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INTERNATIONAL

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Temple of memory

One of the most prominent, revered and beloved museums in Belarus — the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History — has recently turned 75 years old. A unique exhibition — *Returning Time* — was prepared for the anniversary, featuring military awards, personal belongings and documents of war veterans, as well as paintings.

A total of more than 500 exhibits that have joined the museum archives over the past five years — since the opening of a new building near the Minsk — Hero-City Monument — are on show. → 9



Minsk-Havana: time-tested friendship

The history of relations between Belarus and the Island of Freedom — as Cuba is sometimes called — has a solid foundation. The two countries have everything they need for further development: modern production facilities, advanced experience, technology, as well as political will, mutual understanding and the support of the heads of state. These all were mentioned by Aleksandr Lukashenko while meeting his Cuban counterpart — Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez. The latter visited our country for the first time as President. Mr. Lukashenko emphasised, “You should know that Belarus will always be a reliable and loyal friend and our agreements will always be fulfilled.”



Partnership with a rich history

The proximity of the two states and the mutual interest in friendship and co-operation is also confirmed by the fact that Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez’s visit to Belarus is among the first to other countries after taking office.

Belarus-Cuba relations have been based on solid foundations since Soviet times. There have been economic liaisons, as well as educational and cultural exchanges. As the President noted, it’s the basis upon which modern interrelations should be built. “We are lucky because we do not have to invent anything new. We just need to build on what we have and to keep fulfilling our agreements. Figuratively

speaking, our economies don’t compete or contradict each other. We have a desire to buy what you produce just as you need our products. I think we should have an earnest discussion of these matters, map out new objectives and move forward,” Mr. Lukashenko stated.

On common ideals and tasks

“Cuba has always been and remains an example of courage, perseverance and devotion to its cause,” the President said during the extended-format talks. Mr. Lukashenko noted that Belarus, just like Cuba, condemns the use of unilateral restrictive measures in politics and trade. “We believe that such actions run counter to the law, undermine trust and lead to the escalation of tensions,” he noted.

As regards Belarus-Cuba co-operation, agriculture has always been one of its drivers. “Cuban agricultural producers often come to Belarus and they are always welcome. We are ready to share our best practices, expertise and technology that are of interest to you. This also pertains to farm machinery that has

been well known in the Island of Freedom since Soviet times. Being fully aware of the importance of Belarusian goods for Cuba, we decided to grant loans to finance supplies on exceptionally favourable terms amidst a rather difficult situation. This enabled us to implement a number of interesting joint projects,” Mr. Lukashenko said.

A series of contracts worth over €30m — dealing not only with agriculture — has already been executed. An agreement was signed to supply Belarusian lathes to Cuba and talks are underway to set up a joint venture to produce household appliances. There are good co-operation prospects in the IT sphere. In order to facilitate the uptake of technology, best practices and knowledge, Belarus is improving its education system. The President invited Cuba to utilise the educational potential of the two countries using the principles of complementarity.

On strategic partnership

Mr. Lukashenko noted that the analysis of bilateral trade suggests huge underutilised capacity. “I am convinced that today we

will find ways to remove the existing barriers and to upgrade our economic ties to the level of strategic partnership,” he said, also emphasising that the Minsk talks will help promote Belarus-Cuba dialogue in various fields and will pave the way for new co-operation agreements.

In turn, the Cuban leader invited Mr. Lukashenko to visit the Island of Freedom, noting, “For Cuba, Belarus is a friendly country: a state with which we will always be ready to have fraternal relations.”

Miguel Mario Diaz-Canel Bermudez reminded the participants of the expanded meeting that Cuba is experiencing a difficult situation due to sanctions from the United States. In this regard, he thanked Belarus for its support, adding that his country has the will to expand political and diplomatic dialogue, as well as trade and economic co-operation. “With regard to the political dialogue, I would like to say that we have the same points of view on the main issues of the international agenda. We condemn the threats and unilateral sanctions that some powers are taking against

other countries of the world. We are fighting for peace and for the well-being of our peoples, as well as for sustainable development,” he stressed.

According to the Cuban President, the two countries have great potential in trade and economic exchange. In particular, in the field of health care, biotechnology and pharmaceuticals: Cuba proposes to export its medical services. The country also needs Belarusian technologies and products.

Based on the content of the talks, further dialogue at the highest level on Belarusian-Cuban co-operation will be continued in Havana. By then, the governments of the two countries will present an agreed plan for the development of co-operation.

As a result of the negotiations, five joint documents on collaboration in various fields were signed and the key was the joint statement of the heads of state, which confirms the allied nature of relations between Minsk and Havana.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Measured response to challenges

Aleksandr Lukashenko received leaders of the country’s power bloc with a report at the Independence Palace: the reason for the dialogue was NATO activity at our borders. The event was attended by the State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, Stanislav Zas, Belarus’ Defence Minister Andrei Ravkov and the Chief of the Main Intelligence Department — Deputy Head of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, Pavel Tikhonov.

Situation under control

The Head of State emphasised that he did not see too much danger from the transfer of the American military contingent to Lithuania, but the reaction to the gesture would be proportionate. “The question is that a precedent has been created. Troops have never been so pointedly delivered to our borders from across the ocean... We are simply obliged to respond to such demonstrations. However, we understand that we should not sabre-rattle. We are a peace-loving state. We don’t want to fight. The page of war for the Belarusian people has already been turned. We want peace in this region and in Europe as a whole, in our common home.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that, during the military

reorganisation, four modernisations of the Armed Forces were carried out in sovereign Belarus, taking into account the experience of modern conflict. Hence the confidence in their potential is obvious. “We understood what kind of issues would be created at our borders and what kind of adversary we might face. We have been preparing for this, and therefore thirty tanks are simply ridiculous for our army. We can’t make any movements to resist these people... Yes, we accept the statements of politicians in Europe and America, and of the military — our colleagues — that they are peace-loving people and are not going to fight with us; we hear that. We understand this and accept it, but based on the lessons of the past, our gunpowder should be kept dry. We must respond appropriately to any such actions without provoking aggression.”

There can’t be any secrets

At the same time, the Head of State demanded that the public be widely informed about the decisions taken. “We must clearly tell people how we will respond to this and how much it will cost. And our rivals too.”

The President strongly recommended we do not get involved in wild interpretations of the situation. Everything is open here, “I stress once again

that this brigade is not a rival to our Armed Forces. Frankly speaking, we can deal with them even with our mobile air assault units, which perform the corresponding functions and which I do not want to discuss here. We ourselves have enough strength and means to react to such things. One should not call on the whole world to defend Belarus. We can protect ourselves.”

Protecting NPP

The President drew attention to the fact that the Pabrade training area, where the relevant forces are stationed, is literally a few kilometres from the Belarusian nuclear power plant. “Therefore, one must be more careful here. God forbid, a second Chernobyl. Europe won’t survive it.”

The Head of State noted that Belarus has a good defence of the nuclear power station from the air. “We’ve created a whole anti-air regiment with the latest weapons: the Tor-M2 [anti-aircraft missile system] was recently purchased and transferred there. Our military has mastered this weapon. We also need to think about ground resistance, about ground protection more seriously.”

In conclusion, Aleksandr Lukashenko once again underlined, “We are preparing adequate responses to any movements. And what worries me is a prec-

edent. I would not want troops to be stationed 15km from our borders, no matter what they are.”

Reacting adequately

A little later, Defence Minister Andrei Ravkov told reporters what specific measures the country will take to adequately respond to the deployment of NATO equipment at the Belarusian borders and the holding of NATO ‘Defender 2020 in Europe’ exercises. “These will be measures for arms control, sending inspection teams to the adjacent territory, and strengthening intelligence tasks.”

The Minister specified that measures will be taken to strengthen the Belarusian state border, the number of troops in the Lithuanian area has been increased. In addition to the military component, a number of information and diplomatic measures are also being taken. This, according to Mr. Ravkov, will sharply raise the question of the presence of NATO troops near the Belarusian border.

“As part of the response to these measures, private tactical actions will be carried out in this direction by missile forces, artillery, aviation, motorised riflemen, paratroopers and joint operations with border guards. There are enough measures — both planned and those approved by the Head of State at the meeting,” he added.

Mr. Ravkov also commented on issues of military co-operation with Russia. The Minister said that, next year, the parties planned to revise the plan for the use of the regional group of forces. It will be changed taking



Andrei Ravkov

into account the prevailing situation. So, the military personnel of Belarus and Russia will conduct joint intelligence in connection with NATO exercises.

