



This year marks ten years of the Belt and Road Initiative of joint construction

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The first tram line appeared on the Belarusian lands in Vitebsk in 1898, 30 years earlier than in Minsk

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INTERNATIONAL

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The leader of the Belarusian rhythmic gymnastics team Alina Harnasko became the strongest in the ball exercise. In total, she won six medals at the 2nd CIS Games.

## Colourful, bright and unforgettable!

Eminent sportspeople and beginner juniors, athletes from more than 20 countries of the world, a huge audience of fans around the world, and most importantly, a bright, colourful, memorable game and indescribable emotions! All this is the 2nd CIS Games, which are being held by our country these days. Belarus once again demonstrates that this sports festival is not only standings and medals, but above all a symbol of true friendship, peace and creation. It was on these moments that the President of Belarus focused special attention during the solemn opening ceremony of the 2nd CIS Games. Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed not only the participants of the competitions and viewers around the world, but also Western politicians who are trying to hide behind the iron curtain from the truth of life, “The slogan of our Games is Strong in Spirit, Strong in Competition! It is not just about sport. It is about every one of us. The time has come for courageous and resolute people, able to stand up for the honour of the country, for the victories of their fathers and the future of their children. This is our time.” → **2, 11**



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# The fire of true justice and sports fraternity burns in Minsk

**The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, spoke at the opening ceremony of the 2nd CIS Games. The colourful show that took place in the Minsk Arena was watched by millions of spectators from all over the world.**

The 2nd CIS Games are held in 20 athletic disciplines in Belarus from August 4th to August 14th. More than 2.2 thousand athletes representing more than 20 states take part in them. This bright sports holiday is a worthy response to Western political and sports functionaries who have mixed sports and politics together and thus crossed out the Olympic Charter and international sports principles.

The official part began with a ceremony to raise the flags of Belarus and the CIS. The Belarusian flag was raised to the national anthem by eminent athletes — two-time Olympic rowing champion Ekaterina Karsten, Olympic trampoline champion Ivan Litvinovich and Olympic canoe champion Aleksandr Maseikov. Three more well-known Belarusian athletes — Olympic champions in athletics Yanina Karolchyk-Pravalinskaya and Yulia Nestsarenka and Olympic handball champion Andrey Barbashinsky — took part in a ceremony to raise the flag of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

In his speech, Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed not only the participants of the competitions and a huge audience, but also Western politicians who are trying to hide behind the iron curtain from the truth of life.

***“The slogan of our Games is Strong in Spirit, Strong in Competition! It is not just about sport. It is about every one of us. The time has come for courageous and resolute people, able to stand up for the honour of the country, for the victories of their fathers and the future of their children. This is our time.”***

As the President noted, the Belarusian land is hosting the

Games of the Commonwealth of Independent States — once again, the attention of millions of fans around the world is riveted to Belarus. Just like four years ago, when the victorious fanfare of the 2nd European Games sounded at the Belarusian stadiums.

***“Their flame lit in Minsk has not gone out. It burns with faith in the Olympic ideals, true justice and sports unity. It unites true friends, loyal and reliable — people with iron character.***

Furthermore, it has brought us together. The atmosphere here is wonderful. You create it with your emotions, openness, and friendliness. Thank you very much,” the Head of State said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed gratitude to the leadership of the CIS countries and other states from where sports delegations and sports fans came to Belarus.

***“You have shown confidence in Belarus, and we will hold this sports tournament with dignity. It has a great future. In addition, this future is in our hands. No matter how striving to take it away the world bosses — embittered and powerless. I am sure they see us today too. Watch, listen, and draw***

conclusions. You are trying to remove strong competitors from international sport.

***You want to take away our sport victories. You are killing the spirit and purpose of the Olympic movement. This is a sign of weakness and your fear. This is an attempt to hide behind the iron curtain from the truth of life. This is recognition of the strength of our deepest values, which are shared by the overwhelming majority of people on the planet, including ordinary Europeans and Americans.***



Thousands have gathered here. Millions watch the broadcast. Everyone will see not only our beautiful Belarus, but also the culture of those twenty countries represented by leading athletes. You will see the traditions, the heroic history of Belarus, which is shared by all countries of the Commonwealth. You will see that Belarus has a magnificent enchanting nature. Everyone will see modern arenas, strong athletes, exciting competitions and new records, and most importantly — a great international interest in these Games,” the President of Belarus stated.

As the Head of State emphasised, over two thousand athletes

Aleksandr Lukashenko wished the athletes participating in the Games good luck and great personal achievements, noting that neither Russians, nor Belarusians, nor representatives of other countries can be excluded from the international Olympic and sports movement, “You will always be in demand. You will always be in business... I declare the 2nd CIS Games open!”

Together with thousands of spectators who packed the Minsk Arena stands, the Belarusian leader watched the spectacular performance that featured more than 1,000 performers, including the Belarusian leading singers, singing and dancing professional and amateur bands.

The lighting of the Flame of the 2nd CIS Games was a draw of the opening ceremony. This tradition dates back to the ancient Greeks’ sports competitions, and usually the torch is carried by a famous person to the cauldron. This time the organisers decided to make an exception and entrusted the solemn mission to a young gymnast, a prize-winner of the national rhythmic gymnastics competitions Aleksandra Zubovich, who was accompanied by three-time bronze medallist of the world rhythmic gymnastics championships Anastasiia Salos and head coach of the Belarusian national sambo team, many-time champion of world and European sambo championships Yuri Rybak.



from more than twenty countries of different continents came to us.

***“No sanctions, no political intrigues will deprive us of this fest. It is impossible. The world is small, interdependent, interconnected. Only madmen are trying to break these ties,” the Belarusian leader is convinced.***

## Russian President Vladimir Putin sent a greeting to the participants, organisers and guests of the 2023 2nd CIS Games in Belarus,

“Dear friends, I greet you on the occasion of the opening of the 2nd CIS Games in the Republic of Belarus. It is gratifying that the 1st CIS Games, held in 2021 at the initiative of Russia, were successful, received comprehensive support, and became an important event in the sports calendar of the CIS states. The current Games have significantly expanded their geography, brought together thousands of participants, their coaches, mentors and fans in Belarusian cities. In the coming days, they will provide athletes with an excellent opportunity to compete with strong rivals, show character and will, the desire to fight to the end — and win,” the message of greetings said.

Vladimir Putin is confident that the 2nd CIS Games will convincingly demonstrate their creative and consolidating potential, contribute to international humanitarian co-operation, and strengthen personal and human contacts. And, of course, they will popularise sport and promote the values of a healthy, active lifestyle, especially among young people.

## Tajikistan’s Deputy Prime Minister Matlubakhon Sattoriyon,

“I would like to express sincere words of gratitude for the hospitality and warm welcome in Belarus. It is very beautiful and incredibly hospitable here. We felt comfortable and cosy. You can see that everything is made with love here. We wish happiness, joy, harmony and prosperity to the Belarusian people. Belarus is a great host of the Games. The opening ceremony and the Games themselves are organised at the highest level... People’s friendliness, the beauty of the country, and the forests simply captivated me. We were all very comfortable here, and we are leaving Belarus with wonderful impressions. It is clear that Belarus is a sporting nation. A healthy lifestyle is your calling card.”

## Minister of Sports of the Russian Federation Oleg Matytsin,

“Together we are initiating a new format for holding competitions. Traditionally, one or another international organisation determines the policy and organises competitions for a certain number of countries or federations. We now have a deep conviction that the world is becoming multipolar, including in the field of sports. We must be able to go beyond traditional and conservative formats. We put the development of sports at the forefront.” Oleg Matytsin draws attention to the fact that the proposed format is not opposed to any other, “The fact that representatives of more than 20 countries came to the 2nd CIS Games today indicates that this is correct. I want to repeat: this is not an alternative, but a new direction. And here the governments of the countries determine how they develop the sports direction, which is an important part of national development.”



**The Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko focuses on the work of the economy in general and the situation in agriculture in particular. At the very beginning, the President inspected the course of the harvesting campaign in Minsk, Grodno and Brest Regions from a helicopter. Later, the Belarusian leader personally assessed the situation in the farms of the Brest and Grodno Regions. By the way, this time the President did not go to solve any burning problems. Brest Region and Grodno Region are in the lead as far as agribusiness is concerned. Needless to say that the agricultural enterprises Belovezhsky and Olekshitsy, which Aleksandr Lukashenko visited in Kamenets District and Berestovitsa District, are doing great.**

According to experts, on many issues one can learn here and take an example of how to develop the industry in other regions. The key component is discipline and order, which the President demands from everyone tirelessly.

As Aleksandr Lukashenko was told, overall harvest prospects across the country remain good for many crops despite fears during the drought period. However, corn and sugar beets are expected to yield better results than last year. Potato fields are also in good condition.

The Head of State traditionally wanted to learn about problems instead of accomplishments. He wondered whether there were reasons for concern as far as the overall harvesting complex is concerned.

