lithium battery production facility (gigafactory) in Belarus.

clear power plants both from an economic standpoint — power generation does not depend on the weather or gas prices, and an environmental one — the shutdown of nuclear power plants may lead to increased CO2 emissions if renewable energy sources fail to generate electricity again and have to be replaced with fuel stations.

It should also be borne in mind that Europe is still focused on supporting combat actions in Ukraine, and this requires enormous financial resources that will clearly not be allocated to the nuclear industry.

At the same time, the realisation of reality that the United States took advantage of the EU has dawned on Europeans. The Head of the European Diplomacy, Josep Borrell, emphasised in this regard, "We are not part of this war. There is no need to scare people that war is inevitable. This is not about dying for Donbass."

Thus, it is apparent that the existence of sovereignty makes it possible to independently determine the order of development of the national energy system. Belarus is a vivid example of benefiting from its sovereignty. We, Belarusians, have created our own nuclear power plant in liaison with our Russian colleagues despite all the criticism and external pressure. After a short period of time, it has become clear that our path proved to be the right one. Europeans, on the other hand, are only now returning to the logic of realism, having lost time.

France, the main nuclear supporter in Europe, has always systematically increased its nuclear capacity. As a result, it currently generates about 70 percent of all electricity consumed in the country.

## The logic of realism

It is revealing that after the beginning of the gas crisis, a group of well-known European scientists and environmentalists wrote an open letter to the German government urging to cancel the decision to close nuclear power plants. The document provided solid arguments in defence of nu-



# Tears invisible to the world

It is not individuals who are behind child trafficking, but a criminal syndicate

After the end of the Nuremberg Tribunal, twelve smaller Nuremberg trials followed. One of them brought to justice the Nazis from the SS Race and Settlement Main Office, representatives of the Lebensborn (in English 'Spring of Life') association affiliated with the SS, which was engaged in the Germanisation of children abducted in the East. But isn't it what official Kiev, Washington, London and other parties involved are doing now?

By Lyudmila Gladkaya

## 'Hay action' campaign

German Nazis were frightened by the huge number of Russians, Belarusians, Ukrainians, Poles — 'non-Aryans', in a word. Therefore they deployed any measures of colonisation and biological elimination of the Slavic people. Thus, they initiated the so-called hay action campaign, as part of which they killed children, kidnapped, deported, forced them into slavery in Germany, extracted their bone marrow, as well as completely pumped blood out of children for the needs of the German army. In Belarus alone, there were 16 children's concentration camps during 1941-1944, a third of which specialised in 'full' blood donation.

Thus, there was a children's concentration camp in Belarus' Skobrovka. It was inaugurated in May 1944 and was considered an exemplary model of its kind. In fact, it was one of the centres of inhuman medical manipulations. Also, children were prepared to be sent to Germany there. In Poland, there were three Lebensborn points for the selection of children of Poles, Russians, Serbs and Czechs. Since 1942, young prisoners from all over Eastern Europe were taken to the Kinder KC concentration camp in the Polish city of Łódź, where Nazis determined the 'racial value' of the child. In order to match the dominant Aryan race, it was necessary to meet 62 points assessing body proportions, eye colour, hair colour, and the shape of the skull, among other matters.

Under the initial Lebensborn Germanisation programme, children were given German names while their documents were changed. They were usually defined as orphans whose parents died for the Führer and great Germany, and the indicated place of birth was the eastern lands of the Reich. Children were then taught German, and were beaten up for a word in Russian. Conversely, obedient and diligent children were encouraged in every possible way. A few months later, the 'orphans' were given away for adoption. In 1945, as the Soviet troops were approaching, kidnapped children were evacuated. This way hundreds of thousands of kids from Slavic countries ended up in Berlin, Hamburg, Hanover, Munich... Now they have no idea about their true origin.

In 1947, the administrative head of Lebensborn, SS Standartenführer Max Sollmann, argued in Nuremberg that Lebensborn was a charitable organisation. He received less than three years in prison.

**It is still unknown where the 50,000 little prisoners stolen by the SS in the USSR have gone. Of those taken by the Nazis for the so-called re-education, only two to three percent returned home.**



## How the modern scheme works

According to independent Dutch journalist Sonja van den Ende, who fled from the Netherlands to Russia, the Netherlands has become the first country in the EU to take away, according to various reports, between 100 and 300 kids through the courts from former migrant families who were unable to pay compensation for their children's benefits.