“These measures are adequate to those events that are currently being held in our neighbouring territory. They will allow us to respond and keep this situation under constant control. As for the public, both international and Belarusian, they should know that the Armed Forces, engaged in their daily activities as planned, will be able to ensure peace and the protection of our people,” noted the Defence Minister.

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Every comfort afforded

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has taken part in the opening ceremony of a new residential home for patients and their carers at the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Oncology and Medical Radiology. Important though it was, the official event was not the most significant point, as the visit of the Head of State to the cancer centre offered a platform for discussion of some of the problems with medical treatment and prospects for its development.

The new boarding house looks superb, with its 118 comfortable single and double rooms, a dining room and a cafeteria, a laundry and sports complex. The ground floor of the new building is to be used for patients attending for examination, including those with disabilities. The first floor is aimed at their relatives and the second floor is to be occupied by students of the training centre which operates at the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre.

It must be said that, prior to the opening of this new building, the problem of patient facilities was acute. Mr. Lukashenko mentioned the situation when relatives of patients coming from other regions were forced to rent expensive accommodation in Minsk. "People were in trouble, while someone was making money from them. It's wrong and unfair. I ordered a hotel to be built so that people can stay the night here and then help care for the patient in the morning. That's why it was built; as a priority!... We must do everything possible to ensure justice for people, this is the point of it," he stressed, also ordering that doctors be

provided with the most modern medical equipment and warning those present that expensive equipment in medical institutions must not stand idle.

The President also spoke of the outflow of personnel from the medical industry. According to Mr. Lukashenko, he is not particularly concerned by the fact that Belarusian doctors migrate to other countries. According to the Health Ministry, the number of doctors in the country today is increasing, so the needs of the domestic health system for specialists in the coming years will be addressed. The Ministry also asserts that the situation with traditionally low doctors' salaries has been changed and it's now possible to influence the problem of retaining personnel in the industry.

"We are not rich but we are not living in poverty. We will adhere to this strategy and, by 2025, our doctors' salaries will double," assured the Head of State. He expressed the opinion that as more high-tech operations are conducted, the more doctors should earn.

The President also inspected the new dormitory complex for medical workers built in Leskovka. He indicated that the

state will respond to the outflow of specialists from the medical sector, including through the construction of such housing. "It is necessary to build such so-called hostels for doctors, nurses and all those who work in hospitals. It will link a person to their hospital, to this land," Mr. Lukashenko said.



The level of medical education is another important factor in preventing the outflow of doctors, and it is impossible to reduce this. The President noted, "In order to keep a doctor, we must give them a good education, not only a decent standard of living and salary. Perhaps it is no bad thing that some go away to study. It is more important for these people not to forget about

their country, to come back and help the state. No one will hold doctors, teachers, engineers or journalists here by force. The world is globalising, migration is intense and people are moving around. We need to deal with people in a civilised way."

The President was informed about developments

in the healthcare system in the country as a whole, as well as about the state and prospects for the development of the Centre. As the Health Minister, Vladimir Karanik, said, the country has managed to reduce mortality rates, which indicates the effectiveness of our health system. At the same time, we are concerned about the decline in the birth rate, caused by the

demographic crisis and changes in attitudes as women begin giving birth later.

Mr. Lukashenko asked whether measures taken to support large families have had an effect. "The trend is positive. The number of large families is growing significantly," Mr. Karanik noted. The Head of State also drew attention to the need to reduce child mortality and care for the health of mothers. "The death of a mother is an extraordinary circumstance. This should not happen in our country," he said.

During his visit to the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Oncology and Medical Radiology, Mr. Lukashenko said how happy he would be if Belarusian doctors managed to find a way to cure cancer. "What a gift to all of us this would be! Although doctors work effectively — 70-75 percent of people live, but 30 percent die. Patients themselves are often to blame for not diagnosing the disease in time. It would be great if we could defeat it. Humankind would breathe more easily. This would be a great present!"

Based on materials of belta.by

Drugs are our common enemy

The situation regarding the distribution and consumption of drugs has been stabilised in Belarus but there are no grounds for self-complacency, said Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko during a meeting focusing on ways to counteract drug distribution and drug prevention measures. Among those attending the meeting were Government members, heads of ministries and the judiciary.

The Head of State stressed that drug control and drug prevention have been discussed at a high level many times over the past five years. "Systemic measures adopted in Belarus in 2014 helped us turn the tide," he said. "We've managed to stop the distribution of synthetic drugs, so-called spice, which were distributed mainly among young people. Criminal liability for illicit trafficking in drugs and psychoactive substances has been significantly toughened."

"As a result, we have stabilised the situation," Mr. Lukashenko said. Over the past five years, the number of drug crimes has decreased 1.5 times, those committed by minors — about 5 times. The number of drug overdose deaths in Belarus is 14 times lower than in Lithuania and 72 times lower than in the United States. The last overdose death of a teenager occurred in 2014.

"However, despite these figures, there are no reasons for us to be complacent. No other country, let alone Belarus, has ever taken such comprehensive measures in drug control and drug pre-

vention. We decided we would return to the issue in about five years, analyse various practices and, if necessary, take additional measures, which we are doing today. Whether we achieve the goal from the first attempt or have to revisit it again, the i's should be dotted by January 1st, 2020," he added.

Taking into account the geographical location of Belarus, drug cartels seek to use our convenient logistics. "Therefore, we must not reduce the pressure on drug traffickers and drug suppliers in general. If we forget about it for a moment, our country will drown in these problems," the President said.



applied primarily to the leaders of organised criminal groups and wholesale drug trafficking chains. It's important to do everything possible to eliminate the criminal network completely — to involve international channels and diverse methods by special agencies, if necessary.

The Criminal Code had recently been amended to allow the courts to be more flexible in sentencing. "People should have no doubts about the fairness and validity of court decisions. The main task of the court is to thoroughly understand the situation and assign the punishment adequate to the circumstances of the case," the President noted.

DIRECT SPEECH

"As long as we fight only the consequences, not the causes, we will not be able to improve the situation fundamentally. The most effective barrier to the spread of drugs is zero-tolerance in society. When there is no demand, there is no supply. We need to promote that."

In order to involve young people in the distribution of drugs, leaders of criminal groups actively use electronic platforms: the dark web and messenger apps. "Teenagers agree to distribute drugs without understanding what they are getting involved in, and then get time in prison. They, of course, become accomplices in the sale and consumption of drugs with all the ensuing consequences," Mr. Lukashenko added.

He stressed that the principle of inevitability of punishment should be

Mr. Lukashenko also asked to ensure employment and support for people released from prison. "They are our citizens and we must help them get back to normal life and prevent them from returning to crime," he said.

The Head of State criticised the measures to prevent drug trafficking and drug addiction which he believes are insufficient. "I have repeatedly said that as long as we fight only the consequences, not the causes, we will not be able to improve the situation funda-

mentally. The most effective barrier to the spread of drugs is zero-tolerance in society. When there is no demand, there is no supply. We need to promote that," the President said.

He also noted that drug addicts are mostly young people who do not fully understand the dangers of drugs. "Therefore, we need to be proactive through educational institutions, healthcare and, of course, families. Increasing anti-drug propaganda among young people is important. Along with traditional media, we need to make full use of social networks and other popular Internet resources," he added.

It's important to determine the next steps in the fight against evil. It's necessary to punish large distributors, to reach producers, to undermine them in social networks and popular messaging services. We should clearly convey the information about the dangers of addictions to potential victims. The Government and society must unite their efforts — in workplaces, educational institutions and in families. The general co-ordinating role is to be played by the Prosecutor's Office and control must be supervised by the State Secretariat of the Security Council.

As a result of the talks, a comprehensive document on further actions to counter the spread of drugs and suppress drug trafficking will be prepared. It will take into account all the proposals and initiatives.

Based on materials of belta.by

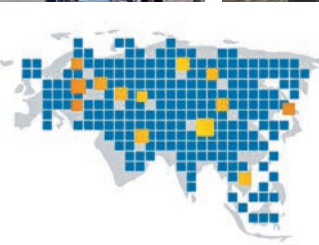


Marta Astreiko



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Business



diplomacy

In late October, the Italian city of Verona hosted the 12th Eurasian Economic Forum. This year, interest in the Verona meeting was particularly high: the event brought together about 1,500 representatives from 41 states — which was not surprising: the issues under discussion were relevant to most people.

