



Orsha will become the first smart city in the Republic



The country honours and awards doctors who fought against the coronavirus



INTERNATIONAL

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Masters of the Glubokoe House of Crafts — Yelena Mikhailovskaya and Artem Fomin — are among the *Cherry Festival* guests

## Cherry capital of Belarus

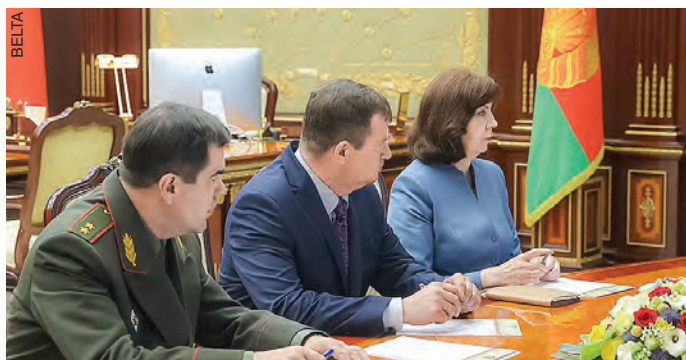
The traditional international *Cherry Festival* was held in Glubokoe, Vitebsk Region. Over the years, the event has become a vibrant and delicious calling card of the city. The organisers have succeeded in amazing both residents and guests of the festival with previously unknown scale and local flavour. The city virtually lived with the festival — enjoying a theatrical procession with the participation of the Cherry Queen, the ‘cherry wedding’, courtyards with cherry delicacies, quests, auto and motorcycle shows, a cherry open air and cherry snail race. Thousands of guests appreciated the event which became a bridge of friendship between countries and peoples.





# President meets Security Council members

Last week, Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko called an urgent meeting of the Security Council. The Head of State was informed about the situation concerning the detention of more than 30 representatives of a foreign private military company in Belarus. He said, "I've invited you to look into the matter, one might say, emergency that happened tonight. There is no other word for it."



KGB Chairman Valery Vakulchik, State Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus Andrei Ravkov, Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic Natalia Kochanova

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked KGB Chairman, Valery Vakulchik, to describe the situation in more detail, noting, "I've been looking at how the Russians respond to it. As they make excuses, they go nearly as far as saying we've brought them here on our own. It is clear they need to justify their bad intentions in some manner. This is why I would like to ask you that everything must be extremely sincere and honest in this situation with regard to this fact. If those are Russian citizens (as far as I can understand they've been questioned), it means we should immediately contact the relevant authorities of the Russian Federation so that they can explain what's going on."

After the meeting, the State

Secretary of the Security Council of Belarus, Andrei Ravkov, shared some details of the talk with journalists. He announced further measures to be taken in response to the detention of members of the Wagner foreign private military company near Minsk.

Mr. Ravkov said that participants of the session had discussed a number of matters concerning national security. "As many as 32 people — Russian citizens, who belong to Wagner's private military company — were apprehended in a sanatorium near Minsk on Belarusian territory in the morning. They are now being questioned. Another person was apprehended in the Gomel Region," he said, adding, "If personnel of a private military company were

to be redeployed somewhere, and via Belarus at that, it is likely that some security agencies would have provided certain explanations — since it's a very serious matter. However, in this case, neither the FSB [Federal Security Service], nor GRU [Main Intelligence Directorate], nor some other agency has provided any information."

During the Security Council session, the Head of State set a number of tasks for components of the national security system. Some of them focus on the work of Belarus' Foreign Ministry, in particular, the organisation of queries and the invitation of ambassadors of the Russian Federation and Ukraine for explanations and discussions.

"According to the information available now, after questioning these people, about 14 of them are people on the watch list and have been to Donbass," the State Secretary of the Security Council said.

In addition, the State Border Committee of Belarus will beef up border security. "Including the Belarusian-Russian border as part of the efforts to track the situation and the people that cross the state border, including the green border. These assets will be considerably increased," Mr. Ravkov noted.

The President also drew attention to the security of public events, including those relating to the election campaign. Regarding this, Mr. Ravkov stated, "Stronger control of access to venues of public events, stronger security, checks of people. Because as far as the organisational structure of the people that have been apprehended is concerned, we can clearly see snipers, demolition experts, IT specialists. A number of measures of organisational nature will be taken bearing it in mind to ensure security."

He summarised, "All subsequent information that we'll receive will be communicated in a timely manner, and the public will be informed."

The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Russia to Belarus, Dmitry Mezentsev, and the Minister-Counsellor, Acting Head of the Ukrainian Embassy in Belarus, Piotr Vrublevsky, were invited one by one to the Foreign Ministry. "The Russian side has been given substantive information about a group of Russian citizens, who were detained by law enforcement agencies in Belarus a day before, who belong to the so-called Wagner private military company," the

Ministry noted, adding that "the Russian Ambassador has been asked for detailed explanations regarding the goals and other aspects of the arrival and stay in our country of this organised group of persons, many of whose members have proven combat experience".

"Taking into account the confirmed information on the participation of a number of detainees in combat activities in Donetsk and Lugansk regions of Ukraine as well as the Ukrainian origin and Ukrainian citizenship of some of them, Piotr Vrublevsky was asked to provide the relevant information for a comprehensive analysis and assessment of the reasons for their presence in Belarus," the Foreign Ministry's press service said.

Taking into account this alarming fact, as well as the ongoing election campaign in Belarus, an agreement has been reached with the Ukrainian side to intensify co-operation between border agencies and strengthen the border control in order to prevent destabilisation of the situation in the both countries.

Based on materials of belta.by

## Reasons and consequence

The situation with the previously detained Russians from a private military company is under the special scrutiny of Belarus' President. Aleksandr Lukashenko heard reports on the matter from KGB Chairman, Valery Vakulchik, and Chairman of the Investigative Committee, Ivan Noskevich.

Addressing the military officials, the Head of State said, "Many facts (reported to me in a written form) are interesting. I can see that our senior neighbours have gone quiet on the matter. They are no longer insisting that they actually sent these men to Istanbul. There was no Istanbul in their plans, as the investigation shows. It is clear that this group had different goals. The task of the investigators is to find out what they were."

### An attempt to sweep the issue under the carpet

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked that the detainees be treated with care. "They are guilty, of course, but not so much as to take any harsh measures against them. They are soldiers. They got an order and embarked on its implementation. We have to deal with those who made the order, who sent them here."

The President outlined his understanding of the situation. According to him, this was the first group of 180 or 200 people who were planned to be re-

located to Belarus. "I have read the report, it is accurate data. An attempt to sweep the issue under the carpet in Russia by saying that they had previously agreed the arrival of this group with us is complete nonsense," he added.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the relevant agencies of the two countries always co-operate, no matter what events are held in Belarus with the participation of Russian military — either former or acting. "Only the President can give permission for military personnel to visit Belarus, either with equipment or without equipment, airplanes, helicopters, etc... Nobody has given any permission. Moreover, we have serious suspicions about the goals the group was planning to fulfil," said the Head of State.

He stressed that the truth must go public. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, our country is open to interaction with our neighbours. He stated, "We will not build a policy on lies. We will not solve the issue by shouting at each other in the media. Therefore, if



Palace of Independence

anybody from Russia has a desire to get additional information, we are always open. We are not hiding anything, but we need the truth."

### Inconsistencies registered

The investigation draws attention to inconsistencies in the testimony of the detained Russians from a private military company in Belarus. The relevant facts were announced by the Chairman of the Investigative Committee, Ivan Noskevich, in his speech to journalists.

Based on the totality of information received about the suspicious behaviour of these people, a decision was made to detain them, and subsequently to initiate criminal proceedings. Ivan Noskevich explained, "In addition, to confirm the conclusions about the rather strange behaviour of these people, the investigation received information from the phones of the detainees that they are expecting several more groups of their colleagues — citizens of the Russian Federation. Moreover, we have received information that

almost all of them have a serious combat history. They fought in Eastern Ukraine. Almost all belong to Wagner's private military company. Clearly, other decisions regarding all these citizens, other than detention and taking other procedural measures, were not actually intended."