“All the issues have been solved with your help. I mean both fuel supplies and availability of harvesters,” Deputy Prime Minister Leonid Zayats replied.

### **Tough requirement of the President for northern areas and domestic seeds**

Aleksandr Lukashenko demanded to improve the situation in Vitebsk Region. It makes sense to plant more early crops there due to the region’s climatic conditions. Such crops include winter barley, rapeseed and a number of others, “This is my toughest demand — to sow early crops in the northern regions in order to start harvesting earlier. Let’s free up fields and sow winter crops earlier.”

The President had previously described winter rapeseed as ‘food, fodder and cash crop’. In other words, this is a raw material for rapeseed oil and animal feed, and a good export item. Winter barley has also earned a good reputation.

The matter of more actively using Belarusian seeds was high on the agenda last week. According to experts, there are domestic seeds of different crops in the country. They are not bad. Some are even exported. But not all of them, and they are inferior to imported varieties in some parameters. And of course, agricultural enterprises are intent on achieving maximum performance. This is why they buy imported seeds.

In Kamenets District the Head of State examined wheat and rapeseed fields that had produced a good harvest using imported seeds.

“The number one task is to make sure that we have them,” the President emphasised, noting that the provision of own seeds is not only import substitution, but also a matter of food security. It is also important to ensure the high quality of seeds, their compliance with high requirements.

During a tour of a cattle farm in Berestovitsa District Aleksandr Lukashenko said he wanted the loss of cattle eradicated and mentioned that calves should be taken away from negligent farms and transferred to the farms where they will be given proper care.

The President recalled his instruction to transfer dairy herd to modern dairy complexes within five years. At the same time, Aleksandr Lukashenko urged to create good conditions for livestock maintenance and fattening.

Continuing the matter of reconstruction of dairy farms to convert them into modern dairy complexes, Aleksandr Lukashenko inspected new cow sheds and a milking and dairy unit in the agricultural enterprise Olekshitsy.

During a trip to the agricultural en-



BELTA

# Agriculture is an important factor in national security

terprise Olekshitsy the Head of State was made familiar with progress of the harvesting campaign in the region. In a winter wheat field near the Podbagoniki site local harvester drivers met with Aleksandr Lukashenko. Hot meals had just been delivered to them and the farmers invited the President to lunch with them. Pea soup, mashed potatoes with patties, vegetables, bread and tea with a bun were on the menu.

### **‘We are preparing to defend our country at any moment’**

While talking to residents of the agrotown of Belovezhsky, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke not only about agriculture but also about the country’s social and economic development. He touched upon important matters that worry everyone and gave detailed answers to questions asked by the rural dwellers.

The President reaffirmed: Belarus is not going to attack anyone, but if necessary, one must be able to protect the state and people.

“Times are complicated. We are peaceful people, we’ve had enough wars in our history. As a historian, I know this well. I want you to understand that we are not rattling our sabres but are preparing to defend our country at any moment,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President noted that Belarus is counting on the support of fraternal Russia in this matter. The Head of State noted that the Russian leadership had responded even to the biggest requests from Belarus. Such as the deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in the country. They are a security factor alongside the nuclear power plant, the President noted.

“A nuclear country has never been attacked before,” he explained. “We have a nuclear power plant. This, I must tell you, is a very strong security factor: if it explodes, God forbid, all will be affected. Therefore, you have to be very careful with it. We see what is happening

with the nuclear reactors in Ukraine.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko explained that more than half of the nuclear weapons that were planned to be deployed in the republic have already been delivered and dispersed throughout the country.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, more than half of the nuclear weapons that were planned to be deployed in Belarus have already been brought and dispersed across the country. “God forbid we have to use these weapons. I still hope that this will not happen,” the President added. “We don’t mess with anyone. Please don’t mess with us either. We will ensure our security with the help of our friends. Our western neighbours are going crazy. I just don’t



Aleksandr Kulevsky

know why they are acting the way they do. We had lived peacefully, calmly. Nobody had been stressing out anyone. Then crazy people came to power, I can’t call them otherwise, and things went off the rails. We do not interfere in their affairs. We want to have normal relations. Belarusians, Poles, Lithuanians have always lived together.”

### **On PMC Wagner, Poland and the Suwalki Corridor**

During the meeting with local residents Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that more ef-

forts will be poured into creating a contract army in Belarus. The President remarked that some units of the private military company (PMC) Wagner had joined the Russian regular army, some are working in Africa, and some are staying in Belarus.

The Head of State said, “It was my initiative and I don’t regret it. I want to leave these guys in the armed forces of our country. And relying on them, I’d like to more actively create a contract army. Over there we have experienced people. They are mainly officers. It is their profession to fight or defend the country. This is why we are looking attentively at this experience in order to protect us in the future. It is our only goal. We don’t want a war and I think that everything will be normal. If the enemy sees that we will respond in kind, and they will incur irreparable losses, losses that will not be acceptable for them, they will never attack us.”

In response to concerns of some Western politicians, the President stressed that Belarus absolutely doesn’t need the Suwalki Corridor. The corridor is a land route that goes along the borders of Poland and Lithuania and could connect Belarus with Russia’s Kaliningrad Region. At the same time Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that Belarus will move its military units in its own territory any way it wants.

While talking to the President, residents of the agrotown admitted that they are concerned about actions of Polish authorities at the Belarusian border and the redeployment of Polish troops and weapons closer to the border.

Aleksandr Lukashenko remarked that Belarus closely watches this manoeuvring: “I don’t think they are trying to intimidate us. I don’t think that they are afraid of us. I don’t think that they are doing it due to changes of the situation. After all, they can see that we are not mobilising the army. We don’t redeploy troops here. We got into a decent international scuffle. The entire Europe. Americans have been destroying Europe since Trump’s time. They need to bet on someone. They are thousands of kilometres away after all. Do you remember the UK’s withdrawal from the European Union?”

What didn’t the UK like? Everything was normal. But the UK and the USA are bosom buddies. Their relations are even closer than ours with the Russian Federation. This is why the UK is their mainstay, their unsinkable aircraft carrier. On the other side there is Poland. They bet on Poland. Poland will still make problems for us. Not Poles. They are smart people. But their leaders have gone crazy. Americans will bet on them.

**Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by**



**The growth of GDP, exports and real incomes of the population, inflation is at a historic low: Economy Minister Aleksandr Chervyakov spoke about how the Belarusian economy copes with external challenges**



**Investments are growing**

“The government is pursuing a proactive investment policy aimed at creating new industries, modernising the industrial sector, and building infrastructure. For objective reasons, the external inflow of capital is currently limited. Therefore, the task was set to attract and effectively use internal sources, primarily the own funds of enterprises, the resources of banks, the budget channel,” the head of the Economy Ministry noted.

He stressed that this approach is already bearing fruit, “In the first half of the year, we managed to reverse the negative trend of the last three years to reduce investment in fixed assets. They are growing rapidly. Based on the results of work for the first half of the year, investments in fixed assets amounted to Br14.9 billion, or 107.2 percent. At the same time, the purchase of machinery and equipment is financed to a greater extent — an increase of 119.1 percent.”

In other words, enterprises do not invest ‘in premises’, but in the active part of fixed assets, where added value is generated.

By the way, this year it is planned to implement 812 investment projects with an investment volume of Br6.2 billion.

The centre of attraction of capital is the manufacturing industry. Investments



# Dynamics are powerful

Aleksandr Chervyakov — on the results of the economy in the first half of the year

## Key parameters achieved

“Belarus has been under unprecedented external pressure for the second year. In general, we managed to successfully overcome the first and most difficult stage — the adaptation of the economy to the new reality,” the relevant minister noted, assessing the work of the Belarusian economy in the first half of the year.

He stressed that the timely measures taken by the government made it possible to avoid the development of events according to a negative scenario in 2022: enterprises continued to operate, people were protected from the sanctions strike, and the state fully fulfilled its social obligations.

This year, the minister recalled, the task is to move from the stage of adaptation and economic recovery to growth, “The results of the economy in the first half of the year are an indicator of how effectively it is possible to solve it and where there are reserves for development.”

Aleksandr Chervyakov draws attention to the fact that according to the results of six months, four most important parameters were met in excess of the established targets: GDP (102 percent with a forecast of 101.9), exports (an estimate of 109.4 percent with a plan of 102.9), real incomes of the population (103 percent with a forecast of 102) and the inflation rate (103 percent with the bar not exceeding 106.9).

“We slightly fell short in terms of investments (107.2 percent with a forecast of 108.1), but the dynamics achieved — plus 10 percentage points compared to the pace of the first quarter — allows us to talk about a well-formed set of measures to boost investment,” the relevant minister explained.

## Growth leaders

“Industry is at the forefront. For half a year it has added 6 percent, and in ‘net’ June — 15.5. We increased the production of passenger cars by almost three times, trucks — by 30 percent, forage and grain harvesters by more than 26 percent, television sets by almost 2.4 times, elevators, fabrics, clothes, shoes, and so on. It is important to note that the products did not go to the warehouse,” Aleksandr Chervyakov emphasised.