By **Marta Astreiko,**
Svetlana Mikhovich

Among the subjects on the agenda were contemporary geopolitics in the Eurasian space, establishment of the economy of co-operation from the Atlantic to the Pacific, challenges in the energy sector, building financial models, further development of the Eurasian infrastructure, ecology, climate change and improvement of the healthcare industry in Greater Eurasia.

The organisers of the event — the Conoscere Eurasia non-profit association, the Roscongress Foundation and the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum — made every effort to ensure that the two-day Verona meeting was not only a platform for exchanging views on sensitive political and social issues but also brought real economic dividends. There were numerous business talks, country, regional and infrastructure presentations. One of the major projects presented in Verona and entitled 'Long Distance Railroad' was a high-speed railway (HSR) between St. Petersburg and Minsk with further access to Western Europe. It

is planned to connect two major seaports: St. Petersburg and Hamburg, also passing through such European capitals as Minsk, Warsaw and Berlin.

Presenting the project, the Deputy Secretary of State of the Union State of Russia and Belarus — Alexey Kubrin — stressed that it takes 13-14 hours now to travel from St. Petersburg to Minsk by rail. If the project is implemented, the time will be significantly reduced and will only take about 2 hours. A separate section of the railroad will also connect Moscow and Minsk. In addition, 7-8 hours will be needed to travel to Hamburg from St. Petersburg and it's assumed that trains will move at a speed of 350-400 kilometres per hour.

The estimated cost of construction of the high-speed railway is 30 billion Euros. The funding will be of a combined nature, including at the expense of own capital, investment and project financing of banks and funds. The business model of the project assumes a corporate nature: an international corporation with approximately equal distribution of the countries' shares in the share capital will act as the operator. It will include Russia, Belarus, Poland and Germany.

The State Secretary of the Union State, Grigory Rapota, in an interview to journalists on the fringes of the forum commented on some interesting points related to the implementation of the project. "Our idea has a fundamentally different business model from those that are being used for other sections of the proposed railroads. We offer to do this at the expense of personal funds and money attracted from businesses. I think we don't use enough business opportunities to implement significant projects, including infrastructure," he said, adding that it's impossible to implement such projects without state participation.

Experts believe that the 'Long Distance Railroad' — if successfully implement-

ed — could become a link between the three integration associations: the Union State, the Eurasian Economic Union and the European Union. In the meantime, the EU — experts said with regret at the forum — by and large, distanced itself from the dialogue with the EAEU, as well as from other integrations in the post-Soviet space.

This situation does not benefit any of the parties: a tangible blow is inflicted on the interests of not only businesses but also ordinary citizens. Professor Antonio Fallico, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Intesa Bank and the President of Conoscere Eurasia (which has been promoting the development of economic relations between European companies and enterprises of the EAEU for many years), is convinced of this. Speaking at the forum, he said, "The need for a dialogue between the EU and the EAEU is due to the current recession in the world economy, which continues to be affected by the economic crisis that broke out in 2007... The EAEU is interested in developing co-operation with the European Union. I want to emphasise that the Eurasian Economic Union is not a political but an exclusively economic alliance that is rapidly developing ties with various partners, with the exception of the European Union." In confirmation, he spoke of the agreements on the establishment of free trade zones between the EAEU and Vietnam, Iran, Singapore. The circle of partners of this integration association will continue to expand.

Mr. Fallico believes that the lack of a dialogue between the EU and the EAEU is primarily due to the sanctions imposed on Russia. The renowned Italian expert called these sanctions unreasonable and illegal, "The main reason for their introduction is to prevent Russia from taking

off economically, but this operation has failed to achieve its goals."

However, there are already some positive developments. Veronika Nikishina, a member of the Board (Minister) for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission, said that the EAEU and the EU agreed to start consultations on customs administration, pharmaceuticals and the digital agenda. "We are very pleased to note the beginning of technical consultations with the European Commission, which we agreed to form on specific issues of interest to business co-operation. There should not be too many of these: customs administration, technical regulation, the single market of pharmaceuticals, digital agenda and traceability of goods," she stressed. Ms. Nikishina also added that European business declares that it is keen not to lose its share in the EAEU market.

Much attention at the forum was paid to the challenges faced by modern global energy, as well as the topic of the dependence of business on the mood of politicians. The speech by the President of the International Foundation for Co-operation, former Prime Minister of Italy — Romano Prodi — aroused great interest among the audience.

According to Mr. Prodi, the modern world is in a special situation where politics slows down the economy. "We are now going backwards, heading towards the fragmentation of world markets. The economy suffers from this because world trade has always played the role of a development driver. It's not stagnant, but the economy is in trouble," he added.

This state of affairs, according to Mr. Prodi, especially affects countries that have based their economies on exports. "Fragmentation is a road to nowhere though I hope that politics will still lead the economy towards development," he stressed.

NEWS IN BRIEF



The Great Stone Chinese-Belarusian Industrial Park has been recognised as the industrial project

of the year in Eastern Europe by EuropaProperty Agency.

The 9th annual EuropaProperty CEE Investment Awards ceremony was held in Warsaw. According to the Head of EuropaProperty, Craig Smith, the agency considers the Great Stone as the most advanced and important industrial site not only in Belarus but also in Eastern Europe. "The Park has demonstrated dynamic development, efficiency of planning and management of large-scale projects from year to year," he noted. "We would like to recognise the Park's achievements in attracting companies from Asia, Russia, Western Europe and the United States."



Belarus' representative — Alisa Manenok — was placed fourth at the International

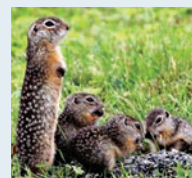
Miss Earth-2019 Pageant.

Nellys Pimentel, from Puerto Rico, was the winner. Second place and title of 'Miss Air' went to American Emanii Davis, while Klara Vavruskova from the Czech Republic won the 'Miss Water' title and third place. The Belarusian beauty was awarded the 'Miss Fire' title. The finals of the 19th International Pageant was held in Manila, the capital of the Philippines, gathering girls from 85 countries to compete for the crown. The *Miss Earth* contest is held under the auspices of the UN and aims to draw attention to humanitarian problems, environmental protection and wildlife protection.



A team from Belarus has become the world champion in international robotics and programming competitions — FIRST Global Challenge 2019, in Dubai.

A total of 189 teams participated in the tournament. Belarus was represented by two schoolchildren and three students. The head of the Robo4U team was a teacher of the Department of Informatics and Methodology of Informatics Lecturing at the Maxim Tank State Pedagogical University — Aleksandr Frantsevich. *FIRST Global Challenge* is an annual international robotics competition organised by the International First Committee Association. This year's competition was called *Ocean Opportunities* and the participants were tasked to clean the ocean of pollutants.



Large colonies of ground squirrels — listed in the Red Book — have been discovered in the Nesvizh District of the Minsk Region.

230 holes were found on a 250 square metre site and the settlement is now viewed as the largest in the country and possibly in Europe. The population of ground squirrels is on the verge of extinction and, according to preliminary estimates, there are only a few thousand of these animals in Belarus. The unusual rodents are extremely fastidious about the landscape: they will only settle in open meadows with low grass and eat mainly grass near their holes. The main danger for these animals is ploughing of unused fields, when many of them are killed.

Alternative energy: green square

The European Commission estimates that 2.8 million new jobs will be created in the renewable energy industry in the EU by 2020. At the same time, the industry in alternative energy sources will create more than 1 percent of GDP. Green energy has good prospects. What does this look like in our country?



The windmills in Novogrudok today are like the Eiffel Tower in Paris. The main attraction is a must-have for selfies but few people know that this wind farm also saves about 5m tonnes of natural gas per year. The Head of the Novogrudok wind farm, Andrey Tiskov, recalls, "It all started in 2011 when the first wind turbine was built. It was a pilot project of Grodnoenergo and everything went well. In 2014, a Presidential decree was signed on the commissioning of the wind farm. The total capacity of the six wind turbines was 9 MW."

In Belarus, the law 'On renewable energy sources' — adopted in 2010 — can be considered the beginning of the development of alternative energy. The document laid down the main principles: sustainable development of green energy, the priority of renewable sources over renewable ones and state support. The President believes that the latter is one of the points of growth. "To build just a plant today is not enough. The world is developing in certain directions, and the pace is frantic. We have managed to do something that will be very important in the future for space, nuclear energy and renewable energy sources. Therefore, it was decided to build a nuclear power plant. These growth points will drive the entire economy of our compact, small European country," he said.