All the detainees are currently being investigated and questioned in the presence of lawyers. "During interrogations, they give the most contradictory statements. In particular, less than half of them state that the group allegedly intended to move from Minsk to Istanbul by air and the others speak of completely different destinations: other countries, not only Turkey," Mr. Noskevich said, adding, "As for those who allegedly planned to go to Turkey, they also have different goals for getting to this country: some say they wanted to sunbathe and relax, some — to allegedly protect certain objects, and some — to visit the Hagia Sophia."

Based on materials of belta.by





## Phone conversation

Lukashenko and Vučić discuss prospects of Belarusian-Serbian relations by phone

A telephone conversation between President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko and President of Serbia Aleksandar Vučić took place on July 30th. The main topic of discussion was the Belarusian-Serbian relations at the

current stage and in the future. In particular, it was noted that there are all the necessary conditions in place to transform in practice a high level of political contacts into real economic indicators. In this regard, the parties are awaiting for

the end of the electoral campaign in Belarus in order to meet and agree on future joint work and projects. Aleksandar Vučić also inquired about the health of the Belarusian leader, giving his best wishes.

# Maintaining and ensuring safety



Aleksandr Lukashenko gave instructions that support be given to election commissions and care taken to ensure the safety of their work. He stated this at a working meeting with Natalia Kochanova and Viktor Sheiman.

Presidential elections peacefully in our country. However, ensuring security at every polling station is our sacred duty," stressed the Belarusian leader. "You see what is happening. Let them shout and make noise. There should be no excesses. They must not be able to criticise us for the fact that we use the moment to restrict others elsewhere. There is a law, there must be election campaigning and all work must be according to this law."

Addressing the Head of the Presidential Affairs Office, Viktor Sheiman, the Head of State noted that every possible support should be provided to the election commissions. "I spoke about

this at the beginning of the election campaign, not only to the Central Election Commission (material assistance, some other kind), but also to clarify locally. Perhaps people need some kind of help. We need to contact the governors," asserted the Head of State.

"Viktor Vladimirovich will be responsible for the material part while Natalia Ivanovna — for the organisational part. Check with Lidia Yermoshina [Head of the Central Election Commission] what kind of support she needs. If you need me to get involved, please inform me urgently," concluded Aleksandr Lukashenko.

"Natalia Ivanovna, I ask you — as the chief of staff of our election campaign — to talk to the governors. Specify what kind of support, alongside material resources, they need. I ask you to

pay special attention to this, and Viktor Sheiman can also help in this regard: to ensure security at polling stations. Because I receive more and more information that they do not want to hold

# Efficiency and prospects

Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko held a working meeting with the Chairman of the State Control Committee, Ivan Tertel

Aleksandr Lukashenko identified two points. The state of affairs in the State Control Committee was one of them. The President asked Ivan Tertel, who was appointed Head of the State Control Committee recently, to make a briefreport about it. "I think since then you've been able to get to know the structure over there and with the personnel. What are your impressions of it?" he asked.

The second point focused on an additional instruction. "The Head of the State Control Committee has always been

responsible for the Vitebsk Region and forestry industry. I think you are interested in these matters," the President said. "This is why I would like you to go to the Vitebsk Region, get to the bottom of the situation over there, and be the President's plenipotentiary representative in this region."

Aleksandr Lukashenko continued, "I know that because you focused on oil deliveries and the rest while working in the State Security Committee, you've often been to Novopolotsk and you know

the Vitebsk Region. At least many people tell me that. You will be able to sort things out. But I sincerely hope that your work will be effective not only as the Chairman of the State Control Committee but as the plenipotentiary representative of the Head of State in the Vitebsk Region."

After the working meeting, Mr. Tertel said that the President had been informed about results of the committee's work and the prospects for its development. Aleksandr Lukashenko pointed out that state oversight should

focus on preventive efforts.

As for overseeing the development of the Vitebsk Region, Mr. Tertel said, "An instruction to take care of the matter has been given. We will work on it. We will help the municipal authorities develop the economy and resolve other problems. Apart from that, the Head of State gave instructions to look into the development of



Ivan Tertel

the forestry industry. It is one of the resources Belarus has. We will see what areas should be developed and how the best effect from forest resources can be achieved for the Belarusian economy as a whole."

# On eligible voters in Belarus' Presidential election campaign

The Central Election Commission announced on its website the number of voters in Belarus and abroad: 6,844,932



According to the CEC, there are 984,601 voters in the Brest Region, 849,472 — in the Vitebsk Region and 1,069,567 — in the Gomel Region. The Grodno Region has 751,084 voters, the Minsk Region — 1,142,043 and the Mogilev Region — 801,825. Most of them are in Minsk: 1,241,021.

5,319 Belarusians are expected to vote abroad.

A total of 5,767 polling stations have been set up for Belarus' Presidential election, including 44 outside

the country. The latter will work in the Belarusian embassies and consulates in 36 countries: Austria, Azerbaijan, Armenia, Belgium, Bulgaria, the UK, Hungary, Venezuela, Vietnam, Germany, Georgia, Israel, Spain, Italy, Kazakhstan, Canada, China, Cuba, Latvia, Lithuania, Moldova, the Netherlands, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Slovakia, the USA, Turkey, Uzbekistan, Ukraine, Finland, France, the Czech Republic, Switzerland, Sweden, and Estonia.

The House of Representatives of

the National Assembly of Belarus scheduled the Presidential election for August 9th. According to the timetable, early voting is scheduled for August 4th-8th. The Central Election Commission will sum up results of the election on August 19th at the latest. If the second round of the election is necessary, it will take place within two weeks of the first one, that is on August 23rd.

Based on materials of belta.by



# Economic and ecological effect



Elemental sulphur production plant

An official ceremony to inaugurate an elemental sulphur production plant based on the Claus process has taken place at Naftan JSC. It was attended by the Chairman of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee — Nikolai Sherstnev, Novopolotsk's Mayor — Dmitry Demidov, the Chairman of Belneftekhimp Concern — Andrei Rybakov, the Director General of Naftan JSC — Aleksandr Demidov, and Naftan employees. After the symbolic launch, the first product was obtained — technical sulphur, which is a completely new product for the company.

By Olga Korneeva

“The Claus facility recycles hydrogen sulphide, which is formed during oil refining,” Mr. Demidov said. “As a result, we get liquid and granular sulphur from the harmful by-product. The first and most important advantage of the new facility, in which we have invested 130m, is the environmental factor. Thanks to modern technologies, the plant will reduce emissions of pollutants by 14,000 tonnes per year, and emissions of sulphur dioxide will be reduced by more than 40 percent. Secondly, we are implementing an import substitution programme. Liquid sulphur, which is used to make fertilisers for agriculture, is in demand by our chemical giants in Gomel and Grodno. It is currently purchased from abroad. Thirdly, money matters: the plant will save up to \$10m annually.”

The elemental sulphur production

plant has been built from scratch. It occupies nearly five hectares and is 25m tall. Almost a hundred units of technological equipment are installed here: thermal reactors, tanks, columns, pumps, furnaces,

a burner and a chimney. This is the first such facility in Belarus, similar plants being operated in Sweden, Bulgaria, Poland, Italy, Belgium and the United Arab Emirates.

Claus is part of the technological chain of the delayed coking unit. As a result of its operation, Naftan will increase the depth of oil refining to 90 percent and the yield of light oil products up to 65 percent.

Commercial products — high-purity 99.9 percent hydrogen — are produced by another new technological facility of the delayed coking unit built from the ground up: hydrogen production facility No. 2. These two facilities jointly employ 174 people.

The company continues working on the diversification of oil supplies. Over seven months, Naftan received about 900,000 tonnes of ‘alternative’ raw materials and, in the first decade of August, the ninth tanker of this year is expected — coming from the USA.

However, before the launch of the Claus facility, three flasks with samples of American, Norwegian and Arab oil were sent to Novopolotsk's Museum of History and Culture.



Official launch of the elemental sulphur production plant

## Under constant monitoring

A permanent network of seismic stations being developed to monitor the situation in the vicinity of the Belarusian nuclear power plant



The report on the state of nuclear and radiation safety of Belarus in 2019 — published on the website of the Department of Nuclear and Radiation Safety of the Emergencies Ministry of the Republic of Belarus (Gosatombdзор) — announced the work.