High rates in construction (gross value added in January-June 2023 amounted to 106.1 percent) are ensured through the implementation of contract work for major and current repairs (growth rate of 125.5 percent), landscaping, construction and reconstruction of highways of republican status, water deironing stations and construction of housing within the framework of the state investment programme and regional investment programmes.

He drew attention to the fact that the social infrastructure is actively developing: within the framework of state programmes, nine kindergartens, ten schools, five swimming pools, 53 hospitals and clinics, 12 sports and recreation centres, 23 sports facilities are being built.

“All this is a real investment in improving the quality of people’s lives,” the head of the Economy Ministry is convinced.

Continuing the topic of construction, the head of the economic department stated that the tasks for housing construction, including with state support, were completed by all regions in the first half of the year, “In January-June 2023, 1,758.9 thousand square metres were put into operation (for 16, 9 percent above the plan), of which about 30 percent — with state support (plus 13.2 percent to the plan).”

Aleksandr Chervyakov also noted an increase in the contribution of domestic demand to economic growth compared to the

first quarter of this year, “Retail trade plays a big role here, which added more than 12 percent in the second quarter. In general, for the first half of the year, the growth amounted to 104.6 percent.”

Wages, pensions and benefits are rising. At a historical minimum, inflation is 102.9 percent by June last year, 103 percent by December 2022. Consumer lending in the first half of this year increased by 1.5 times compared to the same period in 2022.

“This trend indicates that society has adapted to new conditions. Belarusians have become more confident in planning for the future and are switching to their usual active consumer behaviour,” the minister is convinced.

## The numbers are impressive

The volume of exports increased by \$1.8 billion, or more than 110 percent compared to January-May last year. The balance of trade in goods and services is positive. The export of consumer (128.3 percent) and investment (121.9 percent) goods grows most actively.

According to Aleksandr Chervyakov, such an increase is provided by physical volumes, “This fact confirms that our products have found their customers in the markets of friendly countries and are still in demand. So, in January-May alone, deliveries to Russia amounted to \$10.3 billion, which is comparable to the annual volumes in 2015 and 2016.”

According to him, the share of Belarus in Russian imports is being restored. In 2023, it approached 9 percent, which is significantly higher than the average level in the last 20 years — 5-6 percent.

“Sales to China have reached the \$1 billion mark, already exceeding annual exports through 2022. Accordingly, there are all prerequisites for reaching the target 2.2 billion,” the minister believes.

are also made in agriculture, forestry and fisheries, mining, construction and transport.

“The implementation of 29 industrial investment projects has been completed, of which three are ahead of schedule. We are actively working on the implementation of the instructions of the Head of State ‘One district — one project’. Today, there are already about 156 projects, thanks to which more than 9 thousand new jobs will appear in the regions,” the minister stated.

## Rising salaries and pensions

“Increasing the income level of the population is a priority task of the government. According to the results of January – May 2023, the growth rate of real disposable income amounted to 103 percent (plus 1.4 percent compared to January – April),” Aleksandr Chervyakov emphasised.

According to him, wages in nominal terms in the first half of the year approached Br1,800, including 1,927 in June. In real terms, the growth was 7.4 percent.

“This dynamic is supported by production growth and record low inflation rates,” the relevant minister explained.

Labour pensions are increasing at an even higher rate — plus 12 percent in six months. The average retirement pension now exceeds Br680.

The unemployment rate in Belarus continues to decline. In the second quarter of 2023, in accordance with the methodology of the International Labour Organisation, it decreased to 3.4 percent.

“Thus, today we can say that the Belarusian economy has recovered and entered the growth zone,” Aleksandr Chervyakov summed up.



# Heart beats in anticipation

New domestic technical developments will soon come to the service of cardiac surgeons

The release of domestic high-tech products for Belarusian cardiac surgery is an important and promising direction in the development of the industry. This is especially evident amid the unstable flow of foreign materials into the country. However, today we are talking not only about import substitution: the production of our own products for cardiac surgery is the key to further success in the treatment of cardiovascular diseases. Deputy Director for Innovative Development and High Technology of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre Cardiology Yuri Ostrovsky spoke about new developments.



## TO THE POINT

On the one hand, the violation of the usual ties with Western countries in the medical field creates additional difficulties for our specialists. On the other hand, this is a serious incentive for the development of our own high-tech industries. Moreover, Belarusian specialists have a lot of promising developments.

the same material — the pericardium of calves, processed according to a scheme that has been known for 20 years. They have passed preclinical trials, animal testing. True, the biomaterial is not suitable for all patients, someone needs a synthetic fabric. Polymedtech purchased a device that allows them to produce the necessary materials. But a problem arose: when implanting these prostheses, absolute tightness is needed. Specialists from Penza and the Skolkovo innovation centre are involved in co-operation, but there are coatings of a completely different type. Callogen treatment is used: Polymedtech manufactures prostheses, sends them to Penza, where they are processed. But we will go further. We will process the same prostheses at Skolkovo, and they will be used not only in vascular surgery, but for very complex operations for aortic aneurysm. After all, this is not just a vascular prosthesis — in the presence of an internal stent made of self-expanding nitinol, the technology for perform-



## REFERENCE

The history of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre Cardiology dates back to August 1977, when the Belarusian Research Institute of Cardiology was established in Minsk. For 45 years, it has gone from a research laboratory to a highly specialised scientific and practical institution, equipped with modern furnishment and medical equipment. Every year, thousands of Belarusian patients from all regions and about 500 foreign citizens receive consultative assistance at the centre. The number of annual high-tech interventions has reached 3,500, the entire range of cardiac surgeries is performed in high-risk patients, including heart transplantation, 'heart-lung,' 'heart-kidney' complexes.

By Aleksandr Nesterov

From the time of the Soviet Union, Belarusian cardiac surgeons inherited a shortage of mechanical artificial heart valves. In 1993, domestic analogues of Western prostheses were created in the country. Now they are greatly improved.

"We entered the 5th-6th generation, there were single-leaf valves, now they are double-leaf valves. To date, more than ten thousand implantations of the standard valve, which has been used since 2009, have been performed. Everything is fine with it: the performance indicators are absolutely no different from Western counterparts, although the product is cheaper. And most importantly, we do not depend on foreign suppliers and have a huge selection of mechanical prostheses for any valve position — aortic, mitral, and so on," Yuri Ostrovsky explains.

Over time, it became clear to specialists that due to the increased average life expectancy of the country's population, the need for biological heart valves will increase every year. They are needed primarily by patients over the age of 65 years.

"So far, there is no industrial production of such valves, and

they themselves are quite expensive — \$1200-1300 apiece. But things are changing," Yuri Petrovich specifies.

**Preclinical and experimental studies of a frameless biological prosthesis (though so far only in the aortic position) have been completed at the Electronmash plant in the capital. The Republican Scientific and Practical Centre 'Cardiology' plans to start clinical trials this summer.**

If there are no problems, the process can take two to three months. If there is a go-ahead for industrial production, then this will cover all the country's need for these products. Another plus is that domestic products are cheaper than imported analogues.

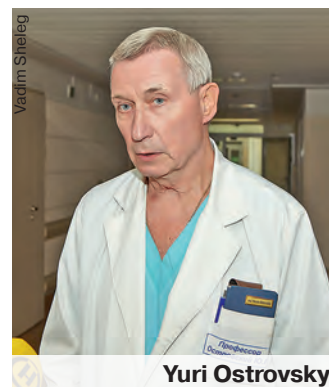
The Deputy Director of the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre emphasises that it will be a completely Belarusian prosthesis, including the material and its processing, and cardiac surgeons need to have several types of biological prostheses, "In this direction, we are co-operating with the resident of the BNTU technopark, the

Polymedtech enterprise. By the end of summer, we are planning to hand over for clinical trials scaffold bioprostheses that can be placed in any position."

**The biological heart valve is a high-precision technique. Its implementation takes a lot of time, but the result is worth it. Any valve must 'hold' 10 years in the human body. However, this does not mean that they will not last longer.**

"Mechanics" can work for a very long time, because the margin of safety exceeds the resource of human life.

"In the West, recently in Russia, and now in Belarus, the so-called devitalised biomaterial for a biological heart valve is being developed. This is the pericardium of calves, from the tissue of which not only antigens, but also any cellular structure is removed, leaving a bare 'framework'. In our country, this project is being carried out jointly with the Institute of General and Inorganic Chemis-



Yuri Ostrovsky

try of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Institute of Biophysics and Cell Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, the Polymedtech and Pharmland enterprises. We are only at the beginning of the journey, but as a result, a valve should appear, which, when working in the human body, is populated by its own cells and becomes, as it were, natural. It does not require specific medical support," Yuri Ostrovsky goes on.

There are also advances in the work on the creation of artificial prostheses of the heart vessels, Yuri Ostrovsky notes, "Biological vascular prostheses were created from

ing such operations is greatly simplified."