The abduction of indigenous children for their forced assimilation has its roots in the USA, Australia and Canada. The experience was spread in Europe then. The first scandals in the Netherlands and Belgium just marked the beginning. By the way, to this day no one will be able to say exactly where the children seized for the non-payment of benefits by their parents are. The worst thing is yet in store for children who have been taken away and kidnapped, Sonja van den Ende claims. "If you walk around Berlin, Antwerp or Amsterdam, you will see the sex trade going on around every corner of the railway station. In the eyes of passers-by, the explosive drop in the age of priestesses and priests of love from the 'standard' 15 to 12 and even 10 years. This is almost the only way for refugees from Libya, Congo or Niger not to starve to death," the journalist emphasised.

**According to the UN, in 2003 alone, up to a million children who lost their parents were illegally transported from Iraq to the EU, the USA and Canada. It has been reported that 1,450 kids were abducted and evacuated from Afghanistan while US troops were stationed there. Up to 700,000 children from Syria have ended up in refugee camps in Türkiye and Jordan, where their traces are lost. Or their traces may pop up somewhere in Spain, Germany or Belgium, where under-age boys and girls end up in semi-legal orphanages, adopted by LGBT perverts, and are exploited, including sexually.**

## Kidnapped children as a commodity for the West

The Kiev authorities are hastily evacuating children, homeless kids, orphans and children from foster families living in frontline cities. The Investigative Committee (IC) of the Russian Federation has already opened thousands of cases for the abduction and trafficking of Donbass and Ukraine children.

The alleged philanthropists, evacuation groups, human rights defenders, and

Ukrainian groupings like White Angels and Phoenix have played a significant role in such criminal schemes. It is all about the forced removal of children. The so-called 'angels' are in fact an armed, legalised paramilitary entity, a sort of a police department.

This is not just one group but a network, a criminal syndicate operating throughout the country. In Kiev-controlled Donetsk territories alone, there were 4-5 such groupings that forcibly separated children from their families. There are even orders for specific children — for example, ten blonde, blue-eyed girls aged 10-13 years old are needed. The 'angels' drive around in police cars and contact the SBU [Security Service of Ukraine], as required. They are trained both in Ukraine and in the West. The groups may include not only Ukrainians, but also westerners.

Here are a couple of examples. White Angels searched the city for 11-year-old Melania Borodai for ten months, lying that her mother was dead and the child was to be taken to Germany. Why exactly to this country is unknown. "At the bus station in the New Market in Artemovsk, my mother and I got lost," Melania wrote to the fund in a note handed over to Russia's IC. She was forced to hide from Ukrainian shelling and an armed group that introduced itself as military police. In an interview with Rossiyskaya Gazeta (Russian Newspaper), Melania recalled that she had seen a four-year-old girl taken away at the Artemovsk market. Under threat of violence, unknown persons pointed assault rifles at her parents and took the child away. "She was taken away, she was crying, and her mum and dad were being kicked. I do not remember much what happened next. There were whispers around, 'White Angels'," Melania shared her story. During the evacuation by Russian military men, the girl was nearly shot by a Ukrainian sniper.

**Mira Terada, an international human rights activist, the head and official representative of the Foundation to Battle Injustice, investigated the abduction of 85 children of the Paskovievskaya special boarding school No. 40 of Artemovsk District, Donetsk People's Republic. At that time, the village was under control of the Ukrainian Armed Forces. It is known that the children were transported by military plane through Poland to Spain, where some of them were sold to Argentina and the United States.**

## Facts about the abduction of minors by government agencies in the United States, Canada and Australia

• One in three Native American children has been forcibly taken away by US government agencies.



• More than 350 boarding schools for children abducted from Native Americans have operated in the United States since 1801.



• Already in 1884, over 130 boarding schools were set up in Canada for children kidnapped from indigenous peoples.



• About 47 percent of Australian Aboriginal babies and children have been forcibly separated from their parents in childhood.



The French military began mass export of children from Niger on August 9th, 2023

The parties involved in this include representatives of Spanish, Argentinian, and American non-profit organisations. The guardianship was issued only for 77 children, though. It remains a puzzle where eight more kids have disappeared.

The fact that there are various ads for the sale and rental of children in the West and Europe is highly alarming. The facts about the Ukrainian laboratories where organ-harvested children's bodies were found have also been made public. Apparently, doctors of Ukraine's nationalist battalions, specialised 'healers' had been working there. Eight such laboratories accountable for 114 corpses of children found there have been discovered in just a couple of months, 86 dead bodies of under-age victims have been identified.

American investigative journalist Timothy Charles Holmseth is a witness in a high-profile kidnapping case. He managed to film child traffickers from the CIA and the FBI discussing their operations, which made him the target of persecution by the intelligence service for ten years. In his investigation, Holmseth presented direct evidence proving the United States' involvement in a multibillion-dollar migrant child trafficking operation on the US-Mexico border, including what agencies facilitated the matter. We will tell about this in more detail, as well as about the 'pedophile brotherhood' in the United States, comprised of businessmen and officials from Joe Biden's entourage as well as the Senate, next time.