At present, seismic parameters in the area surrounding the Belarusian nuclear power plant are monitored by the 7 temporary seismic stations of the local seismic network: Vadatishki, Gradvshchizna, Boyary, Selishche, Vorobyi, Gornaya Kaimina and Litvyany. This local network operates 24/7 and

provides uninterrupted registration of signals from both natural and artificial sources of seismic vibrations.

Simultaneously, work is underway to develop a permanent local network of seismic stations to monitor the stability of geodynamic parameters in the vicinity of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. These permanent seismic stations will be located within a radius of 30km from the plant. The first stage of the work is in full swing now and will be completed in 2020.

Based on materials of belta.by

## Strong argument

By Igor Svetlov

**Belorusneft Siberia supplements its equipment stock with new-generation drilling rig**

The northern branch of the Belarusian industrial group Belorusneft — Belorusneft Siberia — has commissioned a new-generation Russian drilling rig BU 6000/400 which will be used to perform services for Rosneft's daughter enterprise — Sibneftegaz. The project provides for drilling two pilot boreholes 4,655 metres deep.

Made by Uralmash NGO Holding, the new drilling rig meets all the market requirements. “The drilling process is automated. The control system allows monitoring and changing all the parameters in real time. The drilling rig, with a lifting capacity of up to 400 tonnes, al-

lows for the drilling of boreholes up to 6,000 metres deep in any Arctic weather conditions,” the company staff explain.

The oil service enterprise Belorusneft Siberia faces a complex task: apart from drilling the boreholes, it has to perform geophysical exploration. The results will be used for a geological study and an economic evaluation followed by the planning of two horizontal sections in productive strata.

According to specialists, the availability of such a drilling rig is a convincing argument in favour of choosing Belorusneft Siberia as a contractor. The enterprise now has a competitive edge on the Western Siberia market. There are plans to acquire another similar rig for the drilling teams of the Belarusian company operating in Russia's North.







# Our vehicles are closer to flax fields

New Belarusian flax pullers and flax strip turners presented in Lida

By Ksenia Kapustina

Last year, during the visit to the Orsha District and a substantive conversation about the further development of the area, the President initiated a project to set up the production of domestic self-propelled flax pullers and strip turners in Belarus. Recently, our agricultural machine builders reported on the initiative: a self-propelled flax puller and a flax strip turner were presented in the Lida District. Almost all components are a joint development between Gomselmash, Shchuchin Repair Plant and Minsk Motor Plant.

The Minister of Agriculture and Food, Ivan Krupko, came to find out about the prototypes that will be tested at the Peskovtsy agricultural enterprise in the Lida District. Commenting in the field, he said, “The flax-growing industry is very important for the country, with state programmes being adopted for its development on the instruction of the Head of State. We have thus learnt to grow flax and the technological operations have been worked out to the smallest detail. Today, with the help of the Flax Institute, it is possible to produce seeds of Belarusian selection. As far as new samples are concerned, the engineering service reported that the tests are going smoothly, with the machines showing good results.”

Sergei Kalosha, a chief engineer of the Shchuchin Repair Plant, noted, “The uniqueness of this technique is that it works on flat-laid flax; it’s unrivalled in this respect. Previously, when weath-

er caused the flax to flatten, the pullers couldn’t manage it, leading to productivity dropping sharply. With the new machine, this problem is completely solvable and the completeness of the flax harvest is higher. One more advantage is the low cost: an experimental model of a flax puller was created entirely at the production facilities of domestic factories. Gomselmash was responsible for the flax pulling part, as the most complex engineering, while we made the frame

and other units and the engine was manufactured by Minsk Motor Plant. As far as the puller is concerned, 80 percent is of Belarusian production, except for hydraulic equipment and hydraulic motors, which are not manufactured in our country. If necessary, almost closed production of flax technology is possible within the country. After all the tests have been carried out, the issue of releasing a batch of these machines or putting them into serial production will be considered.”

The technical characteristics of the machines are one thing, but another is the opinion of the experienced machine operators who work on them every day. Ivan Krupko asked the workers about their impressions of the new technology.

“The vehicles have comfortable conditions: the cab is equipped with air conditioning and the necessary electronics,” said the machine operator, Sergei Dukhovnik. “I had to work on a Belgian-Belarusian flax puller, and now on a completely Belarusian rival. The domestic sample is fast, manoeuvrable and convenient; most importantly, it works with difficult areas. The flax harvest this year is very good, but there are also problem areas; they are always present as the weather makes its own adjustments. We can completely solve this issue with the new Belarusian equipment.”

The country has mastered the production of flax harvesters at the Kalinkovichi Repair and Mechanical Plant, trailed balers and flax strip turners — at the Holding Management Company, Bobruisk-agromash. Now, the problematic issue of manufacture of flax harvester and turner is also solved.

The equipment will be tested at the Peskovtsy agricultural enterprise all season: it is important for engineers and developers to find out the opinion of farmers during the harvest. All comments will be listened to and, next year, the issue of serial production of flax equipment will be considered: up to 40 flax harvesters and up to 150 flax strip turners per year.



Yury Mozolevsky

It’s planned to use **143** self-propelled flax pullers, **327** flax harvesters, **239** flax strip turners, **50** self-propelled flax turners and combing machines and **656** balers to carry out harvesting operations in the flax-sowing organisations of Belarus.

## Belarusian Nativita and Hungarian Pharma Gap Kft sign an agreement of intent for co-operation, at the Belarusian Embassy in Hungary

## Domestically produced drugs head for export

“The companies plan to register and distribute vital Belarus-made medicines in Hungary and other countries. The list of drugs includes cancer medicines and drugs to calm a cytokine storm in COVID-19,” the Embassy said.

Nativita is an international pharmaceutical R&D company developing and producing innovative drugs for

the treatment of cancer, autoimmune and other serious diseases at the GMP certified production facilities in Belarus. “Since 2016, Nativita has been among the top five companies on the hospital market of Belarus and has become the number one company in the cancer segment. Deep localisation and certified full-cycle production of med-

ications creates good opportunities for increasing exports of Belarusian medicines to the EU,” said the Belarusian diplomatic mission.



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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Belarus’ Honorary Consul to operate in Poland’s Olsztyn



An official ceremony to inaugurate Jan Szynaka as Honorary Consul of Belarus in Olsztyn took place in the Embassy in Warsaw. The Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Poland, Vladimir Chushev, handed over the State Flag of Belarus, a consular patent and a stamp to the Honorary Consul.

Jan Szynaka is a famous Polish businessman, the head and owner of Szynaka Meble — a major Polish investor in Belarus. He will operate in the consular district that includes the voivodships of Warmia-Mazuria, Kujawsko-Pomorskie and Pomorskie provinces.

### The combine operator who has taken part in the harvesting campaign for the 55th time was honoured in the Stolbtsy District

73-year-old Gennady Tsvirko has devoted his whole life to agriculture. He works in Agronemansky JSC as a combine operator during harvesting and as a



foreman of a production site for the rest of the time. He has worked on a variety of harvesters and always shows good results. Gennady Tsvirko believes that there is no particular secret to a good combine operator. The main thing is to work hard to deliver the crop on time. He boasts many awards: ‘For Valiant Labour’ medal, the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, the Order of Honour.

### Diplomat Jeffrey Giauque becomes the new Charge d’Affaires of the USA in Belarus

This information is posted on the Twitter account of the US Embassy in Belarus.

As the Embassy explained, Jeffrey Giauque will head the American diplomatic mission until the US ambassador arrives in Minsk. Then he will remain in Belarus as deputy head of the diplomatic mission. In his welcome video, Jeffrey Giauque noted that he is honoured to represent the US Government and lead the Embassy as Charge d’Af-



fares of the United States. Previously, the diplomat has worked in Croatia and Serbia. The new head of the American diplomatic mission said that he wants to get to know Belarusian traditions and people.

### A goshawk is the new tenant of Lida Castle

The latest story to have happened in Lida looks like a tourist legend. Perhaps, in the future, it will become something that will be talked about to visitors. Some time ago, a bird with a damaged wing entered the castle through the main gate. What happened to the young goshawk is unknown. The bird is now undergoing treatment. All the necessary papers have already been issued for the new guest of the castle. Perhaps it will scare away the pigeons that occupy the galleries of the ancient fortress. The name for the new tenant has not yet been chosen: among the options are Yarila, Tiberius and Gedimin.