Since 2009, more than 500 heart transplants have been performed at the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre Cardiology. There are indisputable successes, but there are also difficulties, Yuri Ostrovsky does not hide, we are talking about an increase in the duration of ischemia — the exclusion of a donor organ from the blood circulation, "In reality, we have to fit in at four hours. But it doesn't always work out. A transport container is needed to ensure the transportation of any donor organ (heart, kidney, liver) at a standard temperature of plus 4-6 degrees Celsius. We don't have it yet. We tried to deal with this issue on our own, we plan to co-operate with Russian developers from Novosibirsk. I think everything will work out, and we will be able to increase the safe ischemia time of the donor heart to six hours. This will allow delivering the organ from one point of the country to another, even by car. This is a big boon for patients."



This year marks ten years of the Belt and Road Initiative of joint construction. Over ten years of development, the initiative has gone from formation and foundation to rooting, becoming an open, inclusive, mutually beneficial platform for international co-operation and a global public good that has received universal welcome from the international community, including Belarus. More than 150 countries and more than 30 international organisations have signed more than 200 co-operation documents on the joint construction of the Belt and Road, implementing more than 3,000 co-operation projects with an investment of almost \$1 trillion.

# On a profitable path

## Cases of Belt and Road ports

By Xie XIAOYONG, Ambassador  
Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary  
of the People's Republic of China  
to the Republic of Belarus

However, unfortunately, some Western media have recently ignored the above facts, fabricated and inflated the so-called threat theory of Chinese investment in global ports, unreasonably denigrated China's investment in the construction of foreign ports under the pretext of 'creating a security threat'. I would like to take this opportunity to share some cases of how Chinese port enterprises are actively investing in the construction of port infrastructure in the Belt and Road countries, bringing real benefits to the countries concerned, this is a vivid example of the concept of building a Community of Common Destiny for Mankind.

### Joint construction of the port of wealth, promoting local economic development

In 2009, the operation of the Greek port of Piraeus suffered due to the impact of the European debt crisis. Thanks to the participation of China COSCO Shipping Group in the management of the port, the port of Piraeus is gradually being restored. China COSCO Shipping Group actively responded to the current unfavourable situation and invested more than €600 million in the construction and modernisation of the port.

*Piraeus has now become the number one port in the Mediterranean, the fourth largest complex port in Europe and one of the fastest growing container ports in the world.*

In fiscal year 2022, the port's revenue reached €195 million, up 26.2 percent year on year, and net income was €52.9 million, up 43.9 percent year on year, effectively contributing to the economic development of Greece.

In Sri Lanka, the port city of Colombo is not only the first special economic zone established and operated by Chinese enterprises abroad, but also an important hub of the 21st century Maritime Silk Road. According to a well-known international consulting agency, this outstanding city of the future is expected to attract more than \$9.7 billion of foreign direct investment to Sri Lanka in the process of development and use, and increase the budget revenues of the government of Sri Lanka by more than \$5 billion USA. Among other things, its modern multifunctional logistics centre will enhance the status of the port of Colombo as a port hub in South Asia.

### Joint construction of a port of opportunity, improvement of local infrastructure

In 2015, China and Pakistan identified a '1+4' co-operation scheme centred on the China-Pakistan Economic Corridor



and focused on the port of Gwadar, energy, transport infrastructure and industrial co-operation. Today, the Gwadar port and the free zone operate unhindered; the exhibition centre and business centre Gwadar appeared; China-Pakistan Faqeer Primary School, Gwadar Vocational School and Sino-Pakistani Brotherhood Emergency Medical Centre brought convenience to local residents; breeding, greenhouse and drip irrigation technologies brought by Chinese specialists help local organic agriculture flourish.

*Thanks to joint construction under the Belt and Road Initiative, Gwadar is no longer a remote fishing village with backward infrastructure, but a city steadily developing towards a regional logistics hub and industrial base.*

In 2022, the Phnom Penh-Sihanoukville Expressway was officially opened, funded and built by the China Road and Bridge Corporation, ending Cambodia's history of no expressway. As a key project of China and Cambodia to jointly build the Belt and Road infrastructure, the expressway not only greatly shortens the distance between the capital city of Phnom Penh and the largest foreign trade centre of Sihanoukville Port, but also effectively contributes to reducing costs and improving the efficiency of freight transportation between the two points, and the area adjacent to the highway route covers a quarter of Cambodia's population, giving a strong impetus to local socio-economic development.

### Joint construction of the port of happiness, creation of new jobs for the local population

In 2022, the official opening ceremony of the commercial port of Jazan Economic City in Saudi Arabia, built by the China Harbour Engineering Company, took

place, marking the official entry of the port into commercial operation. Over 1,000 local residents were employed during the construction of the port project.

*In the future, the operation of the port will greatly improve the situation with the lack of modern ports in the southwest of Saudi Arabia, and not only provide favourable conditions for the industrial development of the Jazan economic city, but will also more effectively promote the economic development of Jazan province and the southwest region of Saudi Arabia.*

In addition, it will actively promote the speedy implementation of the grand vision of creating 150,000 jobs in Jazan Economic City.

In Nigeria, the Lekki Deep Water Port, which was financed, built and operated by the China Harbour Engineering Company, has also created numerous jobs for the local population. The Port of Lekki is expected to become one of the most modern and efficient ports in sub-Saharan Africa and will create almost 200,000 direct and indirect jobs in Nigeria in the next few years.

### Joint construction of a win-win port, promote regional and global development

In 2021, the automated container port built by Shanghai International Port (Group) Co., Ltd., the new port of Haifa in Israel, was officially opened. The new port of Haifa is the first large-scale port opened in Israel in the last 60 years, and also the most modern, greenest and fastest-growing terminal on the eastern Mediterranean coast to date.

As the largest container terminal in Israel and an important trade hub connecting China and Europe, the new port of Haifa will more efficiently and conveniently provide goods transportation services in Israel and surrounding areas, as well as

become an important trade channel for Israel and a regional logistics centre for entry and entering the markets of Europe and the Asia-Pacific region.

In the United Arab Emirates, Khalifa Port Phase II Container Terminal, jointly operated by COSCO SHIPPING and the Abu Dhabi Ports Bureau, has the largest freight container loading station in the Middle East with an annual design capacity of 2.4 million standard containers. At present, Khalifa Port has risen from 89th to 25th place among container ports in the world, gradually becoming an important and highly competitive transportation hub in the Gulf region, which helps the UAE to strengthen its position as a fulcrum of world trade and promote the development of global relationships.

### In defence of peace and stability

China has always been, is and will be a defender of world peace and stability, a supporter of mutually beneficial co-operation, a contributor to development and revival.



*China's practical co-operation*

*with all countries in the field of infrastructure, including the construction of ports, is carried out in full accordance with the principle of joint discussion, joint construction and joint use, aimed at creating new opportunities for joint development.*

The corresponding co-operation is carried out openly and frankly, never poses a threat to the security of any country, never directed against a third party, never interferes in the internal affairs of other countries. Looking to the future, China will strengthen the alignment of the high-quality joint construction of the Belt and Road with country development strategies and regional co-operation initiatives, accelerate the construction of port infrastructure and regional international logistics channels, and jointly with partners, including Belarus, transform Belt and Road to a path of happiness that benefits the whole world, to a sunny road that will allow us to share new opportunities and plan development with the whole world, to jointly create a bright future for the Community of Common Destiny for Mankind.





# Agent Zelensky

## The history of an unprecedented deception

Recently, American political analyst and former US Marine Corps intelligence officer Scott Ritter published two episodes of his *Agent Zelensky* investigation. The film, clearly designed for a Western audience, turned out to be so scandalous and evidence-based that both series were immediately removed from the American YouTube video hosting.



By Roman Rud

### How the producer was produced

Most of the facts cited by Ritter were known to us before in a fragmented form, but the former intelligence officer managed to competently systematise them, sort them out and back them up with evidence. Now any viewer is able to see a picture that convincingly shows who benefits from the war in Ukraine, who actually leads the country, for how many years and who prepared this bloody scenario.

So how did Zelensky come to power? Where is the President of Ukraine, who has become even richer during the war, investing? Why did Scott Ritter call his investigation *Agent Zelensky*? Finally, what tasks of foreign intelligence services have already been performed by a man skilfully appointed to the post of head of Ukraine?

**According to Ritter, the whole story of the Zelensky presidency is an example of incredible manipulation that will go down in textbooks: an ordinary comedian who came to power because he promised a long-awaited peace, dragged his fellow citizens into a bloody massacre.**

The population of the whole country was chosen as the object of manipulation, and the popular TV series *Servant of the People*, in which an ordinary school teacher suddenly becomes the leader of the nation, was chosen as the instrument.



Scott Ritter

The cinema made a strong impression on the public and became a political battering ram that literally broke the path to Zelensky's victory in the elections.