The state support for alternative energy is demonstrated in renewable energy sources that currently produce about 400 MW of electricity. Belarus has 55 photovoltaic power plants, 50 hydroelectric power plants, about 100 wind turbines, 25 biogas complexes and 9 mini CHPPs for wood chips. The most developed of all the renewable resources is solar energy. A fu-

touristic picture is opening up in the Bragin District where 90 thousand solar panels are situated on 40 hectares. This is one of the three photo giants of the country and its capacity is enough to provide almost 4 districts of the Gomel Region with energy. The solar park is already 3 years old, the volume of private investment in it amounts to 24m Euros. During its operation, more than 85m kWh has already

been produced. In addition, green technologies help reduce harmful emissions and increase economic stability in the region.

In the north of the country, money is earned not from the sun's energy but from water. The Vitebsk HPP is the most powerful station in Belarus: its energy can fully satisfy the Vitebsk Region. This joint Belarusian-Chinese project was built by engineers working at the world's largest hydroelectric power plants on the Yangtze and Yellow rivers. It has taken five years to build ours and a cascade of hydroelec-

tric facilities is planned. To support the Vitebsk and Polotsk hydroelectric power stations, the Beshenkovichi and Verkhnedvinsk stations will be built on the main waterway of the northern region.

The Deputy General Director of Vitebskenergo Republican Unitary Enterprise, Vladimir Filippov, explains, "During the first

year of its operation, the Vitebsk hydroelectric power plant saved

about \$11.5m — if we refer to the cost of gas. Jointly

with the Polotsk hydroelectric facility, this figure is close to \$20m per year."

Meanwhile, energy from the bowels of the Earth has been accumulated at the Berestie greenhouse plant. Vegetables here are watered from a thermal spring located directly on the site of the plant — which is one of the largest in the country, supplying vegetables to Brest, its districts and abroad. To cut the bills for payment of water for irrigation and heating, the plant drilled its own geothermal well: at

a depth of one and a half kilometres, the water is always hot and salty. Berestie's main energy specialist, Sergey Pritulchik, is pleased. "As a result, we save \$250,000 a year and about a million cubic metres of gas," he says.

To rebuild the economy on the consumption of electricity and to move away from hydrocarbons were tasks set by the President to the Government. "The era of clean energy is ahead. Coal, natural gas and oil are disappearing. Everyone is guided, for example, not by diesel and gasoline but by electric vehicles. Therefore, we need not just understanding but a clear plan of action — based on the balance of electricity production and consumption. The Government should develop a clear and realistic plan to expand the use of electricity in industry, agriculture, transport, IT sector, housing, household and other areas," said Mr. Lukashenko.

In addition, the construction of a nuclear power plant in Ostrovets is nearing the finish line. The Belarusian nuclear power plant will put our country on a par with such progressive states as South Korea, China and the United States. According to optimistic forecasts of Belarusian experts, by 2030, Belarus will be able to completely abandon the use of hydrocarbons in the energy sector. The Belarusian facility will also be aided by the so-called green square: a combination of environmentally friendly energy sources — such as sun, wind, water and the atom. They will save budgetary funds which can be directed to other needs — like healthcare or social support.

Based on materials of TV News Agency's special project



ECONOMY



High level of mutual trust and respect

By Irina Sergeeva

Belarusian Potash Company and its long-term strategic partner in India — IPL — reach agreement and sign a contract for supply of potash fertilisers to the Indian market at a price of \$280 per tonne CFR

The BPC notes that this agreement will increase demand from Indian farmers and also confirms the general desire of the company and IPL to increase the harmonious and sustainable development of the industry. "The set price not only reflects

the current situation but also creates prospects for activating the fertiliser business in all key regions," said the Belarusian company, adding that the basis of the agreement is a high level of mutual trust and respect.

The Belarusian Potash Company was founded in 2013 and is an exclusive exporter of potash fertilisers produced by Belaruskali. Over the past few years, it has maintained a strong leadership in the global export of potash fertilisers. Over the 6 years of its activity, the BPC has supplied Belarusian potassium to 130 countries.

First among others

Belarusian Gomselmash to demonstrate its innovative product — the 'Palesse GS 4218 CNG' world's first environmentally friendly harvester powered by compressed natural gas

By Natalia Yemelyanova

The unique Gomselmash harvester will be put on display in the exhibition complex Deutsche Messe.

The company announced that, instead of a regular fuel tank, the harvester is fitted with eight gas bottles with a capacity of 1,816 liters. They can contain 400m3 of compressed methane gas. The gas bottles are made of extremely durable carbon fibre which is more reliable than metal. It takes 15 minutes to fully refuel and the amount of gas is enough for an eight-hour shift.

Switching machines and vehicles to gas fuel is a global trend. Gomselmash believes that the 'Palesse GS 4218 CNG' follows global ecological trends: the use of methane as fuel can reduce toxic emissions into the environment by 2-3 times and reduce fuel costs

by 40 percent. The harvester model meets the latest European emission standards Stage V.

It uses a classic format for grain threshing and separation. It is designed to

and other complex agricultural machinery. The company uses the 'Palesse' trademark to market series of grain and forage harvesters, ear



harvest spiked cereals, sunflower, corn, leguminous and cereal crops, colza, and grass seed plants.

The Belarusian Gomselmash holding company is one of the largest manufacturers of agricultural machines. It is one of the leaders on the world market for harvesters

corn harvesters, potato harvesters, mowers, and other agricultural machines. 'Palesse' harvesters are used in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, Czechia, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, Brazil, China, South Korea, the Baltic States, and elsewhere. The company operates an extensive distribution chain, joint ventures and assembly enterprises.

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Aleksandr Kulevsky

Fashion Week in Belarus: educational and eco-friendly

‘Ecology, Responsibility, Conscious Consumption, Recycling’ became the motto of the 19th Belarus Fashion Week which united current world trends, including, as is traditional, those outside the catwalk

By Irina Ovsepyan

The world is struggling to promote ecology and Belarus is at the forefront of the trend — promoting natural fabrics, eco-dyeing and a passion for well-made clothes that can be worn for years. Designer clothes are now acquiring new features, moving not so much to the latest trends but promoting adherence to good quality. In the fashion industry, a linear structure is dominant: ‘to buy, wear and throw away’. Since 2000, the global production of clothing has more than doubled. Every year, we consume about 62m tonnes of clothes, and only 20 percent of these are reused or recycled. In contrast to this, the basic principle of responsible fashion proclaims it’s better to have less but of better quality.

“How do we see the strategic development of Belarusian fashion? A buyer today wants to choose interesting clothes — affordable and technological, with ideological overtones such as environmental protection, cultural as-

pects, the idea of responsible fashion,” believes the founder of Belarusian Fashion Week, Yanina Goncharova.

As part of the Week, a winner of the young designers competition — *New Names BFW*, Ksenia Gest, and Anastasia Yaminskaya (whose ‘Jamido’ workshop uses only natural materials and every article, including dresses and table linen, is handmade) showed their new eco-collections during the *Ethical Fashion Show*. Anastasia, a graduate of the Academy of Arts, decorates each piece of linen with a unique author’s print of natural themes: nettle leaves, seed heads, garden or wildflowers. The designer draws inspiration from Belarusian nature.

The *Belarus Fashion Forum* was dedicated to the theme of ecology, responsibility and recycling and was attended by experts from Russia, Ireland, Sweden and included a delegation of Swedish entrepreneurs. The Ambassador of Sweden to Belarus, H.E. Ms. Christina Johannesson, highly praised the work of the Belarusian

Chamber of Fashion relating to the organisation of the event. She emphasised the great honour of being able to co-operate with Belarusian Fashion Week once again and said, “Fashion is now a broad concept. Fashion and the textile industry, in general, are an integral part of what we call ‘sustainable development’.

It is noticeable how quickly things are developing in this industry and how we, consumers, influence brands today. We are also very happy to participate in the educational part of the event and see collections by Belarusian designers. I personally can add that Belarus is an extremely interesting country in this field, and development here is progressing faster than in many other European countries.”



The Orsha Linen Mill was of particular interest to the Swedish specialists in terms of eco-friendly fabrics and dyeing.