It looks like many more shocking discoveries are waiting for us.

SHOCK



# Heaviest rainfall in UAE

Chaos ensued in the United Arab Emirates after the country witnessed the heaviest rainfall in 75 years, with some areas recording more than 250mm (around 10 inches) of precipitation in fewer than 24 hours, the state's media office said in a statement

The rainfall, which flooded streets, uprooted palm trees and shattered building facades, has never been seen in the Middle Eastern nation since records began in 1949. In the popular tourist destination Dubai, flights were cancelled, traffic came to a halt and schools closed.

One-hundred millimetres (nearly 4 inches) of rain fell over the course of just 12 hours, according to weather observations at the airport — around what Dubai usually records in an entire year, according to UN data.

The rain fell so heavily and so quickly that some motorists were forced to abandon their vehicles as the floodwater rose and roads turned into rivers.

Extreme rainfall events like this are becoming more common as the atmosphere warms due to human-driven climate change. A warmer atmosphere is able to soak up more moisture like a towel and then ring it out in the form of flooding rainfall.

At least one person was killed after a 70-year-old man was swept away in his car in Ras Al-Khaimah, one of the oil-rich nation's seven emirates, police said.

The weather conditions were associated with a larger storm system traversing the Arabian Peninsula and moving across the Gulf of Oman. This same system is also bringing unusually wet weather to nearby Oman and south-eastern Iran.

An official at the UAE's National Centre of Meteorology was cited by local newspaper as saying that the rain was not caused by cloud seeding, putting to rest rumours that the chaos was man-made.

The practice is meant to enhance rainfall in arid or semi-arid regions and entails the 'seeding' of existing clouds with substances that eventually help the clouds induce rain. The UAE has been cloud-seeding since the 1990s and has been doing it regularly over the past few years.

Like the rest of the Persian Gulf region, Dubai has a hot and dry climate. As such, rainfall is infrequent, and the city's infrastructure often fails to handle extreme weather events.

# Russian grain in Lithuania

Lithuania has resumed purchasing grain from Russia after a lengthy hiatus, importing more than 12,000 metric tonnes in February 2024, worth around \$2m, RIA Novosti reported, citing statistical data

The former Soviet nation, one of Russia's most vocal critics, had stopped regular grain imports from its neighbour in May 2023, receiving its last delivery in July.

Nevertheless, in March 2024, Lithuania, along with Latvia, Estonia, Poland and the Czech Republic, urged the European Commission to impose a full ban on grain imports from Russia and Belarus due to the Ukraine conflict.

Statistics show that Latvia has also increased imports of Russian grain, purchasing 58,800 tonnes in February compared to 52,600 tonnes the previous month.

Riga has been one of the most outspoken advocates of imposing EU-wide sanctions on Russian grain. This, however, has not stopped Latvia from increasing its agricultural imports from Russia by almost 40 percent year-on-year in the first three months of 2024.

In February of this year, the EU member states collectively purchased 92,600 tonnes of Russian grain — worth almost €17m.



# Prehistoric elephant in Germany

Two boys have found the bones of a prehistoric elephant that is thought to be the largest land mammal to have ever lived in Germany

Scientists believe it would have lived somewhere outside of what is now the city of Munich, around 10 million years ago.

The rare bones have given scientists more of an idea what the extinct animal deinotheria would have looked like.

When the two brothers made the discovery they initially thought it was just some wood.

It's thought that the mammal would have weighed up to 12 tonnes and had a shoulder height of up to five metres — that's taller than a double decker bus.

The father of the boys who made the discovery, is the director of a prehistoric museum, he says the mammal 'had its

tusks coming out of its lower jaw' unlike the elephants we know today.

Initially, 9-year-old Constantin and 10-year-old Alexander found just one bone near the district of Erding, in Taufkirchen near Munich. But after further excavations a total of 120 bones were found. When the boys found the first bone, they were worried they had damaged their rare find.

"Unfortunately, when we uncovered it, a really big boulder fell on it and dad was afraid that the bone had broken. But luckily it wasn't broken after all," Alexander said.

The boys' discovery is set to go on display at their dad's prehistoric museum.

# Fire in Denmark

A fire broke out last week at Copenhagen's nearly 400-year-old historic stock exchange building, engulfing its iconic dragon-tail spire, which collapsed onto the roof

Videos and images from the scene showed a violent fire engulfing the stock exchange building, or Børsen, which had been undergoing renovation work.

Crowds of people gathered in the Danish capital as black smoke billowed from the building and emergency services worked to tackle the blaze. Some were seen carrying large paintings in an attempt to save the artefacts from the fire.