# City moving to digital



By Natalia Uryadova

Sergey Kruglikov, the Deputy Director General for Research and Innovation at the Institute, explains, “Residents and district heads understand that it’s impossible to develop the area successfully without the active introduction of IT in all sectors of the economy and social sector. In the future, we’ll need to create databases in digital format for each industry; these will eventually be linked. All information will be sent to local authorities in order to properly plan, organise work, and monitor the process of implementing IT. At the same time, special attention will be paid to ensuring that every resident has access to smart city services.”

One of the most important points of the roadmap is the situation centre, or competence centre. It is based on a universal digital platform developed by scientists for small cities. Mr. Kruglikov revealed the details, “The platform should link all heterogeneous systems — housing, transport, health-care, education, and the ‘one-stop-shop’ service. A feedback form will also be developed: residents could see how the au-

thorities react to their appeals. For example, citizens can offer to install an information board in places of their recreation, and then find out what decision has been made on a certain issue. Similar digital platforms

Orsha will become the first smart city in our country as the digital transformation of the region is envisaged by the Orsha District development programme until 2023. Of course, we can hardly match such digital megapolises as Singapore, New York or Barcelona but can still enhance urban comfort, safety and eco-friendliness. By autumn, the United Institute of Informatics Problems of the National Academy of Sciences plans to develop a prototype of the Belarusian ‘Smart City Light’ digital platform.

implementation of the platform will make it possible to launch services, many of which are already operating separately in major Belarusian cities.”

Creating a smart city in Orsha will not be done from

boards. In the near future, public transport will receive a reading mechanism, smart traffic lights will be installed on highways to monitor traffic flows, while video cameras will detect violators.

While scientists are work-

scientists have already joined teachers in developing a course of training lectures, “We will organise seminars and trainings on digital literacy. In addition, the Institute’s specialists have recently published a book —



Orsha will become the first smart city in our country

**In 2020, the smart city concept is planned to be implemented in Baranovich, Pinsk, Novopolotsk, Polotsk, Mozyr, Lida, Borisov, Soligorsk, Molodechno and Bobruisk. Minsk will transform into a smart city in the next year or two.**

exist in the world, but they are very expensive. We are preparing a light version for the district so that the support does not require large financial expense, and it could be made by a Belarusian company. The

scratch. For example, in the housing and utilities system, meter readings are taken automatically, the E-school and E-prescription projects are operating, and soon public transport stops will be equipped with electronic

ing on the platform, it’s time to think about how to increase the level of digital literacy of the population; so far, it leaves much to be desired. Employees of the Institute are ready to help. Mr. Kruglikov says that

*Digital Transformation. Basic Concepts and Terminology* — which explains such notions as a supercomputer, grid systems, cloud technologies, databases and neural networks. This popular science edition will be interesting even for schoolchildren.”

By Ilya Krasovsky

The BSU chemists have joined an international team of scientists to create biodegradable frames made of polylactide matrices for bone fusion. These matrices are surgically implanted into an injury site and regenerate the wounds in just a month, forming new bone tissue.

Modern medicine needs materials to accelerate the healing of bone tissue after severe fractures, congenital pathologies and existing orthopaedic diseases. Matrices solve this problem, performing a double function of both support and recovery. A matrix is a ‘temporary bridge’ for joining bones. Stem cells, in the literal sense of the word, ‘climb’ on the polylactide framework and fill its porous star-shaped structure.

At present, titanium implants are used in case of a crushed bone. Though titanium is a bioinert material, it still does not completely restore the defect and previous functionality, especially of moving parts of the body. However, a matrix ensures the formation of new bone in a month, from the patient’s cells. When the matrix has fulfilled its function, it decomposes completely in the body.

As part of the international team, the BSU scientists are responsible for developing the matrix composition.

## Matrix: reloaded

Scientists at Belarusian State University’s Chemical Department have created biodegradable frames for bone fusion



They are made from polymer — polylactide — which is widely used in the production of biodegradable packaging. Polylactide is produced at a laboratory

of the BSU’s Institute of Physical and Chemical Problems; where a monomer turns into a polymer in the reactor, under the action of catalysts, while photo-

active groups make it possible to further cross-link them by a laser beam from the two-photon polymerisation unit. The matrix structure itself is being created by scientists from Troitsk, near Moscow. In Moscow and Nizhny Novgorod, their colleagues are investigating properties of polymer frames — such as their toxicity.

“A three-dimensional porous structure made of a biodegradable polymer, with an accuracy of several nanometres, will be individually created for a specific patient,” explains Sergey Kostyuk, who heads the Department of High-Molecular Compounds at the BSU’s Chemical Department. “One of the main advantages of the polymer frame is that it does not need to be extracted from the patient’s body.”

Scientists have already conducted preclinical trials and are now working on adding antibiotics to the matrices, to reduce the risk of infection during surgery. The matrices were successfully tested on mice: a one millimetre defect was made in their skulls, where the matrix was inserted. The wound healed, blood vessels sprouted to feed the bone, and the matrix disappeared. After testing of the new project completes, it will be up to doctors to implement the technology in practice.



# They are heroes!

## The country honours and awards doctors who fought against the coronavirus

The COVID-19 epidemic is on the decline. Fewer new cases of the coronavirus infection are detected daily, and more are cured. It's time to honour those who fought selflessly on the 'frontline'. Official awards ceremonies for doctors have been held throughout Belarus.

### Minsk

In the Town Hall, 105 employees of the Minsk healthcare sector received their well-deserved awards. The Chair of the Council of the Republic — Natalia Kochanova, and the Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee — Anatoly Sivak — joined other distinguished guests to congratulate them.

“The pandemic has forced all of us to look at many things differently,” said the Deputy Head of the President Administration, Andrei Kuntsevich, during the ceremony. “We’ve seen how important it is in the modern world to have a developed and accessible structure in the healthcare system. We’ve seen how many caring people, patrons and public figures showed solidarity with doctors and provided them with help and support. Finally, we’ve seen the country, which is a source of pride, caring and able to cope with any difficulties.”

### Minsk Region

More than 60 medical workers of the Minsk Region received thanks and certificates of honour. Presenting the awards, Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko stressed, “Work ahead of the curve, the ability to quickly adjust the functioning of the system to meet new challenges and to mobilise the necessary resources have made it possible to ensure full control of the situation. This is a good lesson for us and the science of how to respond to such challenges. Behind all this is the stability of the state system, the inviolability of the social orientation of the policy pursued by the Head of State, and, of course, with your daily selfless work.”

### Vitebsk Region

Over 100 doctors were awarded at the Vitebsk Regional Philharmonic. The ceremony was attended by the Chairman of the House of Representatives of the National Assembly — Vladimir Andreichenko, the Chairman of the Vitebsk Regional Executive Committee

### Gomel Region

The Chairman of the Gomel City Executive Committee, Piotr Kirichenko, presented certificates of honour and gratitude for conscientious work in the city’s healthcare system, as well as contribution to the fight against the coronavirus to representatives of medical institu-

conditions, so that each patient with a unique course of the disease had an individual assistance programme,” he said.

### Brest Region

More than 70 best representatives of the healthcare and sanitary services of the Brest Region received well-deserved awards for their contribution to preserving the health of residents of the region in difficult epidemiological conditions caused by the coronavirus pandemic. Words of thanks were expressed to doctors, nurses, orderlies and ambulance drivers.

“The problem associated with the coronavirus has forced us to look at many processes — global and international — differently in our country. Most importantly, we had a different understanding of what the healthcare system is and what place it occupies in our lives. Accordingly, special gratitude comes from the hearts of ordinary people, top officials, and the Head of State. Thank you very much for your work, sleepless nights, dedication, love for life and people,” said the First Deputy Head of the President Administration, Maksim Ryzhenkov.

### Based on materials of sb.by

Each of the medical professionals invited to the meetings received an award. Some were awarded with the President's gratitude letter, some received the medal 'For Labour Merits', the 'Outstanding Worker of Healthcare' badge, or certificates of honour. Ceremonies honouring the best healthcare workers who distinguished themselves during the pandemic were held across the country.