“We are following what is discussed in the field of new materials, for example, and the more sustainable development of the textile industry,” the Ambassador added. “We will closely look for opportunities for further co-operation between Sweden and Belarus, and I am sure we’ll find them.”

Another attraction for consumers was the opportunity to buy products by Belarusian designers at reduced prices: a fully-fledged large-format ‘pop-up shop’ opened as part of the Fashion Week. At the temporary market, everyone could find something original.

A further important focus of the BFW is education for young designers. The organisers devoted three days to training programmes, in addition to the special *Fashion Tech Hub Forum* dedicated to modern technology in fashion.

Rich traditions of national book culture presented in Frankfurt

By Svetlana Yevgenieva

Belarus has taken part in the 71st Frankfurt International Book Fair: the world’s major book fair gathered book lovers, writers and publishing professionals in October

A large team of Belarusians went to Frankfurt — including representatives of various publishing houses and bookselling organisations — to represent over 500 innovations in domestic book publishing, on different themes, with special attention paid to the 75th anniversary of the liberation of Belarus from Nazi occupation and the Year of the Small Homeland. In addition, the stand featured books by German authors in Belarusian — published by Zmitser Kolas.

“A facsimile reproduction of the 1563 Brest Bible published in Belarus to commemorate the 1,000th anniversary of Brest was a very unusual and, there-



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fore, extremely attractive exhibit at the 71st Frankfurt International Book Fair,” said the Deputy Director of the National Library, Ales Sussha. The initiator and co-ordinator of the facsimile edition of the Brest Bible continued, “The publication

immediately attracted the attention of not only thousands of visitors but also famous experts from around the world who study the most unusual, rare and valuable books and negotiate the possibility of buying or obtaining rights to use them.”

“In order to demonstrate the rich traditions of the book culture of Belarus and the modern possibilities of domestic book publishing, two copies of the facsimile edition were delivered to Frankfurt and exhibited in different pavilions designed for different target audiences,” Mr. Sussha added. “One of them is presented by Belkniga at the national stand and convincingly testifies to the level of domestic book publishing. Another is demonstrated in the pavilion of rare and artistic books at the stand of the Segment Publishing House. The latter realised the National Library’s order to produce binding for the facsimile edition.”

The Frankfurt forum is viewed as the most prestigious and large-scale international event not only in the literary and publishing sphere but also in the field of culture in general. It annually welcomes around 300,000 guests and presents about 400,000 books.

Limitless possibilities

The practice of a visa-free stay for foreign citizens in some areas of the Grodno Region has existed for years and the interest in such visits for educational purposes among foreign guests is increasing. 2019 has set the record in terms of the number of visa-free guests to Grodno and the Grodno Region. For the whole of 2018, the region was visited by about 92,000 such tourists. Aleksandr Kuczynski from Bialystok was recently honoured when he became the 100,000th visa-free tourist to Grodno this year. He came to Grodno for the first time as part of an organised group from the Eastern regions of Poland.

By Tatiana Kondratieva

Aleksandr Kuczynski, from Bialystok, was officially welcomed at the Festival Cultural Centre. The Polish pensioner arrived in Grodno as part of an organised group and was pleasantly surprised by the presents: apart from the souvenirs, he was awarded a voucher for two people to attend the Republican Festival of National Cultures which will be held in Grodno next year. Those invited will be warmly welcomed and have an opportunity to visit all the festive venues.

The Pole had many good impressions of the city. "It's a very beautiful place, with its own soul. It's important when a city has its history. Here you have the Neman River, the Old Castle and the Eliza Orzeskova Museum... I also have Belarusian roots: my parents were born in the Vitebsk Region but left for Poland a long time ago. I will definitely take my wife with me to the Festival of National Cultures," he said.

"Today it is very important not simply to invite tourists but also to offer them an interesting object or event and tell them about it in advance. Work in this direction is actively being conducted in the region. Thematic portals operate and interactive maps of museums and bicycle paths are available. Mobile apps about the Avgustovsky Canal, the main roads of the region and nearby attractions

are being constantly added to," said the Deputy Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Victor Liskovich, on meeting the jubilee tourist.

Foreigners have been offered the opportunity to visit Grodno and its surroundings without a visa three years ago. The flow of tourists increases every year. About 250,000 people have taken advantage of this opportunity — including citizens of the 37 countries



Aleksandr Kuczynski

who've come this year alone. Among the leaders are tourists from Lithuania, Poland, Latvia, Germany, Estonia, Italy and France. Foreigners come to Grodno not only to enjoy the sights and history of the city but they are also attracted by event tourism and shopping. Medical and health tourism is also becoming increasingly popular.

One hundred thousand guests have visited in less than a



Grodno is one of the most beautiful cities in Belarus

year; these are visa-free tourists. The Deputy Head of the Department of Sports and Tourism at the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Tatiana Lidyayeva, noted that the present celebrations could have taken place earlier. "Our Polish partners slowed down sending groups in anticipation of the decree which established a vast Brest-Grodno visa-free territory and extended the period of visa-free stays to 15 days. The figures are impressive: in 2018, investments in hospitality, entertainment and recreation amounted to \$18m and increased almost 3.5 times compared to 2017. This is the second best after Minsk," she said.

The decree comes into force on November 10th and, as a result, the visa-free zone of the Grodno Region will be supplemented by five districts. The existing system of guest registration will remain in force but, in addition, single tourists and groups — according to the already proven scheme — will be able to come without a visa to the Berestovitsa, Volkovysk, Voronovo, Lida and Shchuchin districts. Moreover, organised groups coming to the region through tour operators on pre-planned routes will be able to visit all the iconic places throughout the Grodno Region.

Why were these five districts chosen? First of all,



BELTA

it was done to unite two visa-free zones: Brest and Grodno. With this in mind, the Svisloch (previously visa-free) and Volkovysk districts have become a bridge between them. The Shchuchin and Lida districts have huge tourist potential, while the Voronovo and Berestovitsa districts were chosen mainly because of the presence of two checkpoints: Berestovitsa and Benyakoni.

So far, specialists can't predict how much the flow of visitors from foreign countries will grow after the expansion of visa-free opportunities. Previously, the peak of visits was registered during the long holidays in May and on special events. The record was set during the festivities in Grodno when 1,200 visa-free guests came to the city on a single Saturday.

Since the visa-free regime was launched in Grodno and two districts, over 1,000 jobs have been created in the field of recreation and catering. Seven new hotels and hostels, more than 60 restaurants and cafes were opened. The number of stores operating under the tax-free system has grown to 52 (previously, there were 9). Refurbishment of the two largest hotels — Grodno and Belarus — has begun in the regional centre. "So far, accommodation is the weakest point," admits Ms. Ledyayeva. "Grodno hotels are booked for the whole of 2020. If it were not for this lack of accommodation, tour operators would be able to bring a lot more visitors. We need hotels of tourist class. We also lack guides but, in the near future, the development of the tourism infrastructure will be given priority."

INSIDE

Exhibits from France

By Irina Sergeeva

Another project to return historical and cultural values to our country has been implemented thanks to the Embassy of Belarus in France: Mir Castle's collection of hand fans has now been replenished with three more exhibits

Anastasia Danilova, an active representative of the Belarusian diaspora in France, donated three 19th century handmade French fans to Mir Castle's collection. These accessories have never been in our country before, but they all belong to the era when such hand fans of Western European production were used by the Belarusian nobility. The fans — measuring about 30 centimetres — date from about



In Mir Castle

Vitaly Pivovarchik



1880-1890 and are a double sheet of painted fabric with pastoral scenes of life in village and floral patterns. Previously, they were kept in a private collection and were bought to be sent to the castle and now occupy a worthy place in its exposition.

This is not the first project on the return of cultural values to Belarus implemented by the Embassy of Belarus in France jointly with Anastasia Danilova. Earlier, two 17th century tapestries were purchased for Mir Castle. Ms. Danilova has received thanks (during the fan presentation ceremony) from Belarus' Culture Minister for her active work aimed at the development of Belarusian-French cultural relations.

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California fires: emergency situation declared state-wide

California Governor Gavin Newsom has declared a state-wide emergency as wildfires, whipped up by fierce winds, continue to sweep through the area

Some 180,000 people have been ordered to leave homes, with roads around Santa Rosa north of San Francisco packed with cars as people tried to flee. Tens of thousands of homes are under threat from the wildfires.