The incident comes five years after a mammoth fire ravaged the Notre-Dame Cathedral in the French capital of Paris, which sent shockwaves across the globe on April 15th, 2019.

Denmark's Deputy Prime Minister Troels Lund Poulsen described the fire as the Scandinavian country's own 'Notre Dame moment'. Meanwhile, Culture Minister of Denmark Jakob Engel-Schmidt lamented what he described as '400 years of Danish cultural heritage in flames', adding that it was 'touching' that employees at the building, as well as emergency services and residents, had worked together to try to save iconic artwork and historical treasures from the burning building.

Built between 1619 and 1640, the Børsen is a well-recognised example of the Dutch Renaissance style.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



**The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,**

*“We are not going to fight against them. We do not need that. I have always said and continue to say — we do not need anything which is not ours, but we will not give away what belongs to us. This is our logic. Why do we need to stand head-on and fight against each other? We are just being dragged into it and provoked, while the interested parties are far away. They want us to beat each other up here. They would then come here, to the ashes, print dollars and restore these lands, but not in the interests of our peoples. Neither Lithuanian, nor Polish, nor Belarusian ones.”*

**During the working trip to check the measures on combat readiness of formations and military units in Oshmyany District, on March 26th, 2024**

# Contagious expansion

## Why the North Atlantic Alliance keeps moving East

**NATO bases are increasingly deployed all over the world. Firstly, the United States pinpoints the areas of its interests by doing so. Secondly, this allows to suppress Europe’s initiative to create its own united army. Thirdly, the US military industrial complex is supported due to new orders. However, everyone else is clearly on a losing side. Why?**



**By Aleksandr Tishchenko,**  
national security expert

### The supply of illusions

NATO is a fungus, a mould, a military pathogen in the global security system, which reproduces by bases, like by spores. Wherever its signs appear on the map, security in the region decreases multiple times resulting in growing threats from the local to global scale. NATO is a harbinger of evil and potential trouble. The states hosting NATO units do not really receive any guarantees of their territorial inviolability but only an illusion of defence. After all, most of such ‘landlords’ in military uniforms do not represent any value in terms of strategy or purpose of military planning. This was especially vividly exemplified by the escape of American soldiers from Afghanistan. United States troops were in such a hurry to flee that they even abandoned their equipment and weapons.

The NATO website has recently come up with an anti-fake campaign about itself, emphasising its defensive nature. However, the alliance remained silent about the fact that the number of NATO’s combined forces is several times higher than the military component of any potential opponent. If you look at the world map, it becomes absolutely obvious that this ‘peaceful’ military bloc has surrounded the Union State of Belarus and Russia from all sides and is now allegedly afraid of it.

***It is not the Union State that is approaching NATO bases, but vice versa — NATO keeps moving towards our borders.***

***Interestingly enough, despite the fact that the whole world has ceased to be safe in principle, NATO for some reason is expanding exclusively to the East, towards the threats it declares. It is usually considered dangerous when a threat is approaching you. Yet, according to NATO’s logic, it is the other way around. Thus, if the problem will not come to you, then you must go to the problem?***

NATO bases virtually serve as sticks that mark the zone of influence. Or rather, a type of animal scent-marks used to identify their territory. However, animal instinct has nothing to do with NATO’s activities. It is mostly about a long-standing element of the global economy where everything is supposed to serve the interests of the United States. This postulate was confirmed personally and vociferously by the European Union High Representative for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy, Josep Borrell. According to him, the interests of Europe can no longer extend so far. Only the United States can afford it. Therefore, the reproduction of military bases is prompted by the road map of Washington politics. The rest of the world are just performers, potential targets and victims.

### Flags on the border

The peculiarity of the current time is that new members of the alliance have neither troops nor equipment to supply new bases with. The only way out of this awkward situation is regular membership fees of 2 percent of their GDP. Yet, the shortage of forces and military means of NATO’s recruits per se nullifies all the meaning of moving East. Therefore, all their marks on border territories stopped being a sign of military dominance long ago. Formally, they just imitate NATO’s growing presence being a sort of a claim as to whose cones are in the forest.

In other words, it is only the number of NATO’s flags along the border line that has increased. In fact, this is nothing else than a painful conceit which does not make our counterparts feel calmer. Permanent fear, degradation and panic attacks are the format of the current political climate in the West. Then, where does the NATO determination come from, what is the hidden motive? It is all simple. In reality, the alliance is certain that there is no any threat coming from the East. NATO behaves as if deranged, which causes the corresponding attitude towards it. All these descendants of Scythians, Balts, Varangians, Anglo-Saxons as

well as genderless bodybuilders are no more than Hollywood fog, which is blown out by a good current of air from the East.