**The gullible voter unconditionally accepted the image of an honest and fair on-screen leader.**

Ritter recalls that the last episode of *Servant of the People* aired four days before the last round of elections in Ukraine. However, not only Zelensky was the pro-

ducer of the series — even before filming, he himself was produced by the States as a possible conductor of American interests. However, the political technology of imposing an invented cinematic image on the people is not at all new: on the eve of the election of Barack Obama, the *Head of State* film was filmed in the USA with an unimaginable plot, where a black idiot suddenly becomes the leader of the country. Movies went to the public and to a large extent served as Obama's victory in the elections. And if the technology works, then why not apply it again?

The Ukrainian oligarch Kolomoisky, who at that moment was faced with a difficult choice, also participated in financing the filming of the series. "*Kolomoisky was on the international wanted list, he was wanted by the FBI. And the only way to save his life and freedom — it was a presidential campaign based on this film. Washington clearly showed up already when Zelensky was winning in the second round. At that moment, buyers of this presidential case began to arrive,*" one of the former deputies of the Verkhovna Rada tells in Ritter's film.

**The investigation of the ex-intelligence officer presents not only his findings, but also the opinions of Western intelligence officers, the revelations of diplomats, the memoirs of Ukrainian and American politicians, as well as numerous documents.**

For example, evidence of a secret collaboration between the Zelensky campaign headquarters and the Washington-based PR agency Signal group consulting. Zelensky's headquarters denied this ties, but in Ritter's film you can see the Signal group's report to the US Department of Justice. It clearly says that Zelensky paid them almost \$70,000. However, that ain't hay for him.

### Generous advances

The Director of the French Centre for Intelligence Studies, Eric Denece, spoke in detail about how Western countries created a financial cushion for Zelensky. Even during the election period, he hid part of his shares in various companies, including offshore ones, to the account of one of which Kolomoisky 'for some rea-

son' transferred \$41 million. In his election declaration, Zelensky modestly kept silent about this, and to this day he continues to dress up in a beggarly toga of the unmercenary. Ritter's film lists only part of the real estate owned personally by Zelensky in various countries:

- ▶ villa in Miami worth \$34 million;
- ▶ a house in Israel on the seashore, \$8 million;
- ▶ villa in Italy, 600 metres from the sea, \$3.8 million;
- ▶ an apartment in London on Baker Street, opposite the Sherlock Holmes Museum, \$3 million;
- ▶ five apartments in a new hotel in Batumi, Georgia;
- ▶ a penthouse in the elite complex Emperor — Livadia, Crimea, about \$1 million (which, by the way, was nationalised by Russia only in May 2023).

The investigation reveals the background of such generous advances. It tells about the role of the American Marshall Centre in the political life of Ukraine, about providing the country's territory for Western biological experiments, but the most detailed analysis is devoted to the current owners of Zelensky — British intelligence MI-6 and its head Richard Moore. The first meeting with him took place at the Ukrainian President in the fall of 2020, and not just anywhere, but at the headquarters of British intelligence in London.

**Nothing like this happened during World War II or during the Cold War. Such a visit is contrary to both diplomatic protocol and the ethics of the intelligence community. It looks like a meeting of a professional agent with his curator, who in the case of Zelensky was the head of MI6.**

It becomes clear why the personal bodyguard of the Ukrainian President was recruited from English specialists, who also helped in the theatrical production in Bucha, and also controlled Zelensky's every step. Including — even at a meeting with the Pope, to which the leader of Ukraine spent only a few minutes, but then in a separate office, already without the Pope, he received instructions for an hour and a half... from the same head of British intelligence, Richard Moore, who also arrived in the Vatican.

### Mission accomplished!

Ritter's investigation will be useful to watch for anyone who still does not believe that Zelensky is just a puppet in the

hands of the special services, consistently carrying out the tasks of the West. Former intelligence officers list ten tasks that are fully or partially implemented by a manual President in Ukraine in the *Agent Zelensky* film.

#### 1. Destruction of the Russian language.

It means legal restrictions already imposed on the use of the Russian language, which is spoken by at least 12 million Ukrainians.

#### 2. Completion of the church schism.

The division of the Orthodox into right and wrong, weaning the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra.

#### 3. Rewriting of history.

The destruction of the common memory of the war, the demolition of monuments, the uprooting of any signs of a common culture.

#### 4. Total eradication of press freedom.

It means the closure of all newspapers, websites and TV channels that retained independence from the presidential office.

#### 5. Prohibition of any opposition activity.

There are no more parties in the country that opposed Zelensky.

#### 6. Creation of a testing ground for Western weapons and biological technologies.

#### 7. Creation of the institution of mercenarism in the ranks of the Armed Forces of Ukraine.

#### 8. Legalisation of Nazism.

#### 9. Sale of fertile Ukrainian lands to foreign owners.

#### 10. Agreeing to Western Lend-Lease aid, which plunged the country into unsustainable debt for decades.

Scott Ritter finalises his investigation this way, "Agent Zelensky has accomplished the tasks assigned by Western intelligence agencies. The question is: will those in power still need someone who knows too much and wants too much?"





**A child who worked for Packers Sanitation Services cleans a slaughterhouse in Grand Island, Neb. US Department of Labour**



**A teenager bagging groceries in a Publix grocery store in Miami Beach, Fla., in June 2023**

# Illegal child labour on rise in tight US job market

Child labour violations in the United States have increased in recent years, while 'some well-known companies and consumer-facing name brands' have been caught employing children for dangerous and exhausting work, CNN reports

"A tight labour market has prompted many employers to search for the cheapest available labour; state legislators are even pushing bills that would limit legal protections for underage workers," said the report.

At 16 McDonald's franchise locations in Louisiana and Texas, children as young as 14 operated 'dangerous equipment and worked long and late hours', the US Department of Labour (DOL) said in late July. In May, the department found two 10-year-olds working without pay until as late as 2am at a McDonald's restaurant in Louisville, Kentucky, according to a DOL release.

Between October 1st, 2022, and July 20th, the DOL concluded 765 child labour cases, found 4,474 children employed in violation of federal child labour laws, and assessed more than \$6.6m in penalties against employers.

That's a 44 percent increase in the number of children illegally employed and an 87 percent increase in penalties compared to the same period the year before, according to the department.

The Federal Fair Labour Standards Act (FLSA) sets the minimum age for most employment at 14 years old, restricts hours for employees under 16 and prohibits any youth under 18 from working in

hazardous conditions or occupations.

Most child labour violation cases involve children working more or later hours than allowed. But the Department of Wage and Hour division found 688 children working illegally in hazardous jobs in fiscal year 2022. That's the highest annual figure since fiscal year 2011.

America seems to be lurching backward to the Gilded Age of the late 19th century, when workers — including young children — were treated like cow dung and robber barons ruled the roost. The public must demand that child labour once again be relegated to the dustbin of history.

# Demographic decline in EU

**The European Union is on the brink of a major demographic shift as new projections suggest a significant population decline by the end of the century**

According to the latest population projections issued by Eurostat, the EU's population will decrease by 6 percent between January 1st, 2022 and January 1st, 2100, equivalent to 27.3 million fewer people.

After a decrease in 2020 and 2021 due to the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the population of the EU started recovering during the course of 2022.

As a consequence of the mass influx of refugees from Ukraine into the EU the population is estimated to have reached 451 million persons on January 1st, 2023. Furthermore, the EU's population is projected to peak at 453 million people in 2026, before decreasing to a projected level of 420 million in 2100.

In 2022, the EU's population pyramid already shows the shape associated with long life expectancies, low death rates and low birth rates: the highest shares of the population are made up of working-age people above 50, while the shares of young people below 20 are noticeably smaller.

The 2100 pyramid clearly shows development towards a shrinking and ageing society: decreases in the shares of children and young people below 20.



# Dane visits every country in the world without flying

**Danish adventurer has recently completed his 10-year round-the-world unbroken journey**

Torbjørn 'Thor' Pedersen left his job, family and girlfriend and embarked on an epic journey to visit every country without flying on October 10th, 2013. The only three rules he set for himself were spending at least 24 hours in every nation, living off \$20 a day, and not returning home until the voyage was complete.

After ten years of travel, Pederson successfully visited all the countries in the world and started his journey home on May 24th, 2023. The last country he visited was Maldives.

Pederson is also the Goodwill Ambassador for the Danish Red Cross. He told CNN, "There's a historical sense of returning home by ship — people can see

it on the horizon and stand and wave as I come down the gangway. And that seems like an appropriate way to complete the project."

The 44-year-old celebrated his success in the Maldives. Then, he backtracked to Malaysia via Sri Lanka to board the MV Milan Maersk, a 1,300 feet long container ship. He travelled 33 days to reach his home country, Denmark.

Pederson survived an intense four-day storm when he was crossing the Atlantic from Iceland to Canada. He also overcame a severe bout of malaria in Ghana. Moreover, he had to reschedule many sailings due to broken ships or exhausting bureaucracy.