The biggest blackouts in the state's history have already left a million people without electricity. Power companies are trying to stop damaged cables from trigger-

ing new fires. Another million people have been told they could lose supplies. The main evacuation order encompasses a huge area of Sonoma County, including Santa Rosa. Sonoma has been ravaged by the Kincade Fire, which has burned through 50,000 acres (20,200 hectares) of land, fanned by high winds that have brought gusts of more than 102mph (164km/h).

Some 3,000 people are

fighting fires which have destroyed or damaged about 400 buildings.

The 150-year-old Soda Rock Winery was among the structures destroyed.

There are fears the blazes could cross the 101 highway and enter areas that have not seen wildfires since the 1940s.

Some 43 of California's 58 counties are under 'red flag' warnings. The warning informs firefighting services

that conditions are ideal for wildfires. Fears about the extent of the wildfires led Pacific Gas & Electric to initiate a precautionary blackout.

Kincade was burning in remote, steep terrain, making access difficult, the State Fire Department said. The National Weather Service spoke of a powerful windstorm creating 'potentially historic fire weather conditions' in the region.

EU approves Brexit delay until January 31st

The European Union agreed to a potential three-month Brexit delay that Prime Minister Boris Johnson had vowed never to request, as Mr. Johnson sought a snap election to secure a majority capable of passing his divorce deal

Mr. Johnson, who won the top job in July by vowing to deliver Brexit on October 31st, 'do or die', was driven to request a postponement after he was defeated in Parliament over the ratification of his divorce deal.

The 27 countries that will remain in the EU agreed to put off Brexit until the end of January, with an earlier departure possible should the faction-ridden UK Parliament ratify the separation deal that Mr. Johnson agreed with the bloc.

In a letter to European Council President Donald Tusk, Mr. Johnson reluctantly accepted the delay, saying he had no choice under British law. "This unwanted prolongation of the UK's membership of the EU is damaging to our democracy," he said. "I would also urge EU member states to make clear that a further extension after January 31st is not possible. This is plenty of time to ratify our deal."

While almost all British politicians agree that an election is needed, they want to inflict maximum political damage on Mr. Johnson by preventing his last-minute deal from being ratified before the poll. Mr. Johnson, in turn, is trying to shift the blame for failing to deliver Brexit onto Parliament.

Masterpiece found in French kitchen sells for over \$26m



the 10-inch by 8-inch painting had come from, according to Jerome Montcouquill, which was asked to carry out tests on the painting following its discovery in the summer. "It didn't take long for us to see that it was an artwork by Italian painter Cimabue," he noted prior to the sale. "He's a father of painting so we know his work very well."

Cimabue is the pseudonym of artist Cenni di Pepo, born in Florence around the year 1240. He is known to have been the discoverer and master of Giotto, widely regarded as one of the greatest artists of the pre-Renaissance era.

"There are only 11 of his paintings in the world — they are rare," Mr. Montcouquill said, adding that the work is part of a diptych made in 1280, when the artist painted eight scenes centred on the passion and crucifixion of Christ.

The style of painting, its gold background and traces of its old frame helped experts identify the artwork as part of the triptych, according to a press release published by auctioneers Acteon ahead of the sale. The pictorial layer remains in 'excellent condition' despite accumulating dust.

The National Gallery in London is home to another scene from the work, *The Virgin and Child with Two Angels*, which the gallery acquired in 2000. Another, *The Flagellation of Christ*, can be found at the Frick Collection in New York.

A lost 13th century masterpiece has sold for almost 24.2m Euros (\$26.8m), just months after it was found hanging in a French kitchen

Christ Mocked, by the Florentine painter Cimabue, sold for more than four times the pre-sale estimate at an auction in Senlis, north of Paris.

An elderly French woman from the town of Compiègne had kept the rare artwork — which she thought was a Greek religious icon — in her kitchen. The unsuspecting owner did not know where



Migrants stuck at sea aboard rescue ship 'Ocean Viking'

A French NGO has called on European authorities to designate a safe disembarkation spot for 104 migrants stranded at seas aboard 'Ocean Viking' rescue ship

SOS Mediterranee, which runs the ship along with Doctors without Borders (MSF), said among those aboard are two pregnant women and 41 children younger than 18.

"Their anxiety is growing," said Jay Berger, MSF's project co-ordinator aboard the 'Ocean Viking'. "They're unsure of what's going to happen to them next."

On October 18th, the 'Ocean Viking' picked up 104 people aboard an inflatable boat in distress 50 nautical miles off the Libyan coast.

Libyan authorities say they assigned the port of Tripoli as a safe disembarkation site for the refugees,

a statement subsequently refuted by SOS Mediterranee.

Italian and Maltese authorities have not yet replied to requests by the group to allow the ship to dock.

Migrants attempting to reach Europe in recent years have mainly been fleeing wars and poverty in the Middle East, Asia and Africa. Dozens have also been killed trying to make the Mediterranean crossing.

Confirmed deaths on the three main Mediterranean migratory routes in the first nine months of the year were 994, according to the IOM. The number is the lowest recorded since 2014. It is not because of an improvement in safety conditions but rather a reduction in the number of people attempting to cross, the IOM said.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Yury Mozolevsky

Stored eternally at the museum

Recently, one of the most significant, revered and beloved museums in the country — the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History — turned 75. The opening of a special exhibition — *Returning Time* — is the culmination of the celebrations. The museum staff agreed to tell us more.

By Galina Ulitenok

The *Returning Time* temporary exhibition features over 500 rare items from the 5,000 which the museum has received over the past five years: since the opening of its new building on July 2nd, 2014.

The exposition consists of two parts: ‘Pages of History’ and ‘The Museum Today’. “We see a real dialogue between the past and the present here,” explains the curator of the exhibition, leading researcher and museum veteran, Natalia Filippovich, adding, “We have collected authentic items in a realistic environment. Everyone has their own memory of the war, their own pain and their own experiences.” For good reason, the stylised pages of a family album have been chosen for the design of the exhibition. After all, almost all the exhibits the museum received came from individuals. Rarities were carefully kept for decades — initially, by war veterans and witnesses and, later, by their heirs who eventually decided to present them to the museum.

The *Returning Time* show features some truly unexpected exhibits: i.e. the field uniform of a soldier from the Irish brigade of the Royal Irish Fusiliers who participated in the battles of WWII as part of the allied forces, which was specially prepared for the Belarusian museum by three museums in Northern Ireland.

For many years, Belarus has kept artefacts that have become mute witnesses of military battles, the heroism of soldiers and tragedies of civilians. This is what the archaeological objects found in Nesvizh — where more than a thousand people shot in October 1941 were buried — and items that reveal the tragedy

of the Trostenets death camp’s prisoners can tell us. The installation of the field army hospital presents rare items representing the war-time medical service.

The emotional impact of the exhibition is enhanced by a collection of paintings and drawings by the Belarusian artists who witnessed the war, as well as by photos shot by military photographers Aleksandr Ditlov and Yevgeny Podshivalov. The series is completed by exhibits from a separate unique museum archive: these are presents from foreign delegations.



Natalia Filippovich

“We are very grateful to everyone who has agreed to give their family relics associated with the Great Patriotic War to the museum; at present, these are artefacts from the whole Belarusian nation. We are grateful to collectors, for they are also ready to part with some of their treasures — most importantly, at no cost. We understand how difficult it is for many to take such a step. However, the memory of the war is our common memory,” the chief custodian, Svetlana Potupchik, notes. “You know, it would seem that so many years have passed since the war and several peaceful generations have been replaced, but our people are still deeply touched by everything

related to the theme of the Great Patriotic War. Until now, the war has not let us forget it. Amazing stories are still heard.”

Live stories: returning awards

Dmitry Vorobiov brought a ‘Golden Star’ of a Soviet Union hero — which he discovered in June 2010 in the Minsk District — to the museum. The medal belonged to guard lieutenant Boris Mikhailov, a troop commander of the 1496th fighter anti-tank artillery regiment of the 3rd guards tank corps at the 5th tank army of the 3rd Belarusian Front. Mr. Mikhailov participated in the liberation of Belarus and died on July 3rd, 1944. He was awarded the ‘Golden Star’ earlier, on January 10th, 1944 for participation in the fighting in the Kiev Region in October 1943.