***Now the matter concerns the pedagogy of indifferent contemplation of children playing carelessly with matches. They may cause trouble out of ignorance and misunderstanding — burn half the world. Therefore, it is better to hide matches from them.***

In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko, when making a working visit in Grodno Region, virtually conducted a lesson on fundamentals of health and safety as well as good neighbourliness for Belarus’ neighbours. The President called them for sowing crops and fighting for the harvest instead of fighting with each other. The Head of State also showed what fields in the border area should be used for — they should have tractors and combine harvesters on them, not tanks.

Unfortunately, aggression has completely replaced the mind of the neighbourhood elite. The NATO shell only adds the tragic nature to their situation, economically, socially and even militarily. It would be fine if they just hurt themselves. As they say, it is their choice. But what do they want from us?

What is the point of their militaristic mania? Despite the fact that we do not ask them, they keep preparing some kind of paramilitary units in order to bring democracy to us on their machine gun barrels. Well, they may be free to consume the democracy of their own making. In contrast, Belarus does not interfere in internal affairs of any country in an effort to make it more humane, although our neighbours kill unfortunate migrants on a regular basis and throw their corpses on the Belarusian territory. This is a telling example of how the so-called democrats act.

### American marketplace

Another interesting point is that in recent years, Europe has begun to talk about forming its own combined army. These unintentional aspirations provoked accelerated Scandinavian conscription into the ranks of NATO. Americans were in such a hurry to stifle the sprouts of army freethinking in the European barracks that they hastily took the oath from conscripts who did not even have time to understand what kind of mess they were entered into. As a result, hardly had the hangover syndrome passed when at least a third of the territorial defence disappeared.

The policy of NATO’s expansion to the East is so far the only strategy of the West, taking into account its budget, resources and capabilities. Along with that, it is needless to try and look for a defensive meaning in its actions. In addition, it is a pity that all military activities carried out by the alliance pose a threat to the environment, complicate the lives of local people and divert from common concerns about the future.

NATO bases are points and centres of US military logistics for deploying troops and storing weapons according to the principle of Amazon, the well-known American marketplace. This is a system for distributing points of receiving and issuing military orders around the world. Thus, since the Union State of Belarus and Russia refuses to obey the alliance, this logistics will move closer to their state borders, with military cargo being delivered and personnel being concentrated. This is a sort of preparation for war and not protection from it, which also involves supplies of American military industrial complex products to European consumers along the way. Not for free, sure enough.

# Unique beauty of Polesie Radiation and Ecological Reserve

The radiation and ecological reserve in the south of Belarus remained closed for almost three decades. It separated the territories located in the exclusion zone. It is only a few years ago that visitors began to be allowed here. This extraordinary place bears witness to the fact that nature has come to life and taken its course here whereas a person has been given the role of a careful observer of its wonders.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

## Visiting ghost villages

Every year on April 26th, Belarus remembers the tragedy caused by the accident at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant. Although the destroyed reactor was located on the territory of a neighbouring country, it is the Belarusian regions that were exposed to radiation load the most. Everyone has heard about the abandoned city of Pripyat. But what about 450 resettled villages and dozens of enterprises?

The territory is strictly guarded, and it is impossible to get there on your own. However, now you can book a unique excursion in the Polesie Radiation and Ecological Reserve to see firsthand houses, schools and shops that have been swallowed up by the emerald fauna. Time seems to have stopped forever at the 'spring of 1986' mark. Textbooks and exercise books are still lying on school desks, letters and calendars keep gathering dust in the living rooms, children's toys and favourite things left behind during the evacuation have remained on their places...