# Belarus' national pavilion hits 1m followers on Douyin platform

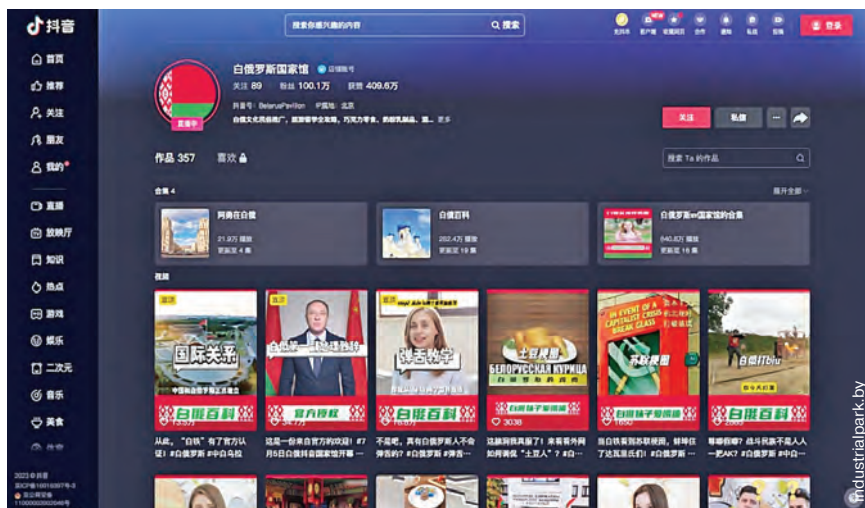
On August 3rd, the number of subscribers to the national pavilion of Belarus on the Chinese online platform Douyin (social network, short video sharing service) has reached one million

The project — implemented by the Industrial Park Development Company together with Chinese partners — has become one of the largest foreign educational resources in social networks. According to the official website of the Belarus-China Great Stone Industrial Park, the tasks of the site include the promotion of Belarus among Chinese users.

The channel of Belarus' national pavilion on Douyin platform has been developing since May 2022. Since then, 357 short videos have been posted introduc-

ing the Chinese to the culture, traditions, history, prominent natives and landmark sights of Belarus. The platform regularly hosts streams with the participation of Belarusian and Chinese bloggers. The channel also has the functionality of selling Belarusian goods to consumers from the People's Republic of China.

Alongside Douyin, the national pavilion project is simultaneously operating on several popular online platforms in China, including online marketing platforms and video hosting sites.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Salt of world hunger

Illegal sanctions against the supply of potash fertilisers from Belarus, imposed by the collective West, threaten world food security

**Experts say three things must come together to ensure food security: the environment, genetics and good management. And if climate change is difficult to manage, plus the development of genetically modified production is still quite expensive, then we can only rely on effective management. It primarily refers to the use of a sufficient amount of mineral fertilisers. And this is what can make it possible to feed 9 billion people today.**



By Svetlana Isaenok

## Our contribution to security

Belarus makes a significant contribution to ensuring food security in the world, supplying foreign markets not only with high-quality agri-food products, but also with the most important resources for production, including potash fertilisers, Andrei Pilipuk, Corresponding Member of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Doctor of Economic Sciences, Professor, Director of the Institute for System Research in the Agroindustrial Complex of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus notes, “In this regard, sanctions and restrictions on the transit of potash fertilisers from Belarus led to a serious increase in prices for this type of resource, making it more expensive and much less affordable for most world importers.”

Of course, it is beneficial for foreign experts to underestimate the contribution of Belarus to ensuring global food security, the scientist emphasises. Belarusian potash fertilisers have a number of significant competitive advantages: the main one is affordability. And no less significant — high quality.

**Experts note that our potash fertilisers are produced using modern technologies that provide higher static and dynamic strength, biological purity and safety of products that can be transported over long distances and stored for a long time without loss of quality.**

Domestic producers take into account the growing demand for complex fertilisers, with a balanced ratio of nitrogen, phosphorus and potassium minerals, as well as microadditives. We mastered the production of a brand of potassium chloride with a minimum content of fine fractions. Potash fertilisers are a key position in the Belarusian export basket and a strategic branch of the country's economy.

## Africa needs Belarusian fertilisers

There are new disappointing global data. The Food Security Information Network reports that in 2022, 58 countries were in a state of food crisis, including countries in Africa, Congo, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Afghanistan, Syria and others. The total number of hungry and mal-

nourished people in these countries is 258 million people (this is 34 percent more than in 2021). The role of Belarusian potash fertilisers in ensuring the agricultural production of African states is significant.

**Sanctions, or unilateral coercive measures taken by countries that bypass the UN Security Council on food and fertilisers, are among the most irresponsible decisions for several reasons,**

Deputy Permanent Representative of Belarus to the Food and Agriculture Organisation of the United Nations Kirill Petrovsky says:

### DIRECT SPEECH

**Andrei Khudyk, Minister of Natural Resources and Environmental Protection,**  
“At the moment, the reserves of potassium salts in our country amount to 7.3 billion tonnes. With the existing annual production — about 53 million tonnes — the country is provided with these reserves for more than 100 years.”

**Firstly,** the global hunger situation has not improved in recent years. According to The State of Food Security and Nutrition in the World, prepared by FAO, IFAD, UNICEF, WFP and WHO and published a few weeks ago, global hunger rates have remained virtually unchanged from 2021 to 2022, but are

still much higher than pre-COVID-19 levels (9.2 percent of the world population in 2022 compared to 7.9 percent in 2019). In 2022, there were between 691 and 783 million hungry people in the world, and about 29.6 percent of the world's population — 2.4 billion people — were moderately or severely food insecure.

**Secondly,** unilateral coercive measures on fertilisers hit hardest not the countries on which they are imposed, but the poorest countries in Africa, Asia and Latin America. For example, despite the sanctions regime, the problem of hunger in Belarus does not exist at all.

According to the same report, our country maintains

### MEANWHILE

According to the UN, there were 828 million malnourished people in the world in 2021. This is approximately 88 times more than the population of the Republic of Belarus. One in five people in Africa, 9 percent of the people of Asia, 8.6 percent of the people of Latin America and the Caribbean, and almost 6 percent of the population of Oceania have already experienced hunger.

its position in terms of the minimum level of ‘spread of malnutrition’: less than 2.5 percent, on par with most European countries. In Kyrgyzstan, this indicator is 4.8, Georgia — 2.9 percent, etc. The share of Belarusians who cannot afford a healthy diet is one of the lowest in the world (0.5 percent), while in Sweden this figure is 0.6, Austria — 0.9, Kazakhstan — 2.3, Russia — 2, 6, Moldova — 7 percent.

**Thirdly,** fertilisers sanctions have a long-term effect: by not fertilising this year, farmers in the poorest countries will have a smaller harvest next year, further exacerbating hunger.

In general, international experts, including the FAO, name several blocks of causes of world hunger: climate change, the consequences of a pandemic, conflicts and, of course, trade barriers and restrictions, the most destructive of which are precisely unilateral coercive measures against food and fertilisers. It is quite difficult to assess the share of influence of each of them separately, but one thing is clear: there are no reasons for optimism in the situation with global food security.






**A heated discussion on the impact of fertilisers sanctions on hunger has been going on at the FAO site for more than a year, but so far to no avail.**

“The United States and its allies generally started out by saying that there were no sanctions on fertilisers, that is, with a lie. Today, they are diligently, but usually unsuccessfully, trying to avoid discussing this very sensitive topic, especially in the presence of the most ‘affected’ states in Africa and other regions. FAO member countries, at the initiative of Belarus, formed in Rome an informal ‘anti-sanctions group’, which, among other things, develops and coordinates joint actions aimed at the speedy removal of all unilateral coercive measures against such an extremely important position for the whole world as fertilisers. We plan to continue to increase pressure on the collective West, which, for the sake of its political ambitions, makes decisions that are one of the main causes of global hunger,” Kirill Petrovsky believes.

Obviously, if the situation with the supply of Belarusian potash does not change, many poor countries will find themselves in a difficult situation. Prices for potash fertilisers, which have risen above nowhere, will continue to rise, according to the World Bank. Starving countries are already voicing fears about next year's harvest. In conditions of acute food shortages, their harvest directly depends on the amount of fertilisers, a significant part of which is Belarusian.

### FIGURES

The share of Belarus in the world trade in potash fertilisers in recent years was about 20 percent. The volume of export deliveries of potash fertilisers exceeded 11 million tonnes in the amount of \$2.4-2.7 billion. The geography of exports of potash fertilisers covered more than 100 countries. At the same time, the largest buyers of Belarusian potash fertilisers over the years have been:

	Brazil — 22 percent
	China — 13 percent
	India — 12 percent
	Indonesia — 6 percent
	Malaysia — 4.5 percent

Information provided by the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus

SANCTIONS

The Minsk Times  
Thursday  
August 10  
2023

9



Perhaps there is nothing more reliable for strengthening the unity of the people than common national pride. We, Belarusians, have something to be proud of. Amazingly beautiful nature — fields blooming with fragrant herbs, centuries-old forests, reflecting the clear sky, lakes. A story in which more than once our people had to show courage, wisdom, philanthropy. More than once, being ahead of time, we, Belarusians, opened up new opportunities and became an example for the whole world.