Doctors who fought against COVID-19 — including Yelena Ivanova, Irina Svorob, Irina Boldyreva and Olga Yesmanchik — were awarded at Minsk's Town Hall

— Nikolai Sherstnev, the Deputy Prime Minister — Aleksandr Subbotin, and the President's Aide — Anatoly Linevich.

The Healthcare Minister, Vladimir Karanik, warmly welcomed those in attendance. “In recent times, I’ve often visited the Vitebsk Region, communicating with you directly in the hot spots. That’s why I’m very happy to see all of you finally without anti-virus suits, face-masks and shields. We’ve done it! The healthcare system has worked as a single entity. We’ve found out that it’s highly stress-resistant. Importantly, such professionals as yourselves work in Belarus,” he said, causing a standing ovation.

In total, more than 40 people were awarded. The Mayor warmly thanked the doctors for their very important mission to save people’s health.

### Mogilev Region

More than 70 people were invited to the ceremony in Mogilev. Before the awards ceremony, the Deputy Prime Minister — Igor Petrishenko — expressed the common opinion: the whole healthcare system has concentrated on the coronavirus, successfully ‘re-grouped’ and adequately withstood the blow of this dangerous infection. “Doctors built treatment methods in combat

# Castle, knights, Paulinka and much music

## Last weekend, all roads led to the cultural capital of Belarus — Lida

By Victoria Poznyak

On the first day of August, City Day was celebrated there. Although Lida is only 697 years old, the list of interesting and grand events was impressive. It was hard to choose what to see because of such variety but thankfully, there wasn't far to go between them all. For the convenience of holidaymakers, all activities were concentrated inside and around the Lida Castle.

The festive marathon started on a grand scale on Friday, July 31st. The main attraction of the region — the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre — staged the legendary *Paulinka*, which has been an integral part of the repertoire since 1944. In late 2019, the performance was included in the list of Belarus' historical and cultural values.



Lida Castle's Sword knight's tournament

Natalia Levshunova, the Head of the Lida District Executive Committee's Culture Department, commented on the spectacular show, “For local residents, *Paulinka* is a real gift, for guests — it's a good reason to come to Lida. Interestingly, the show was staged at the end of the 100th season of the theatre and was available for free.”

On the same day, the *Lida Yesterday and Today* exhibition

opened in the conference hall of the castle, visiting this attraction is a trip back in time to a century ago. It featured more than fifty photos and drawings of the city from the late 19th and early 20th century.

“The 2010 *Dozhynki* Republican holiday was a turning point in the history of Lida. The city really transformed itself, beginning to ‘breathe’ differently,” Ms. Levshunova said,

adding, “Even the locals themselves can hardly remember what the Mound of Immortality, Leninskaya Street, the bus station or the area around the castle looked like before. There are many such sites. We have presented many images from the ‘before’ and ‘after’ period.”

The celebration of City Day began on Saturday morning — with diverse venues, fairs, craft stalls and food courts near the Lida Castle. The official opening took place in the castle and was dedicated to the main achievements of the Lida Region over the past year, as well as to people who have deserved respect and vocation due to their work successes, active citizenship and personal qualities.

The Lida Castle knight's tournament was also held, as is traditional. It's one of the most anticipated events in the region but, this year, it was slightly reduced — lasting for an hour, but amazing everyone none-

theless. The Vilkomir knight's club also attended to reconstruct 15th century knightly fights. A knight's camp was set up in the grounds of the castle, where guests were able to get to know the culture and life of the knights of the Middle Ages. Moreover, the show was accompanied by music, animated performances and games with audience participation.

“I would like to draw attention to another of our brand events: the *Father-Fest* family festival. It brings together all those who want to compete for the title of ‘best dad’,” added Ms. Levshunova.

Guests of Lida City Day enjoyed music from local and visiting artists: the *Belye Rozy* (White Roses) ensemble of dance, music and song, Aleksei Khlestov, *ByCity* band, and the *Feeriya* (Extravaganza) show ballet. After dark, a music and dance programme in open-air format began inside the castle — headlined by Aleksandr Solodukha.







## ITER assembly begins

The assembly phase for the world's largest nuclear fusion project started, with French President Emmanuel Macron hailing the energy programme as 'a promise of peace'

The International Thermonuclear Experimental Reactor (ITER) aims to build the world's largest tokamak — an experimental machine designed to harness the energy of fusion. Fusion is a nuclear reaction that powers the Sun and the stars and is a potential source of safe, non-carbon emitting and virtually limitless energy.

The machine is to weigh 23,000 tonnes and will have a plasma volume of 830 cubic metres, far higher than the tokamaks operating today which have maximum plasma volume of 100 cubic metres.

It will be built in southern France with parts and

funds provided by each of the eight members: China, the EU, India, Japan, Korea, Russia, the UK and the USA.

"There are moments when the nations of the world choose to overcome their differences to meet a particular moment in history. The decision to launch ITER, in the mid-2000s, was one of these moments," Emmanuel Macron said.

European members are providing 45 percent of the estimated 13bn Euros required with the remaining countries each covering 9.1 percent. Construction is expected to be finalised in 2025.

## Creative ways

Restaurants around the world are finding creative ways to enforce social distancing as they welcome back customers after coronavirus lockdowns



But even as countries lift the strict measures implemented to slow the spread of COVID-19, there are still guidelines in place to prevent a second wave of the virus outbreak.

From protective shields and individual greenhouses to placing some customers in rubber tubes, restaurants are adapting to those new social distancing guidelines.

In Paris, the H.A.N.D restaurant uses individual shields that look a little bit like the lampshades while the Mediamatic ETEN restaurant in Amsterdam installed little greenhouses around each table to shield customers from each other.

Restaurant staff at the Mediamatic ETEN also wear masks or plastic shields

and serve food on long planks in order to distance themselves from customers.

The Fish Tales Bar & Grill restaurant in Ocean City, Maryland tried to make social distancing a memorable experience by providing their customers with giant mobile rubber-rings.

A number of restaurants and cafes in different countries have been using mannequins to replace diners in their establishments. Mannequins are used to demonstrate new seating arrangements and to help ensure that customers don't sit where they're not supposed to.

People in Bangkok meanwhile have been eating behind plastic dividers to maintain social distancing.



## Artefacts in seafood store

During a routine inspection in a seafood store, authorities in Spain discovered 13 Roman amphorae that could date back to the first century

Civil Guard officers in Spain's Santa Pola (Alicante) were conducting a routine food inspection at a frozen seafood shop when they came upon a rare archaeological discovery: 13 Roman amphorae that date back to the first century and an 18th century metal anchor were on casual display. "The agents saw various ceramic amphorae in different parts of the installation, a metal anchor and an engraved limestone plaque — all of which, at first glance, appeared to be of some considerable age," the Spanish Civil Guard said in a statement.

According to local media reports, the vendor's son says he found the items while fishing and brought them back to decorate his father's seafood shop.

The artefacts were moved to the local Museum of the Sea for an evaluation. According to the Civil Guard, archaeologists at the museums determined that all 13 ceramic vessels were Roman artefacts 'of great heritage value' that date back to the first century. One of the items was deemed exceptionally significant, 'due to its exclusivity'.



## Location of masterpiece

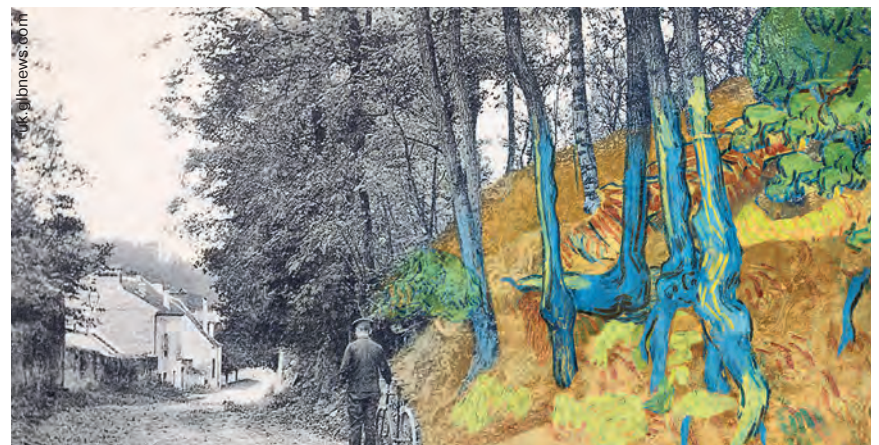
A postcard has helped to find the probable spot where Vincent van Gogh painted what may have been his final masterpiece, art experts say

The likely location for *Tree Roots* was found by Wouter van der Veen, the Scientific Director of the Institut Van Gogh. He recognised similarities between the painting and a postcard dating from 1900 to 1910.