As stated in a letter written to Boris’ mother by his front-line friend, during his last battle, lieutenant Mikhailov joined a group of submachine gunners to cut off the retreat of the enemy column and managed to repel several counterattacks. Sadly, the forces were unequal: Boris’ subordinates were killed and he was seriously wounded. The Nazis finished off Boris with a single shot and tore off the medals from his tunic, including the ‘Star’. Perhaps the enemy soldier who stole the medal was killed or lost it: after 65 years, the Belarusian land has returned the hero’s gold.

The grateful memories of the defenders of our Fatherland shows not just words but actions which sometimes become true heroism. Come to the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History and get personally involved. Its temporary exposition — *Returning Time* — is open until the end of 2019.

FACTS

The Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History is located in a semicircle on a hill on Pobediteley Avenue near the Minsk — Hero-City Monument — forming the Geroev (Heroes) Square. It consists of four blocks, symbolising the four years of war. They are united by the ‘Road of War’ exhibition gallery. The main role is given to the central facade of the building which recreates a symbolic salute of Victory on May 9th, 1945. Its rays feature ten significant events of the war — including defence of the Brest fortress and hoisting of the Victory banner over the Reichstag. At the same time, the rays of the searchlights symbolise the rays of glory.

- **15,000** square metres are the total area of the museum.
- Over **154,000** museum objects and scientific-auxiliary materials are kept at the museum.
- **4,200** square metres are occupied by the permanent exhibition.
- **10** halls of the exposition crown the Victory Hall, with a banner over a glass dome.
- **30** collections are kept at the museum, with all artefacts and scientific-auxiliary separated. Of particular value and significance are the collections: *Handwritten Magazines* and *Self-Made Weapons*. Since 2009, they have had the status of historical and cultural value items of the first category.
- **65** hectares are covered by the Pobeda (Victory) Museum and Park Complex which is located near the museum.

DIRECT SPEECH



Director of the Belarusian State Museum of the Great Patriotic War History, Vladimir Voropayev:

Our museum is a temple of memory, a place that enables anyone to realise the value of the peace. We aim to show visitors what the Great Victory cost and what future generations must do to ensure that such events never happen again. Many people are trying to rewrite history nowadays, and our museum works to convey the truth about the war. Our collections contain unique rarities. Each of these items is dear to us.

Over the past 5 years, the museum was visited by representatives of more than 100 countries, with Russia, China, the USA, the UK, Turkey and Germany in the lead. We have lots to show and tell people. Everyone, after visiting our museum, begins to realise the depth of the tragedy and heroism of the Soviet people manifested during the war.



Aleksey Stolyarov

Five reasons to visit Disna



Belarus' smallest town, with a population of around two thousand people, was first mentioned in the chronicles in the 11th century as a stronghold of the Polotsk Principality

By Kristina Khilko

Covering the way of the Vikings

The town originated on the peninsula where the River Disna flows into the Zapadnaya Dvina River. A thousand years ago, the legendary road 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' ran through the settlement. Vikings used dragon ships full of weaponry, furs and amber, to get from Scandinavia to Constantinople, and brought back wines, spices and decorative items. Disna was one of the stopping places on the way. It's no accident that it has become a busy trading centre and now the exotic 'Varangian way' is enjoyed by tourists, who use it for sailing in canoes, boats and rafts.

There was also a castle here, which was standing in the time of Ivan the Terrible but fell to Napoleon's troops. Only the impressive defensive earthworks are left, preserving the memory of former battles.

The town also has its wonders, with thousands of pilgrims visiting the white-snow Holy Resurrection Church, where they ask for protection and patronage from the miraculous icon of the Mother of God, Hodegetria.

Driving along the oldest bridge

It's unforgivable to be in Disna and not take a ride on a ferry. Even the coat of arms of the town has a wooden boat with a white flag depicted as cleaving through the water. There are only five such ferry crossings in Belarus. A huge 'raft' follows a strict schedule from 7am to 8pm, like a Swiss watch. The exotic vessel takes a crowd of tourists on board, as well as five or six passenger cars and takes ten minutes to get to the opposite bank of the Zapadnaya Dvina River.

One can also cross the river via a more traditional method, using Belarus' oldest bridge.



Disna's miraculous icon of the Mother of God Hodegetria guards the town and its residents

This one-hundred-year-old miracle of engineering thought has undergone the trials of time, wars and natural disasters. At present, this arched bridge is a favourite place for newly-weds and its banisters are full of heart-shaped padlocks — a symbol of eternal love.

Rushing like the wind through the swamp

Europe's largest upland swamp in its primeval state is located some 30 minutes' drive from the town. The Yelnya bog is more than 9,000 years old and this area of two hundred square metres is a natural habitat for



hundreds of species of marsh plants and animals, registered in the Red Book. It's home to dwarf birch, while in autumn, points of 'red gold' burn in the moss — cranberries. Experienced people know that cranberries can be collected until the frosts: they don't lose their vitamins but, on the contrary, become even sweeter.

Yelnya is also a nesting place for rare birds: white grouse, curlews and white-tailed eagles. It's no surprise that those keen on birdwatching regularly come

here. Aren't you experienced in ornithology? No problem at all. The reserve's employees will show you the birds. Do you want something more exciting? Then you should order an extreme excursion on the gigantic marsh buggy that will drive you through the swamp.

Walking through 'movie' town

Disna looks like a European town from the time of the French Revolution, with ancient merchants' buildings, magnificent

churches and stone-paved streets called 'brukavanki' it looks like a scene from a festive postcard. It's not surprising, as the central square was built in the 16th century using the design of the German architect, Hedemann. Due to its charm, style and wonderful 19th century features, Disna has long been known as a 'movie' town, with such classical films as *The State Border*, *People on the Marsh*, *The Black Birch Tree*, *A Bus Driver* and *The Witness* being shot here.

Finding 'Grinlandia' country

Did you know that famous writer Aleksandr Grin has Belarusian roots? His father — nobleman Stefan Grinevsky — was born in Disna. For his participation in the rebellion of 1863 he was sent to the Vyatka Province where, in 1880, the would-be author of *She Who Runs on the Waves* and *Scarlet Sails* was born. The story and film based on it, continue to excite young girls' hearts even now.

The red-brick house of the Grinevsky family is still in remarkably good condition. Though Aleksandr Grin has never stepped across the threshold, the building has been well-preserved.

Yelnya Reserve is a paradise for those keen on nature; there are about a hundred reservoirs in the neighbourhood which are a part of huge Belarusian Poozerie



Congratulations, Arina!

Arina Sobolenko of Belarus, occupying 14th place in the world ranking, became the winner of the Women's Tennis Association tournament in Chinese Zhuhai

By Olga Korneeva

In the first game of the decisive match between Arina Sobolenko and the world number ten, Dutch Kiki Bertens, the rivals successively won points on their serves and only in the tenth game did the Belarusian athlete manage to take her opponent's serve and win — 6:4. She held the second set confidently, winning — 6:2.



Arina hit three aces and took three breaks, having twice made a mistake when serving. Kiki missed an ace three times and made four double faults. The meeting lasted 1 hour 15 minutes. Their personal meeting score is now 4:2 in favour of Bertens.

On the way to the final, Arina Sobolenko beat Greek Maria Sakkari (ranked 22nd in the WTA) — 6:3, 6:4, Belgian Elise Mertens (18) — 6:4, 3:6, 7:5 and Czech Karolína Muchová (placed 26th) — 7:5, 7:6.

For Sobolenko, this is the fifth championship title in tournaments under the WTA, with four earned in competitions held in China.

President Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated Arina Sobolenko on her victory in the final of the tournament, wishing her success in the future.

Kickboxers show class



Belarusian athletes have won 9 medals at the WAKO World Senior Kickboxing Championships, held at the end of October in Sarajevo (Bosnia and Herzegovina)

Belarusian Artem Vinnik (weight category 60kg) claimed gold. In the first match, he beat the Polish athlete. In the next bout, the Belarusian was stronger than his opponent from Kazakhstan and, in the semi-finals, he defeated the Russian athlete, and in the finals — the boxer from Turkey. Silver medals were claimed by his teammates Ivan Ganin (54kg) and Pavel Shelest (81kg).

In addition, Belarusian athletes Kirill Vorobey (51kg), Sergey Shmargun (63.5kg), Yevgeny Lashevsky (81kg), Zakhar Trofimov (over 91kg), Piotr Romankevich (over 91kg) and Lyudmila Chislova (48kg) all earned bronze medals.

The world forum was attended by 754 athletes from 58 countries.