# Well-known route

The first tram line appeared on the Belarusian lands in Vitebsk in 1898. 30 years earlier than in Minsk, and a year earlier than in Moscow.

By Artemy Vasilevich

Recently, Vitebsk celebrated the 125th anniversary of its brand — the Vitebsk tram. Opened in 1898 in the city above the Western Dvina River, the line became the first in Belarus, remaining such until 1928, when the tram system was launched in Minsk.

The history of the Vitebsk tram begins in February 1896, when an agreement was signed between the Vitebsk city government and the French industrialist Fernand Guillon. Under the terms of the agreement, the Frenchman, investing his own funds in the construction of the track and the power plant, received the right to own the Vitebsk tram for a period of 40 years.

The first Vitebsk power plant appeared in 1897. Dense pairs of engines that generated power swirled over the city. In the paintings of the patriarch of the Vitebsk art school, a friend of I. E. Repin and a teacher of M. Chagall — Yehuda Pen, who lived near the opened station, you can see its red brick pipes.

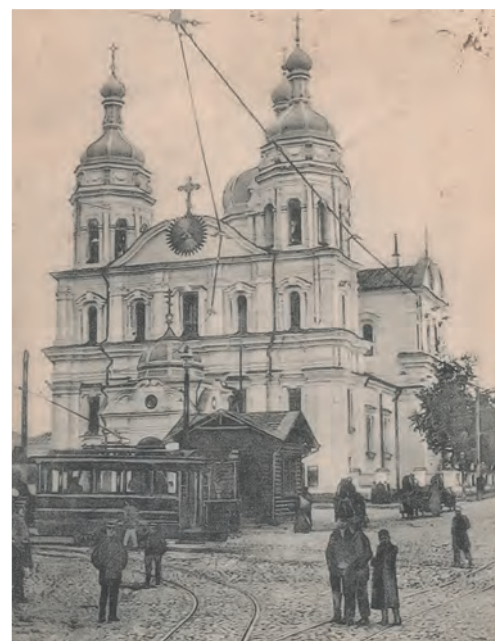
*In the early summer of 1898, Vitebsk heard a tram bell on the streets for the first time. Boys from all over the neighbourhood came running to stare at the amazing horse-drawn carriage, following the rails without horses, ringing every minute and periodically throwing up sheaves of bewitchingly bright sparks.*

Well, it's no wonder. Vitebsk acquired its own tram a year earlier than Moscow, and the capital of the empire, St. Petersburg, was nine years ahead.

A ride on amazing transport cost the city dweller five kopecks. But for this amount it was possible to travel five kilometres, looking out of the window as the buildings of the district court, the old town hall, churches and cathedrals float by. Initially, the city's tram fleet consisted of 18 motor and 16 trailer cars. There was not enough space for everyone.

Vitebsk met the events of October 1917 quite calmly. Soviet power was established in the city on October 28th. In the first months of 1918, the Vitebsk tram enterprise was nationalised. And in 1921, V. I. Lenin was solemnly enlisted as an honorary machinist in the ranks of the workers of the Vitebsk tram power plant.

With the beginning of the civil war, cargo platforms began to walk along the Vitebsk tram tracks, which were used to transport wounded soldiers. So, according to the documents, in the period from April to November 1920, 60 thousand wounded soldiers were delivered to the



Vitebsk. Tram at the Cathedral. Early 20th century.



Vitebsk. Tram on Zadunovskaya Street. Early 20th century.



Vitebsk. Tram on Zamkovaya Street. Early 20th century.



Vitebsk. Tram on Gogolevskaya Street. Early 20th century.



Vitebsk. Tram on Vokzalnaya Street. Early 20th century.

city with the help of tram platforms.

In the 1930s, when Vitebsk became one of the most important industrial centres of the country, active construction of tram lines to factories, plants and combines operating in the city began. Cargoes from enterprises were transported by special rolling stock with reinforced platforms to the territory of a freight railway station near the Comintern plant.

The photographs of the city in 1940–1941 evoke a true sadness. Young, actively developing, with unique architecture and amazing people. Soon it will all be blown up and destroyed. The Vitebsk tram officially stopped on the day the fascist occupation of the city began — July 11th, 1941.

*Even for researchers, it still remains a mystery how titanic work it was necessary to restore the enterprise after liberation. However, already in 1946, when the city was reviving after the Great Patriotic War, the Vitebsk tram delivered bricks for construction.*

Simultaneously with the resumption of freight traffic, which was the most important for the restoration of the city incinerated by the war, public routes were also launched, connecting, as before, the two banks of the Western Dvina River. The pre-war routes were gradually restored, the length of the tracks increased, and the tram fleet grew. Vitebsk was again filled with chimes, unhurried knocking, and in the evenings, young people

walking along the embankment, as if on shooting stars, made wishes on sheaves of sparks escaping from the 'horns' of a tram shrouded in twilight passing along the Kirov Bridge.

Years passed, Vitebsk grew prettier and grew, and along with it, the Vitebsk tram fleet expanded and became younger. Moscow cars were replaced by Chelyabinsk ones, and they were already replaced by Riga ones, which are still so memorable to any resident. Although why memorable?!

*On holidays associated with important city dates, the Vitebsk tram fleet launches RVZ-6M cars of the Riga Carriage Works, which look unusual today, but somehow very touching, like elderly people who have returned to the places of their youth after decades.*

The first years after the collapse of the USSR became very difficult for our entire country. Difficulties in the economy could not but affect the Vitebsk tram. The situation in which the enterprise found itself, when it was not possible to buy even the most necessary for the repair and assembly of transport, led to the fact that the number of trams on Vitebsk streets decreased by 30 percent.

However, already in June 1998, when the city solemnly celebrated the 100th anniversary of its tram, an agreement was signed with the St. Petersburg Carriage Works for the purchase of new cars. And since 2005, Vitebsk switched to electric tram transport of the Belarusian enterprise Belkommunmash.

Perhaps someone will say that over the past years, the importance of the tram as a means of transport has declined somewhat. But this is only at first glance. The tram was and remains favourite transport among Vitebsk residents. A morning trip through the city waking up and getting ready for a busy day, an evening trip, when one by one the trams hide in the reflections of the sun setting over the Dvina River and enveloping the surroundings (then they really resemble outlandish fairy-tale animals) — so pleasant for the townspeople and numerous guests of Vitebsk!

Vitebsk tram has long been a real tourist brand. Want to get to know the city better? Get on the tram directly from the station — and good luck. This route has been tested for a century.

Photos from the personal collection of Vladimir Likhodedov



Belarus' national team young gymnasts claimed gold in exercise with 5 balls



The 2nd CIS Games kicked off with rhythmic gymnastics competitions in Minsk. How beautiful it was! First Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration Maksim Ryzhenkov, welcoming the participants of the competitions and spectators, noted that rhythmic gymnastics has long gone beyond the boundaries of just a sport and has become a great sports art. Hundreds of fans were able to make sure of this.



Lala Kramarenko

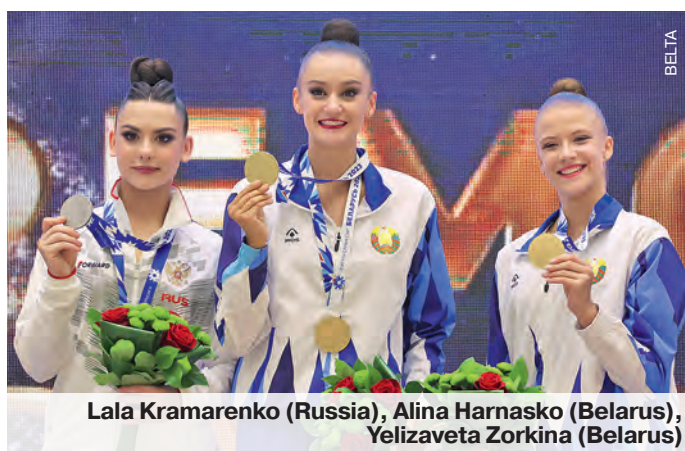
# Ready! Set!

Belarusian gymnasts won 10 medals at the 2nd CIS Games in Minsk

By Tatiana Pastushenko

For three days, the performances of the graces gathered a full house. Crowded hall and crazy support from the stands. The girls who went out on the mat did not get tired of thanking the fans for the warm welcome. Belarusian sportswomen who opened the scoring with awards (let us remember that our junior team won gold in the all-around in the group exercise, Alina Harnasko won silver in the individual all-around and our team in the team event) continued to replenish the collection. Our girls won seven more medals — two gold, two silver and three bronze. 10 in total!

Our group players — Anna Shakun, Valeria Malkovich, Taisiya Erchak, Agniya Selivanova, Zlata Buchenkova and Kiryana Shevtsova — finished with gold. The team won the award of the highest standard in the exercise with five balls. Before that, the juniors took silver in the composition with five ropes — only a little lost to the Russians.