The postcard shows trees on a bank

the museum Louis van Tilborgh and Teio Meedendorp, concluded that it was 'highly plausible' that the correct location had been identified.

"In our opinion, the location identified by Van der Veen is highly likely to be the correct one and it is a re-



Rue Daubigny, of Auvers-sur-Oise postcard (1900-1910), with superimposed image from Vincent van Gogh's *Tree Roots*, Van Gogh Museum

near the French village of Auvers-sur-Oise. The site is 150m from the Auberge Ravoux, the inn in the village, where Van Gogh stayed for 70 days before taking his own life in 1890.

"The similarities were very clear to me," said Mr. Van der Veen. He presented his findings to Amsterdam's Van Gogh Museum, whose researchers conducted a comparative study of the painting, postcard and the hillside.

The experts, senior researchers at

markable discovery," Mr. Meedendorp said. "On closer observation, the overgrowth on the postcard shows very clear similarities to the shape of the roots on Van Gogh's painting. That this is his last artwork renders it all the more exceptional, and even dramatic."

A ceremony was held in Auvers-sur-Oise, a few miles north of Paris, to mark the discovery of the apparent location.



# Great legacy

Temples, museums and frescoes from the 12th century — how the cultural legacy of Polotsk is being preserved

**Polotsk is the most ancient city of Belarus, the capital of the first state in our land, the birthplace of Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, Francysk Skaryna and Simeon Polotsky and one of the most powerful cities of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania. It was first mentioned in the *Tale of Bygone Years* in 862. For many centuries Polotsk gave birth to and attracted talented people who glorified Belarus all over the world.**

By Andrei Shcherbitsky

## Brands of Polotsk

St. Sophia's Cathedral is ranked among the most famous sights of Polotsk, and is one of the top attractions for tourists. The spiritual symbol of the Belarusians stands on the Upper Castle near the Zapadnaya Dvina River. The construction of St. Sophia in the 11th century demonstrated the economic and political strength of the Polotsk Principality.

Throughout its existence, the temple has experienced many trials, reconstructions and fires. The cathedral acquired its present appearance in the 18th century. Today, the temple houses an exposition in the Museum of the History of the Architecture of St. Sophia Cathedral, and a concert hall with an organ.

Tours, concerts and festivals are held within the walls of the cathedral. One of them is the *Bells of St. Sophia Cathedral* International Festival of Organ Music, launched in 1996 on the initiative of the Honoured Artist of Belarus, Ksenia Pogorelaya.

The Sophia organ was modernised several years ago, which significantly increased the technical possibilities for musicians. The majestic instrument delights the ears of connoisseurs of classical music.

Next to the cathedral there is another significant sight: the buildings of the former Jesuit Collegium. Today, about 1,000 students of Polotsk State University study here, but back in the early 2000s, there were only dilapidated buildings on the site. In 2016-2017, a large-scale restoration of the former collegium was completed. There is now a recreated 'Mechanical Head' inside, admired by many people — the famous creation of the scientist, Gabriel Gruber, who worked within the walls of the collegium at the end of the 18th century. The main attractions in the collegium's courtyard include a restored 18th century well, a gallery of reproductions of paintings and a musical clock with an 'academic' procession. Every hour from 8am to 2pm, the students' song — *Gaudeamus Igitur* — and anthem of Polotsk University is played. At the same time, the figures of Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya, Francysk Skaryna, the first rector of the Polotsk Jesuit Collegium, Piotr Skarga, a teacher and a student, move from one door to another on a small balcony.

The restored buildings of the collegium are included on the tourist routes of Polotsk and the former Jesuit Collegium is visited by about 15,000 people each year.

There is a place of power in Polotsk, which is rightfully considered the pearl of not only Eastern Slavic, but also world architecture: the Transfiguration Church of the Saviour and St. Yevfrosiniya Convent. It's known in this way not only because of its venerable age (the temple was built in the 12th century), but also because of the unique frescoes and archaeological discoveries there. In recent years, excavations have been carried out at the walls of the church.

The first archaeological research project on the adjacent site to the temple was launched in 2015; before that it had not actually been studied.

2018 brought the greatest success for the archaeologists. At a depth of about 3m, the experts dug up the remains of the room, where, presumably, the father of Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya could have been buried. There are no other examples of such a dungeon in ancient Russian architecture from the 10th-13th century in Eastern Europe, which confirms the individual approach to the construction of a temple commissioned by the saint. At that time, nearly all stone monuments were erected above ground level.



St. Sophia's Cathedral



Musical clock



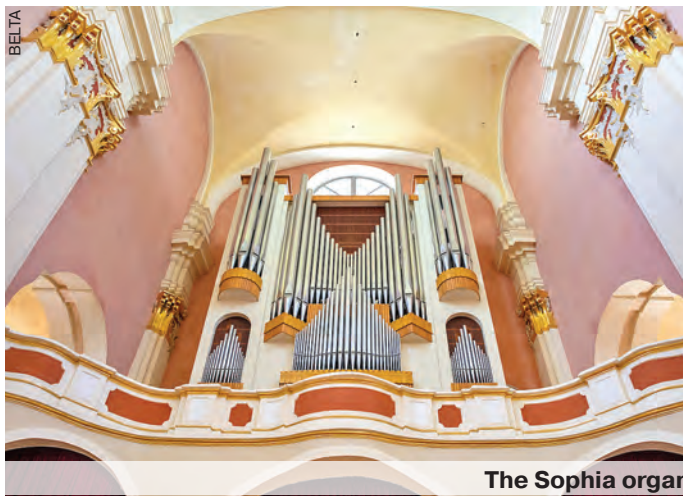
Murals of the Transfiguration Church exhibition



Frescoes of the Transfiguration Church



The buildings of the former Jesuit Collegium



The Sophia organ

The room was 1.5m x 4.5m in size and a stone staircase led to it; there was also an altar and a special niche.

The history of restoration work showed that much was unknown about the temple. This religious and architectural monument is amazing in preserving 90 percent of the 12th century frescoes.

## Messages from the ancestors

The heritage of the Polotsk land is rich and diverse, requiring careful consideration. Alongside archaeological artefacts

and preserved architectural monuments, a unique stationary exhibition — *Murals of the Transfiguration Church* — has been created in the Art Gallery. It exhibits peeled oil paintings of the 18th-19th century, taken from the walls of the Saviour Church. Today, the entire building with the 12th century fresco painting is open in the church, the plan of which was created according to the design of St. Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya.

Back in 1992, the Belarusian restorer, Vladimir Rakitsky, began to reveal the ancient frescoes. Since 2006, specialists from Russia have worked under the guidance of the most experienced restorer, Vladimir Sarabyanov. Applying new technologies, which made it possible not to wash off, but to peel off the later paintings, the restorers preserved the oil paintings beneath.

The sliding shelves depict various Biblical stories.

"The technology enabled us to remove scenes up to 6sq.m from the walls. Paintings from several centuries ago have been preserved. This has never been done anywhere else. Restorers came from other countries and were very interested in our experience," said Larisa Lysenko, who heads the Art Gallery. Some compositions were made around window openings and the restorers peeled them off too.

It would have been impossible to implement a large-scale project like this without the support of the state; grants from the President's Culture and Art Support Fund were allocated for the work. It's difficult for an ordinary person to imagine what painstaking work the restorers have

done. On an area of almost 1,000sq.m, they have meticulously cleaned every millimetre of fresco painting. Then the specialists of the Art Gallery worked on it.