Luck is a reward for courage



Our team of military athletes returned from Chinese Wuhan, which hosted the 7th CISM World Games 2019, with an impressive medal haul. More than 90 soldiers competed across 12 sports and won 14 medals: 4 gold, 2 silver and 8 bronze. As a result, the national team of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus was placed 13th in the team event. In total, 9,300 army athletes from 109 countries around the world gathered in Chinese Wuhan, competing in 27 sports.

By Ilya Krasovskiy

The 7th Military World Games was the largest in the history of the event. They were officially opened by President Xi Jinping. The CISM World Games is an Olympiad for active servicemen. The first Games took place in 1995 in Rome: the tournament dedicated to the 50th anniversary since the end of World War II. Since then, the summer Military World Games have been held every four years and, since 2010, winter Games have also been added. The Military World Games adopted many other traditions from the Olympics: for example, on the eve of the competition, the torch relay takes place and, during the opening ceremony, athletes parade, with each team led by a standard bearer. This year, this honourable mission was entrusted to our Olympic shooting champion, retired Colonel Sergey Martynov. The squad also included famous athletes: European athletics champion Olga Mazurenok, winners of the 2nd European Games — Maksim Nedosekov, Dmitry Asanov and Marina Slutskaya. By order of the Defence Minister, Olga Mazurenok and Marina Slutskaya were awarded the military rank of lieutenant. They received epaulettes directly on arrival, alongside bread and salt. In total, 67 Olympic champions and winners of world championships took part in the Games.

In an important international sporting event, army athletes clinched

gold in judo in the under 100kg weight category, women's 100m hurdles, and boxing in the under 64kg category. The women's archery team also took gold. Silver was earned in freestyle wrestling in the under 97kg weight category and 50km men's walking event. Our athletes also took bronze in women's parachuting (individual competitions in landing accuracy), women's wrestling in weight categories under 50kg

stages in preparing army athletes for the Olympic Games in Tokyo in 2020. The Games were very useful in taking place in the same climate and time zone as the Japanese capital. Immediately on arrival, our athletes tested the sports facilities and toured the unique sports infrastructure. In addition to traditional Olympic sports, the World Military Games programme includes special military-applied disciplines,



This sporting event is one of the stages preparing army athletes for the Tokyo Olympic Games in 2020

and 62kg, Greco-Roman wrestling in weight category under 97kg, in modern pentathlon individual classification, middle weight boxing and diving from a 3m springboard.

Belarus' First Deputy Chairman of the State Institution Sports Committee of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus, Kirill Chupris, told *The MT* correspondent that the military counted on a good result, "We consider this sporting event as one of the

such as parachuting and military pentathlon. The backbone of the parachuting team — members of the Special Operations Forces — skilfully practiced dome acrobatics exercises and jumping for accuracy. In addition, the pentathlon disciplines, which included jumping and fencing, added to the romanticism of the military history.

The CISM World Games set 7 world records and beat 85 records of the International Military Sports Council.

Three major symbols in one



Organising Committee for 2024 Olympic and Paralympic Games unveils new logo in Paris

The logo is a round gold medal depicting a white flame which features a woman's face with golden curls. The new design brings together three iconic symbols connected to sport, the Games and France: the gold medal, the Olympic and Paralympic flames, and Marianne — the symbol of the country. For the first time in the history of the Games, the emblem will be common to both the Olympic and Paralympic Games.

Bronze at tournament in Japan

Belarusian gymnasts Yekaterina Galkina, Alina Gornosko and Darya Tkacheva, who defended the colours of Dinamo Minsk, won bronze in the team all-round competition at the prestigious AEON CUP-2019 international tournament in Japan

Dinamo Minsk posted a final result of 237,400 points, behind the Ukrainian gymnasts from the Deriugina School (240,600). The champion title was retained by the Russian team Gazprom (251,900), in which, apart from the Averin sisters, Sofia Agafonova also performed.

In the individual all-around event for the younger age group, Darya Tkacheva finished 4th with a score of 72,100, losing to Italian Sofia Raffaeli (79,500), Nikol Krasiuk from Ukraine (74,300) and Sofia Agafonova (72,600).

In the adult competition, Yekaterina Galkina gained 83,950 points in total and was just a step away from the medals podium. Belarusian Alina Gornosko finished the tournament in 8th position.



Photo of the week

Minsk's Central Botanical Garden hosts Celtic culture festival — *Samhain 2019* — seen by Celts as the day when autumn turns to winter

EXHIBITIONS

NATIONAL HISTORICAL MUSEUM

12 Karl Marks Street
Until 6th November. *Old and New: 18th Century Russian Jewellery Art*

NATIONAL ART MUSEUM

20 Lenin Street
Until 24th November. *Nadya. Devotion to 115th anniversary of Nadezhda Khodosevich*
Until 19th January. *Oman: Pearl of the East. Handicraft Legacy*

NATIONAL LIBRARY OF BELARUS

116 Nezavisimosti Avenue
Until 7th November. *September 17th 1939: You Are From Western and I'm From Eastern Belarus*
Until 10th November. *Doll Stories*
Until 15th November. *Constellation of Images*

MIKHAIL SAVITSKY ART GALLERY

15 Svobody Square
Until 17th November. *Summer Tales*
Until 19th. January. *Lady's Articles*

YANKA KUPALA LITERARY MUSEUM

4 Yanka Kupala Street
Until 5th December. *I'm Free in My Spirit*

NATIONAL CENTRE OF CONTEMPORARY ARTS

3 Nekrasov Street
Until 10th November. *Presence*
Until 1st December. *Art of Live Fire* — based on results of 16th International ART-ZHYZHAL Ceramics Open Air Worksop

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN CINEMA HISTORY

4 Sverdlov Street
Until 8th December. *Solaris. Donatas Banionis*

ZAIR AZGUR MUSEUM-WORKSHOP

8 Zair Azgur Street
Until 23rd November. *Seven Sins*

MUSEUM OF BELARUSIAN NATURE AND ECOLOGY

12 Karl Marks Street
Until 12th January. *Dangerous Beauty*

VILNIUS

55 Kalinousky Street
Until 1st December. *Pictorial Art by Dmitry Mshar*

TROITSKY SUBURB

7A Bogdanovich Street
Until 12th January. *Best Toys from USSR*
Until 12th March. *Robo Art*

THEATRES

BOLSHOI OPERA AND BALLET THEATRE OF BELARUS

1 Parizskoy Kommuny Square
06.11. Oh, Offenbach, Offenbach, Offenbach...
12.11. Lady's Images
14.11. Anna Karenina

MAXIM GORKY THEATRE

5 Volodarsky Street
06.11. Oscar and Pink Lady
12.11. He and She
13.11. Summer Residents

YANKA KUPALA THEATRE

7 Engels Street
06.11. Elza's Land / School of Taxpayers
08.11. Two Souls
09 and 13.11. Prudok Radio
09 and 10.11. Black Lady of Nesvizh
10.11. ART
12.11. Kupala Night Dream
13.11. Local Cabaret
14.11. Future-Tellers

YOUTH THEATRE

17 Kozlov Street
06.11. The Fool
08.11. Love of Three
09.11. Warsaw Melody
10.11. Hotel of Two Worlds / Zhmurik
12.11. A Very Simple Story
13.11. Family Weekend / Lesson of Love. Kosciuszko's Story
14.11. Playing Happy Family

BELARUSIAN DRAMA THEATRE

44 Kropotkin Street
06.11. Belarus. Didactics
08.11. Concrete
09.11. If There Is No Tomorrow
10.11. Medea's Syndrome
12.11. Hunting for Self
13.11. Suffering from Common Sense
14.11. Doctor Raus' Career

THEATRE-STUDIO OF CINEMA ACTORS

33 Masharov Avenue
06 and 08.11. Battlefield
09.11. Jubilee / Proposal
10 and 12.11. False Note
13.11. A Very Simple Story
14.11. Even a Wise Man Stumbles

MINSK CONCERT HALL

5 Oktyabrskaya Street
06.11. Henpecked Husbands
06.11. Show of Jurymen
08.11. Mysterious Weekend
09.11. The Same Place, the Same Time
12.11. Love Is Not Potato: It Cannot Be Thrown Out

BELARUSIAN ARMY THEATRE

3 Krasnoarmeiskaya Street
07.11. Last Ardent Lover
08.11. Star Hour
09.11. About Theatre With Smile
13.11. Three Sisters
14.11. Do Not Leave Me