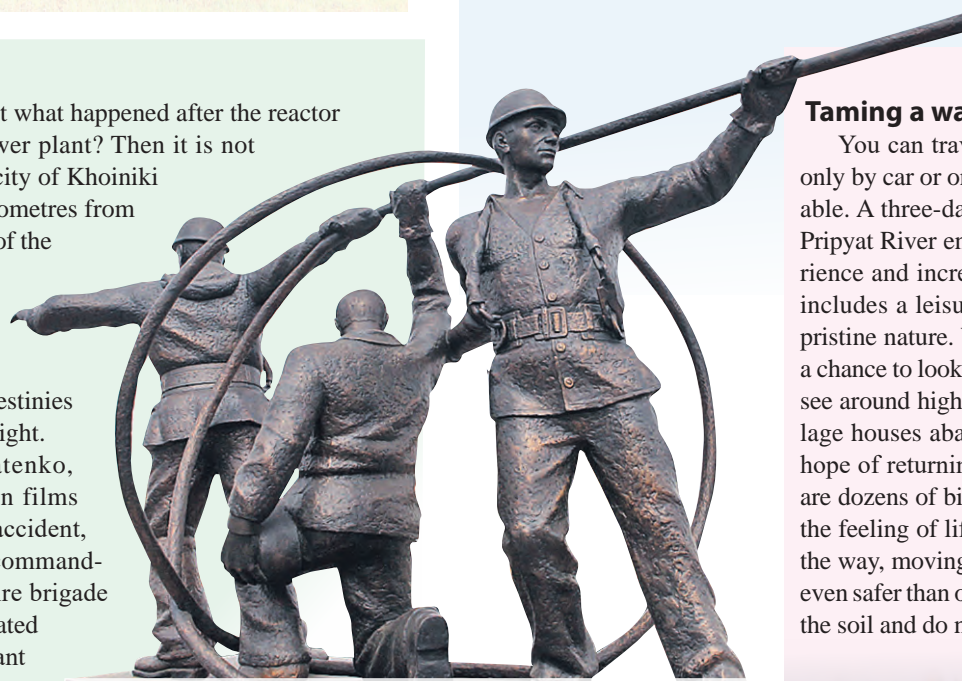


The first excursions to the Chernobyl exclusion zone were held in 2021

## Recalling the liquidator's fate

Do you fancy learning the truth about what happened after the reactor explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant? Then it is not worth watching TV serials — go to the city of Khoyniki instead. It is located just a few dozen kilometres from the accident epicentre. It is here that one of the largest museum exhibitions dedicated to the 38 years ago events is placed. It features rare documents and photographs, personal belongings of the liquidators, heart-piercing stories of human destinies divided into before and after that April night.

Chernobyl liquidator Vasily Ignatenko, whose story is often taken as a basis in films and works of fiction about the nuclear accident, was from Gomel Region. The section commander of the 6th independent paramilitary fire brigade for the protection of Pripyat, he participated in extinguishing the fire at the power plant that night. There is a unique monument in Khoyniki dedicated to the liquidators. At the end of April, the foot of the monument is traditionally buried in a sea of red carnations — Belarusians remember the feat of their saviours.



A requiem rally takes place every April at the monument to the liquidators in Khoyniki

## Stroking the mane of Przewalski's horse

An interesting feature is that animals born in this nature reserve are absolutely not afraid of humans due to being not familiar with them. During the excursions, the chances are great to see not only a roe deer or a deer, but also a bear, a wolf, a lynx, and more. Amazing black storks have also taken up residence in these places. In the cold season, visitors can safely watch bisons as they come here in herds for additional feeding. Yet, the most unusual inhabitant is the infinitely adorable Przewalski's horse, which is quite rare in nature. Photography is allowed!

During the excursion, it is important not to lose your vigilance and move along the permitted routes only. The radiation settled unevenly — three metres away from the path and the dosimeter will alert that the radiation level is elevated and it is dangerous. It is for a reason that the nature reserve staff have compiled a detailed map of the protected zone having taken into account every tree and hillock.



The horse herd is getting bigger every year



The President of Belarus personally tasted the local honey and gave it an excellent mark

## Choosing a special souvenir

It will not be possible to take even a twig from the protected areas as a keepsake as it will be found at the checkpoint on the way back. Also, health comes first! Yet, you definitely will not go home without souvenirs. Thus, employees of the security zone have been engaged in beekeeping in experimental territories for several years. The hive inhabitants live and feed in strictly designated areas, and every gramme of honey is thoroughly checked for the presence of radionuclides. There are barrels with buckwheat, lime, acacia and raspberry delicacies.

Another option is straw products. Craftswomen from Khoyniki are considered the best in the country for taming this Belarusian material. Their hats, trays and caskets, paintings and sculptures are in special demand. It is here that unique gifts are ordered for top officials who come on formal visits.

## Taming a wayward wave

You can travel around the nature reserve not only by car or on foot. Water routes are also available. A three-day rafting trip along the wayward Pripjat River ensures never-to-be-forgotten experience and incredible emotions. The programme includes a leisurely boat trip with a view of the pristine nature. When coming ashore, tourists get a chance to look into cultural centres and factories, see around high-rise buildings and traditional village houses abandoned by their owners with the hope of returning. And no silence around! There are dozens of bird species singing exuberantly, so the feeling of life does not leave these places. By the way, moving on water in the protected zone is even safer than on land as harmful elements go into the soil and do not linger on the surface.