The city with more than a thousand years of history continues its development as a cultural and spiritual centre of Belarus. In the coming years, Polotsk plans to implement and complete several projects in this area: to open an archaeological museum and to complete construction work on the Upper Castle in 2021.

In 2024, Polotsk residents intend to complete the restoration of the Transfiguration Church. In 2025, the Christian world will be celebrating the 900th anniversary of the founding of the Saviour and St. Yevfrosiniya Convent.



# Yekaterina Oleinik reveals her path to the majestic world of ballet



**Yekaterina Oleinik after being awarded the 'Honoured Artiste of the Republic of Belarus' title**

By Olga Demenchuk

## How did your path to the world of ballet begin?

My mother Tamara Oleinik played a huge role. As a child, she dreamed of becoming a ballerina but it remained a dream. I think that's why she pinned all her hopes on me and my little sister. My mother most of all wanted us to have a beautiful figure and good posture, but she could hardly imagine that our hobby would turn into a profession. As a child, I was very curious and interested in everything: I did gymnastics, studied choreography at school, attended art and circus workshops. My parents made every effort for me to develop, to find something that I could devote my entire life to. That's why I thought about entering the Choreographic School as another stage in my self-education.

## During your studies at the Choreographic School, you won many awards at the most prestigious international competitions. What was this experience like for you?

Participation in competitions was mostly my initiative. My teacher, Olga Lappo, helped me a great deal. She was directly involved in preparing for competitions. Of course, when you learn to overcome obstacles at the age of 15, it greatly strengthens your character in your profession and life.

## In 2008, at a competition in Hungary, you were awarded the special prize of Maya Plisetskaya 'For the Interpretation of Odile'. How do you remember of the experience meeting the great ballerina?

It happened at a rehearsal before one of the tours. Maya Plisetskaya came to give me a piece of advice on what the image of the Black Swan should be. In her opinion, the mistake of many ballerinas was that they began to flirt with the au-

The combination of talent and beauty, sensitivity and determination at the same time is quite rare. However, it seems that the prima ballerina of the National Bolshoi Theatre, an Honoured Artiste of Belarus — Yekaterina Oleinik — harmoniously combines all these qualities. As a student of the Choreographic School, she constantly won international ballet competitions in Varna and Moscow. In 2008, in Hungary, she was awarded the special prize named after Maya Plisetskaya 'For the Interpretation of Odile'. It is not surprising that, after graduation, Yekaterina joined the Bolshoi Theatre company immediately as a soloist; that was an exception to the rule. The ballerina's repertoire includes only the most striking roles. Although her Kitri from *Don Quixote* was recognised by the audience and critics as one of the most brilliant, the dancer personally believes that Giselle is much closer to her in terms of drama and depth. Yekaterina tells us more about her path to the world of ballet, her rich creative life and inspiration.

dience, when all the attention and seduction had to be directed at the partner. I remember Maya Plisetskaya for her precision in thoughts, words, gestures and, of course, for her elegance. The competition was one of the most difficult in my career because I had to perform with a leg injury. Already during the first round after a jump, it became clear that I couldn't walk, and there were two more performances ahead. Fortunately, everything ended with a good result, but it was a real challenge for me.

## Joining the Bolshoi Theatre troupe as a soloist, immediately after graduating from the Choreographic School, is rare. How did this happen to you?

In 2006, Valentin Yelizariiev noticed me at an international ballet competition in Varna and invited me to work at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre as a soloist. My appointment was kept secret until the last moment. As far as I know, only Ivan Vasiliev had a similar offer a year earlier. I must note that I was lucky enough to appear on the stage of the Bolshoi

Theatre during my last year of studies: I then danced the pas de deux 'Diana and Actaeon', the pas de trois in 'Swan Lake' and 'Esmeralda'. Of course, it was very exciting, because I felt it was under the gaze of my senior colleagues.

## Who became your main mentor at the Bolshoi?

I started working with Tatiana Yershova at the theatre and almost all my repertoire was prepared with her. I was interested in other teachers' opinions as well, so I often turned to them for advice: this enabled me to enrich my performances

of the famous choreographer, Charles Jude: dancing his 'Nutcracker' was incredibly interesting and easy. Since last June, my friendship with the Opera House of Nice has begun. I have enjoyed the opportunity to dance classical and modern pieces there.

## In 2018, you were awarded the title of an Honoured Artiste of the Republic of Belarus but personally received the award only in 2020. Why?

This was due to my frequent absence from Minsk: initially, I was touring Germany and then danced in Nice. However, thanks to this combination of circumstances, I managed to experience the moment twice: when I learned about the award of the title and again directly during the award ceremony. Of course, this event was a huge honour for me. My soul was filled with joy and a sense of how great the value of art is for the state and each of us.

## Due to the coronavirus pandemic, this year has been quite difficult. How did you survive it?

In mid-March, after participating in the 'Don Quixote' ballet in Minsk, I planned to fly to France, as I have been working with the Opera House of Nice since last June. However, due to the pandemic, my flight was cancelled. Therefore, I spent the entire period of quarantine in Minsk, where I could enjoy freedom and lessons in the theatre. In June, after easing of restrictions, I was able to return to Nice. Since the work process there was still not properly adjusted due to the consequences of the pandemic, the trip became for me more of a vacation than work. During the three weeks of my stay in France, I travelled a lot around the region: I visited the filming locations of 'And God Created Woman' in Saint-Tropez and visited the cosy town of Saint-Paul-de-Vence, where the body of the world-famous Belarusian artist, Marc Chagall, rests.

## When will you be seen on the stage of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus?

I hope this will happen in September. I miss my native Belarusian stage, my home, and, of course, my favourite audience.



**Yekaterina Oleinik performs Kitri in Don Quixote ballet; photo courtesy of the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus**

with new nuances in plastic and character creation. The camera notices all the shortcomings in working on the role, so I constantly make videos for myself. I think that the most important critic of my work is myself.

## How did your career develop after that?

At the age of 26, I received a rather interesting job offer in Washington. The fact is, that by that time, I had danced almost the entire classical repertoire and wanted to move on. In America, I was introduced to the popular modern style. After working for a season, I realised that I missed my native theatre, and I also had problems with my Achilles' tendon. I had to return to Minsk, but only for a short time. Soon I was dancing classical pieces in a new version on the stage of the National Opera in Estonia. A special, though short-lived, period in my career was the collaboration with the oldest San Carlo theatre, in Naples. There I was able to experience the artistry





**Sergei Bocharnikov is among the most experienced biathletes of the Belarusian national team**

By **Tatiana Pastushenko**

Biathletes are continuing to prepare for the new season. Our men's national team have recently completed the fourth training camp in Raubichi and held the first controlled training session. Very soon the athletes will begin working again, but for now, the senior coach of the national team, Andrei Padin, tells us about how our biathletes are managing and how they are preparing for future events.

The coronavirus pandemic has seriously affected the plans of shooting skiers. Initially, the coaches expected to hold several training camps abroad in the highlands, but so far the borders of many countries remain closed.

"By working in the high mountains, we wanted to increase aerobic potential, because at heights the athlete's body is more susceptible even to moderate loads," explains Andrei Padin. "While it is not possible to go everywhere, we adapt to the prevailing circumstances, adjusting the training programme to the existing conditions and waiting for the problem that has arisen all over the world to recede."

According to the coach, excellent conditions for training have been created in Raubichi, with the most modern equipment and everything necessary within walking distance. However, the long months spent in the complex leave their mark: in order to relieve psychological fatigue, training sessions are carried out in Logoisk amongst other places.

"Logoisk also has a very good base with a shooting range and significant relief landscape, helping us compensate a little for the missing stages in the highlands. A variety of workouts can be held in this complex. In addition, we also train at the athletics stadium, using all the available bases. Nevertheless, athletes need a consistent schedule: changing time zones and climate — all this is important for competitive practice. After all, it's possible to have ideal conditions for training, but the body

adapts to them, and then in a different time zone and climate it will take more time to rebuild."

Recently, our men's national team conducted a controlled training exercise whose results enabled coaches to evaluate the work done. One of the most experienced biathletes — Sergei Bocharnikov — won the 15km race with four firing ranges. The three leaders also include Yegor Kazarinov and Anton Smolsky.