Lala Kramarenko (Russia), Alina Harnasko (Belarus), Yelizaveta Zorkina (Belarus)

The grace competitions were attended by many world-class stars — Alina Kabayeva, Yevgenia Kanayeva, Yana Kudryavtseva and not only. Two-time Olympic champion in artistic gymnastics Svetlana Khorkina also peeked into the Palace of Rhythmic Gymnastics.

“In addition to these competitions, I have not had time to watch anything yet — rhythmic gymnastics did not let me go! It always absorbs all my attention — it’s so beautiful. The CIS Games are competitions of an ex-

cellent format, our athletes show their skills on wonderful venues. It is a pity that there is no gymnastics in the list of sports included in the programme. I hope it will be presented at the 3rd CIS Games too!” Svetlana said.



Arina Averina won the gold medal in hoop exercises

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Alina Kabayeva said that she has a lot in common with the Belarusian national team. After she lost at the Olympic Games in Sydney in 2000, she spent a lot of time with the Belarusian team, where she was very supported. And that is not all, “Irina Leparskaya gave me the road to big sport. In 1998, the European Championship was held in Portugal. I came to it for

she could not give me less as I did well. For this I am very grateful...”

The competition ended with a drawing of awards in separate types for seniors. Our gymnasts have climbed the pedestal more than once. Alina Harnasko won gold in the ball event, silver in clubs, and bronze in hoop and ribbon. Yelizaveta Zorkina received a bronze medal for the ball.

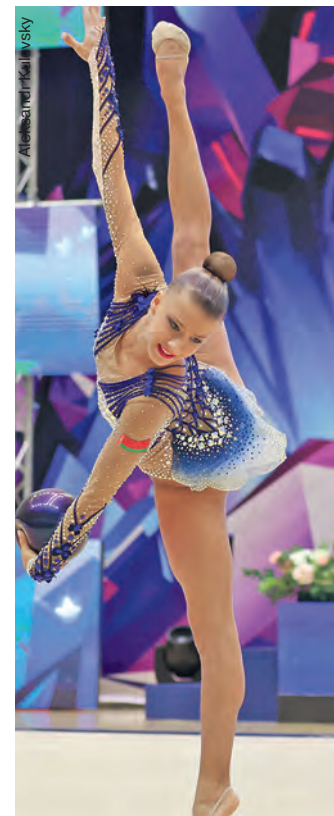
Yelizaveta Zorkina said that for her, the completed competitions are, first of all, a great experience, “I was happy to perform at the 2nd CIS Games, as I was also at the 1st Games in Kazan. This time, however, the competition

was quite different. They were held at home, with a numerous fans — in such an atmosphere, probably, I competed for the first time. It was a pleasure!”

One of the main stars of the Russian team, Arina Averina, also appreciated the reception in Minsk. She won gold in the hoop exercise.

“The tournament turned out to be intense, bright and grandiose. The audience was very supportive, you could feel it. On the last day, especially: there was a real battle, until the last it was not clear who would win. In fact, I didn’t set myself the goal of necessarily winning, but I didn’t want to let the team, coaches, myself down. I wanted to show what I can, to give joy to the audience,” Arina said.

In addition to Alina Harnasko and Arina Averina, Russian Lala Kramarenko won gold in single disciplines — she became the best in the clubs and ribbon exercise.



Yelizaveta Zorkina received a bronze medal for the ball

Schedule of the 2nd CIS Games

Athletic disciplines	FR Aug 4th	SA Aug 5th	SU Aug 6th	MO Aug 7th	TU Aug 8th	WE Aug 9th	TH Aug 10th	FR Aug 11th	SA Aug 12th	SU Aug 13th
3x3 BASKETBALL										
BOXING										
WRESTLING:										
Greco-Roman										
freestyle										
female										
VOLLEYBALL										
HANDBALL										
JUDO										
KARATE										
ATHLETICS										
MINI FOOTBALL										
SWIMMING										
BEACH VOLLEYBALL										
BEACH FOOTBALL										
SAMBO										
MODERN PENTATHLON										
ARCHERY										
SHOOTING										
THAI BOXING										
WEIGHTLIFTING										
FIELD HOCKEY										
GYMNASTICS										
Ceremonies										

● Opening and closing ceremonies ● Preliminaries ● Draw of medals

## The Belarusian medal collection is constantly replenished

Belarusian Greco-Roman wrestlers won four awards. Abubakar Khaslakhonov became the champion of the 2nd CIS Games. Ilya Biteev became a silver medalist, Ilya Meleschik and Pavel Glinchuk won bronze medals. Beach volleyball tournament was held in Molodechno. The medal catch of the Belarusians was as follows: the men’s duet took the bronze, our girls were content with silver. The female couple was one step away from winning awards of the highest dignity.

Belarusian judokas have 9 awards at the Games: Arina Makeenko's silver, as well as bronze medals of Arina Makeenko, Anna Sitnik, Viktoriya Suvorova, Sofia Voropay, Grigory Zurnachyan, Matvey Sychev, Yevgeny Morov and the bronze medal of the team tournament.

Belarusian weightlifters perform excellently. Diana Moiseevich, Yahor Papou and Henadz Laptseu climbed to the top step of the podium. In addition, Alina Shchepanova won silver, and Yekaterina Yakusheva and Ilya Zhernovsky became bronze medallists.

Cheer for our team!





Aleksey Matush

## Photo of the week

Catfish weighing 27 kilogrammes — a record catch by Nikolai Shepetov from Bobruisk at the Big Bard-Fishing festival in the Bykhov District

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

**On August 10th, 1958**, the new city of Soligorsk was founded. The original name is Novostarobinsk settlement. It was erected on the site of the village of Vishnevka in connection with the construction of the first potash plants in Belarus. In 1963, it received the status of a city, since 1965 it has been the centre of the Soligorsk District.

**On August 10th, 1793**, the Louvre opened to the public for the first time as a national art museum. The Louvre is an architectural monument and one of the largest art museums in the world. The building was built as a fortress in 1190. Subsequently, the Louvre turned into a royal residence, and at the beginning of the 18th century, art salons were organised in it. Today the museum's catalogue contains more than 400 thousand exhibits.



**On August 11th, 1988**, the Zdravnevo museum-estate of Repin, branch of the Vitebsk Regional Museum of Local History, was founded in the Vitebsk Region. It was created on the site of the former Zdravnevo estate, which belonged to Ilya Repin. The museum complex



consists of the restored main manor house, the factor's house with office space and an exhibition hall, and a restored cellar. On the territory of the estate, a memorial linden alley has been preserved, where trees grow, planted by the hand of the artist himself.

**On August 11th, 2003**, the 1st International Straw Art Festival opened, bringing together the best straw weaving and appliqué craftsmen from the republic and foreign countries in Minsk.



**On August 11th, 1337**, St. Sergius of Radonezh founded the monastery, which later became the Trinity-Sergius Lavra. This is the largest male monastery of the Russian Orthodox Church with a long history. Located in the centre of the city of Sergiyev Posad, Moscow Region. It is the largest educational and publishing centre of the Russian Orthodox Church. The relics of the founder of the monastery, St. Sergius of Radonezhn are kept in the Holy Trinity Cathedral.



**August 12th** is International Youth Day. It was proclaimed in accordance with the resolution of the UN General Assembly of December 17th, 1999, which approved the recommendations of the World Conference of



Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, August 8th-12th, 1998). It is celebrated to remind about the role of young people in the development and building of the world, and the daily problems that stand in their way.

**On August 12th, 1851**, American tailor Isaac Merrit Singer patented an improved sewing machine. He managed to reduce the cost of a sewing machine and make it affordable for almost every family. Today, the American corporation Singer Corporation continues its activities, being a manufacturer of space and military equipment, as well as sewing machines, electrical appliances, engines, furniture and other products.



**On August 12th, 1981**, IBM released the first personal computer, the IBM 5150, ushering in the era of modern computers. Already in the first year of sales, the number of computers sold exceeded 130,000. And by 2000, 140 million personal computers had been sold. There are about a billion personal computers in the world today. A significant part of the world's population simply cannot imagine their life without smart machines.



**August 13th** is Builder's Day in the Republic of Belarus. The advanced level of construction is an indicator of the development and prosperity of the country.

Today, Belarusian builders are building up micro-districts and reconstructing historical centres, building houses and creating entire architectural ensembles, mastering new heights and 'high-rise buildings', new technologies and materials in order to build solidly, beautifully and for a full due.

**On August 14th, 1893**, the Prefect of Police of Paris, Louis Lépine, ordered that 'certificates of ability to drive a mechanically powered vehicle' be issued in the city. This is how the first ever driver's license appeared.



**On August 15th, 1877**, inventor Thomas Edison first proposed using the word 'Hello' to address the telephone. In Russia, it quickly transformed into 'Алло' [Allo]. The device, later called the 'telephone', was first publicly demonstrated by the American scientist Alexander Bell a year earlier at his Philadelphia World's Fair.