About 120 bird species inhabit the territory of Polesie Radiation and Ecological Reserve

**The President's Cup final, unfortunately, provided no cool western with chases, shootouts or a dramatic denouement. Having released all the steam in the previous rounds, the Brest hockey players failed to give battle to Zhlobin's Metallurg at the decisive moment and lost in four matches in a row, which allowed the opponent to seal a series whitewash. Along with that, Metallurg secured the title of Belarus' best hockey team for the third time in a row.**

By Sergei Kanashits

After the last year's triumph, Metallurg head coach Dmitry Kravchenko was shaved bald right in the locker room. It was a masterful motivational move by the mentor. Before the decisive match with Neman, he personally bought a shaving machine and promised that in case of victory, he would allow the players whom he had criticised most often during the season to shave his head. Zhlobin hockey players gritted out a tough victory, and almost everyone wanted to test themselves as barbers. After the voluntary execution, the formidable coach looked funny but very pleased. This time, Dmitry Kravchenko chose a nobler image for himself — the triumphant coach met his team's treble success dressed in a chic cowboy outfit, which was very appropriate for the occasion. Interestingly, hardly anyone would have bet a plugged nickel on their victory during the regular season.

Metallurg and Dmitry Kravchenko are making history together. This is the fourth Championship Cup for the Zhlobin hockey team overall (the first was won back in 2012) and the third under the guidance of the charismatic coach. In 2022, the 'Wolves' [nickname for Metallurg hockey players] managed to turn the tide of events despite losing to HC Yunost (Youth) Minsk (2:3) in the course of the series. They sealed the decisive victory at the crowded Minsk Arena. It was an incredible sensation! Very little time had passed since then, but the Metallurg composition changed almost beyond recognition. Of



# Hat trick wonder

HC Metallurg Zhlobin has won the President's Cup again

## SCOREBOARD

Hockey. The President's Cup. Final series. Fourth match.  
Brest — Metallurg — 0:4. Series result — 0:4  
(three previous matches — 1:6, 1:3, 2:3 in overtime).

those who used to forge success, only five players subsequently went out on the ice — Sergei Kuznetsov, Vitaly Pinchuk, Vladimir Yermenkov, Ilya Spat and Ilya Shurinov. Roman Dostanko was a direct participant in the events two years ago, although he was fighting not for Metallurg but against it then, as a forward of Yunost. In fact, a new team was assembled in Zhlobin every season. The game was just middling throughout the regular season, with the team interaction mechanisms being adjusted on the way. The team composition was being strengthened, and the players were learning to play efficiently and in a cohesive way with each other, the teamwork was being improved in order to open up and surprise the public and the opponents in the playoffs. This was the case in the last championship, when Neman was defeated in the final. The same happened this year, too. The paradox is that, despite the apparent ease of the final superiority over Brest, it is the current success that is perhaps the most unexpected since the 'Wolves' looked too pale during the regular season. However, Dmitry Kravchenko apparently knows some secret or has a magic spell that allows turning a pumpkin into a carriage at the right moment.

"It is a lot of blood, sweat, joy and tears," the coach was happy after the victory, but seemed worn out psychologically. "There are no weak teams in the champi-

onship, all clubs are evolving, everyone wants to win and bring joy to people. In fact, hockey in our small country is a huge social project led by Dinamo Minsk. Everything happens very quickly on the ice. In one match, fans can shed both tears of sadness and tears of joy. It is happiness to bring joy to people."

The makings of an outstanding toastmaster with a flair of philosophical sadness is another trademark of Kravchenko. The coach is known to be as eloquent and thoughtful as his teams are on the ice — one may enjoy when listening to him as well as admire when looking at his team playing.

"We constantly have a new team composition, by 70-80 percent. It is impossible to show good results right away. Given more time, the result will undoubtedly come. I have an excellent coaching staff as well as the club management, starting from the director and ending with all other employees. Each of them works hard enough for two and does their best. Hence the result. I am happy that we act as a single factory, like a small sports workshop," Dmitry Kravchenko commented on the result.

One of the undoubted secrets behind the current success is the unity and cohesion of the team, as well as the fusion of youth and experience. The Dinamo reinforcement in the face of the Zhlobin hockey school trainees — Vitaly Pinchuk,



Dmitry Kravchenko

Sergei Kuznetsov, Yegor Borikov — came in very handy, too. The same refers to Mikhail Stefanovich's transfer to the team from Shakhter Soligorsk during the season — in the Belarusian Cup he is almost like Sidney Crosby in the NHL. Sergei Kostitsyn undoubtedly deserves special mention, whose authority and skill have cemented the foundation of teamwork and collective spirit for the second year in a row. He is no longer as bright as he was in his stormy youth, yet his experience and grandmaster prudence on the ice are worth a lot. In short: it is a great team!

As for secrets and magic spells, Dmitry Kravchenko revealed them to the general public, "It is necessary to talk less and do more." The question about the future and plans for the upcoming season did not remain unanswered, either. "Why don't we repeat it?" responded the happy coach and smiled slyly with his eyes from under his fancy cowboy hat. That would mean a poker, and no one in Belarusian hockey has won gold four times in a row so far.