Andrei Padin sums up the results of the event, "There is a slight feeling of satisfaction: I really liked the speed of our athletes, the way they spread their energy along the distance and how they increased their speed at the finish. All this inspires optimism: in terms of speed, the guys should be competitive in winter. Shooting is above average so far. The athletes aren't making errors, and this provides guidelines for further analysis and work."

Alongside the biathletes of the main composition of our national team — Sergei Bocharnikov, Anton Smolsky, Roman Yeletnov, Nikita Lobastov, Maksim Vorobei, Dmitry Lazovsky

# Waiting for snow in summer

## How is the men's national biathlon team preparing for the new season?

and Yegor Kazarinov — young athletes also took part in the training: Aleksandr Koshin, Svyatoslav Zaichenko and Ivan Tulatin. Andrei Padin explains that both the main team and the reserve work in the same direction, according to similar training plans, which differ in the volume and intensity of the workload. This is also important taking into account the perspective: when, after a certain stage of time, these biathletes join the national squad, the direction, nature, volume and intensity of the work will be familiar to them, which means that the process of adaptation and improvement of skills will be faster, better and more efficient.

There is still a lot of time and work planned before the start of the new season. The IBU Summer Biathlon World Championship was cancelled this year, so our biathletes will not have the



**Andrei Padin, senior coach of the national team**

opportunity to see rivals from other countries in action in the near future, although they will not be left without competitive practice: controlled training and the Belarusian Summer Biathlon Championship lie ahead. However, even in the current conditions, the coaching staff of the Belarusian national team monitors how competitors are preparing for the season.

"As far as I know, the teams from Norway, Sweden and other countries also trained at their bases during the pandemic. The fact that they did not show it and didn't talk about it doesn't mean that we started preparing before everyone else. Judging by social networks, the biathlon teams of many countries are now also in good shape, holding managed competitions and training intensively."

Belarusian biathletes finished last season in tenth place in the Nations Cup, enabling them to expand their quota. Coaches aren't currently saying who will be in the top five to perform at the World Cup stage. Everything will be decided at the final stage of preparation.

"It will soon show who is better prepared. Last season the squad made a significant step forward, and now the biathletes are very motivated. As the saying goes, appetite comes with eating," notes Mr. Padin.

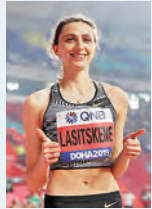


**While biathletes cannot hold training camps abroad, they use all the available facilities**

● **Three-time world high-jump champion, 27-year-old Maria Lasitskene of Russia, is considering the possibility of joining the national team of Belarus to compete at the Olympic Games in Tokyo**

Representatives of the athlete are working on the issue due to the sanctions imposed on the All-Russian Athletics Federation. Failure to pay the fine imposed on the federation for anti-doping violations (\$5m) threatens that Russian athletes will not be able to participate in international tournaments even with a neutral status. Lasitskene won two of the three world titles (in 2017 and 2019) under a neutral flag.

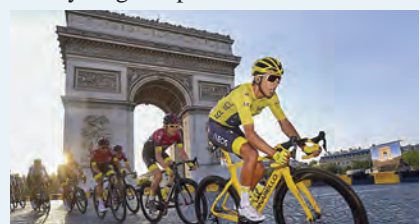
Lasitskene has already missed the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro, and now runs the risk of not getting to Tokyo.



● **2021 Tour de France race will be held from June 26th to July 18th**

The International Cycling Union (UCI) has announced a change in the dates for the prestigious Tour de France multi-day road race in 2021. Initially, the 2021 Tour de France was supposed to take place from July 2nd-25th, but in connection with the Olympic road cycling competitions planned to take place on July 24th, 25th and 28th, it was decided to postpone the dates of the multi-day cycling event.

The Tour de France has been held since 1903 and is one of the most prestigious cycling competitions.



● **NBA regular season resumes after break due to coronavirus pandemic**

To minimise risks, all teams participating in the final stage of the season are gathered in one city: Orlando. The matches will be held without spectators at three venues. Twenty-two teams will finish the championship — those that were in the playoff zone (the first eight places in the conference), as well as teams that lagged behind the above-named by no more than six victories (Portland, New Orleans, Sacramento, San Antonio, Phoenix and Washington). The squads will play eight matches. The seven best clubs from each league will go directly to the playoffs, alongside those who have been placed eighth if they are more than four wins ahead of those in ninth place.



● **The number one tennis player in the world refused to participate in the US Open**

Australian Ashleigh Barty has refused to participate in the US Open due to the coronavirus pandemic, according to the *Herald Sun*. "My team and I decided that this year we will not go to tournaments in the USA, including the US Open," Barty said, calling the decision difficult. According to her, coronavirus still imposes significant risks, and she does not feel comfortable, endangering herself and her team, TASS reports.

Barty, 24, topped the world women's tennis rankings on June 24th, 2019. Of the Grand Slam tournaments, she has won only the French Open, also reached the semi-finals of the Australian Open and the 4th round of the US Open and Wimbledon.





## Photo of the week



Not only are sunbathing and swimming possible at Zaslavsky Reservoir, but also surfing and wakeboarding

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On August 6th**, Hiroshima Day is celebrated. It's the world day for the prohibition of nuclear

weapons. In 1945, during World War II, American aircraft bombed the Japanese city of Hiroshima, using atomic weapons against people for the first time in history, and, on August 9th, 1945, Americans bombed Japan's Nagasaki.

**On August 6th**, the Doctors of World for Peace International Day is marked, following the decision of the Executive Committee of the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War organisation, on the day of the bombing of Hiroshima.



**On August 9th, 1910**, Larisa Geniyush was born (Zhlobovtsy farmstead, Volkovysk District of the Grodno Region) — a Belarusian writer. She is the author of the collection of poetry, entitled *From Native Crop Fields*, the poem *To My Granny*, poems for children, etc. In 1937, together with her husband, she left for Prague, where

she actively joined the life of a Belarusian emigree. In 1949, she was sentenced to 25 years of correctional labour in the camps. In 1956, she was released ahead of schedule and returned to the Grodno Region. Many of her poems are set to music. In 1990, her book of memoirs — *The Confession* — was published, where Larisa Geniyush was one of the first to write about life in the Stalinist camps. She died in 1983.



**August 9th** is Builder's Day in the Republic of Belarus. Builder's Day is celebrated in Belarus on the second Sunday in August. The professional holiday has a half-century history. The first was celebrated on August 12th, 1956. This date appeared on the holiday calendar for a reason. Thanks to the builders, our country was able to revive after many wars and great destruction. It is customary to speak of builders as representatives of the most peaceful and creative profession.



**9th August** is International Day of the World's Indigenous People. It was first established by the UN General Assembly in

the framework of the proclamation of the International Decade of the World's Indigenous People (1995-2004) on August 9th, 1994. Indigenous peoples live in all regions of the world. The total area of the territories in which they live is about 22 percent of the entire land surface of the Earth. The number of indigenous peoples ranges from 370 to 500 million people, which is the largest part of the world's cultural diversity. Indigenous peoples also created and speak most of the world's approximately 7,000 languages.

**On August 10th, 1995**, the Braslav Lakes National Park was established by the decree of the Government

of the Republic of Belarus. It was founded with the aim of preserving the natural complex of the Braslav group of lakes as a historically formed landscape and the genetic fund of flora and fauna — typical for the Belarusian Poozerie.



**On August 10th, 1675**, the Royal Greenwich Astronomical Observatory was founded on the outskirts of London. The 'prime meridian' is drawn through the observatory, from which the countdown of time zones on the planet begins. This historical and scientific site in



Great Britain is listed as a UNESCO World Heritage Site and is under state protection. Today, the buildings of

the observatory house the National Maritime Museum and the newest planetarium, as well as exhibition and lecture halls.

**August 12th** is International Youth Day. It was proclaimed in accordance with the resolution of the UN General Assembly of December 17th, 1999, which endorsed the recommendations of the World Conference of Ministers Responsible for Youth (Lisbon, August 8th-12th, 1998). The purpose of the holiday is to remind people about the role of young people in the development and building of the world, and the everyday problems that stand in their way.