## ARENA

### ● Pairs in the semi-finals

All semi-finalists in the UEFA Europa League and Conference League have become known. At this stage of the second most important European football club tournament, Italian Roma will clash with German Bayer, and French Marseille is going head to head with Atalanta from Italy. The matches will take place on May 2nd and 9th. In the Conference League, Italian Fiorentina will lock horns with Belgian Brugge for the place in the final, and English Aston Villa will face Greek Olympiacos. The matches are scheduled



for May 2nd, 8th and 9th. Earlier, the semi-final pairs of the UEFA Champions League became known — Borussia Dortmund will compete with French Paris Saint-Germain, and Bayern Munich will play against Real Madrid. The

first matches will be held on April 30th and May 1st, the return matches will take place on May 7th and 8th.

### ● Talent search

The republican youth athletics event 300 Talents for the Queen was held in Brest, the main characters of which were schoolchildren of 2-4 grades from all regions across the country, as well as from Minsk. For the first time in its history, the competition went outside the capital. The organisers included a mixed relay, endurance race, ball throwing, standing long



jump and other disciplines in the sports festival programme. The judges summed up the number of points scored by each participant in individual classification. Based on these achievements, team results were calculated.



Ilya Shvedko

## Photo of the week

A squirrel in Minsk Gorky Park

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**April 25th** is World Penguin Day — an annual ecological holiday that encourages people to remember the need to preserve

the animal diversity of our planet. Penguins are a family of flightless seabirds, whose representatives swim and dive well. They live only in the open sea of the Southern Hemisphere and play a significant role in the nature of this region.

**On April 25th, 1792**, France first demonstrated a method of execution using the guillotine — a machine for the production of the death penalty. Its axe falls under the influence of gravity and cuts off the head of the convict.

The use of the guillotine was banned only in September 1981, when the death penalty was finally abolished in France.



**On April 25th, 1859**, work began on the construction of the Suez Canal — a navigable lockless sea channel in northeastern Egypt connecting the Mediterranean Sea and the Red Sea. It is one of the most important waterways in the world.



**April 26th** is the Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day in the Republic of Belarus, the

National Day of Mourning. On this day in 1986, the Chernobyl nuclear power plant became a symbol of the largest man-made disaster in the history of mankind. A powerful explosion equivalent to 500 Hiroshima bombs occurred at the fourth power unit of the plant. Although the destroyed reactor was located on the territory of Ukraine, it was the Belarusian regions that suffered the most from the radiation load. The International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day is observed in the world on this day to honour the lives of those affected by the nuclear accident.

**On April 27th, 1974**, the first team of volunteers, members of the All-Union Leninist Young Communist League, departed from the platform of Yaroslavsky railway station in Moscow for the Siberian taiga on a mission to construct the Baikal-Amur Mainline (BAM). The BAM runs through Eastern Siberia and the Russian Far East, crosses 11 full-flowing rivers and passes through 7 large mountain ranges.



It is one of the biggest railway lines in the world, with a length of 4,324 km. Most of the railway is laid in the permafrost zone.



**April 28th, 1949** marks the birthday of Belarusian composer Vladimir Budnik (1949-2007). He worked in popular genres, wrote music for children. Among his works are the cantata

*On the Partisan's Grave*, the symphonic poem *The Tale of Polesie*, suites for piano, trumpet and piano, oboe and piano, prelude and fugue for a woodwind quartet, songs, music for dramatic performances.

**On April 28th, 1563**, the first printing house started to operate in Moscow. Ivan Fyodorov and Pyotr Mstislavets began working on the printed book *Apostle*. For printing, it was necessary to cast fonts, as well as to manufacture equipment. The book was published on March 10th, 1564. Ivan Fyodorov and Pyotr Mstislavets went down in history as the first Russian printers. The first Russian accurately dated book *Apostle* printed by them became a model for subsequent editions.



**April 29th** is the International Dance Day. This date was chosen to honour the birthday of French ballet master and choreographer

Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810), a reformer and theorist of the art of dance.

He developed the principles of heroic ballet, ballet-tragedy, ballet-play, embodied by means of pantomime and dance in collaboration with a composer, choreographer and artist. The main idea of this holiday is to unite all areas of dance as a single art form.



**On April 30th, 1945**, Soviet soldiers hoisted the Victory Banner over the Reichstag building in Berlin.

On May 3rd, 1945, the Moscow newspaper *Pravda* published photographs of the burning Reichstag with the Victory banner flying over its dome. There were still battles ongoing in Berlin, separate groups of fascists sat down at the Reichstag and were still shooting, and the pictures had already become historical. Pierced by bullets and stained with blood, the red banner became a sacred relic.

**May 1st** is celebrated as Labour Day (aka Spring and Labour Day), which was originally called International Workers' Solidarity Day.

