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INTERNATIONAL

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Twenty-five 14-year-old boys and girls received their first passports from the hands of Chairman of the Constitutional Court Piotr Miklashevich and First Secretary of the BRSM Central Committee Aleksandr Lukyanov. In the photo: Tatiana Sak and Anna Kasabutskaya.

# We are citizens of Belarus!

The Belarusian campaign *We are Citizens of Belarus!* dedicated to the Constitution Day symbolically started in the Constitutional Court. Its main characters were 14-year-old boys and girls representing all regions of the country and the city of Minsk. The guys were handed not only passports, but also commemorative sets of a citizen — the Belarusian flag, the Constitution, as well as a guidance message from the hero of the Great Patriotic War. The events of the patriotic Belarusian campaign *We are Citizens of Belarus!* are taking place on March 11–15th in all regions of the country. This year, the project is timed to coincide with a number of significant historical dates — the 30th anniversary of the adoption of Belarus' Constitution and the establishment of the institute of presidency in Belarus.

For 30 years since the adoption of the Constitution, our country has been steadily developing on a constitutional basis as a democratic and socio-legal state, where a person, human rights and freedoms are the highest values and the goal of society and the state.





# The women's movement remains an important pillar of Belarus' civil society



"I am ready for an open and candid conversation. Our meeting may play a decisive role in dealing with some issues," the President emphasised. "Women have a positive attitude towards me, because you know that I am your most ardent supporter and a man — although far from being ideal — who is extremely devoted to women. I believe that nature has created nothing more perfect than a woman. This is my firm belief."

The Head of State noted that Belarus has a long-standing tradition of congratulating women on the first days of spring.

"The day of March 8th has become a truly national holiday for us. This day gives an opportunity not only to congratulate and thank women for their understanding, dedication, kindness, and sensitivity, but also to reflect on their role in society, to ask ourselves whether we have done everything to make sure our mothers, wives, sisters and daughters are happy, and what else needs to be done to make our Belarus more beautiful so that it matches the beauty of our women," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed. "Another point that I want to make is that Belarusian women are the most beautiful women in the world."

The Head of State said that he accepted the invitation of the Belarusian Women's Union to discuss topical issues on the eve of March 8th.

***"It is you, who are present in this hall, as well as another 170 thousand active members of the union, who have an especially keen sense of responsibility for the fate of your country and care for its future. You are undeniably in the forefront of this patriotic movement. In a relatively short time, the women's movement has become the force to be reckoned with. That is why a women's perspective on the development of society is so important," the President pointed out.***

Aleksandr Lukashenko underlined that the Belarusian Women's Union has been and

remains one of the pillars of civil society. The results of the recent election campaign confirm this — women have made up a third of deputies in the Parliament, and thousands of women have been elected to local councils of deputies.

According to the President, there is a special attitude towards women in Belarusian society.

"Women play a pivotal role in strengthening peace and security — if there were not you, men would have started fighting long ago, even in Belarus — as well as in promoting interethnic and interconfessional dialogue. I have always said it and I will reiterate that you are our most effective diplomatic weapon. I am proud of the fact that many women in Belarus hold high positions in government bodies, public organisations, and run companies. They prove their competence, professionalism and devotion to the Motherland in every area," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

According to the Head of State, all the talk about gender inequality is irrelevant for Belarus.

"The balance of work and family responsibilities, the creation of the most comfortable conditions for self-realisation both in career and in the honourable status of a mother are among the priority tasks. We have provided women with an opportunity to work part-time, on a flexible schedule or remotely — for example, from home. Now you can earn money and handle household chores without wasting time on the way to the office. And this is just the beginning," the President pointed out. "We need to look at the working hours of kindergartens and adjust them to parents. Moreover, you need to be sure that your children — while studying at school, especially primary school — will be under teachers' supervision until the evening, if necessary. In that case, you may not even need a remote work mode."

Aleksandr Lukashenko urged to remember that the true purpose of a woman on earth is being a mother.

On the threshold of March 8th, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko held a meeting with activists of the Belarusian Women's Union (BWU). The communication proved to be very warm and trusting — the participants repeatedly supported the President's words with sincere applause. The Head of State expressed words of gratitude to lovely ladies, presented state awards to the best representatives, and answered numerous questions in an open and honest manner. The event was attended by about 600 activists of the union from all regions of the country.

"No matter what communities they have in the West — 'pink', 'multicoloured' or others (and this wave is unfortunately already moving towards us) — except for a woman, no one can really give birth to an heir.

***A woman mother is the guardian of not only the family hearth, but also of the traditional foundations of our society. By raising children to be patriots, you strengthen the state and lay a reliable foundation for the future of our Belarus. Therefore, give birth to, raise, and take care of our children, and we will do our best to ensure peace and prosperity because we are obliged to do that," the Belarusian leader declared.***

"I know that all mothers and mothers-to-be are anxious to know whether the government will continue to support mothers and children. It is an absolutely legitimate question, as this costs us a lot. We are the epitome of the welfare state. We offer dozens of social security benefits for the population and, above all, for women. The family capital costs millions of dollars. I want to assure you that our state will continue to bear this burden under any conditions and circumstances — in full and, if necessary, beyond the existing social security net. Child benefits will be increased, no one is going to scrap parental leave. We will find the necessary funds to make sure that paediatric care keeps pace with global trends (we are close to this), and that children's health centres continue to be exemplary."

At a meeting with the activists, Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed the BWU with a request to take control of a number of pressing social issues. In particular, they discussed measures to protect women's health and promote families with children.



"The slogan of one of the union's projects is *Women's Health — the Health of the Nation*. Our country is taking unprecedented

measures to protect motherhood and childhood, accompanying women during pregnancy, providing free IVF procedures, and annual medical examinations. However, all government measures are in vain if the woman does not take care of her health," the President remarked. The Head of State recommended that every woman try to find time for physical activity in order to stay cheerful and full of energy.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that the Belarusian Women's Union should play a key role in promoting traditional family values and become a wall to bar the way to imposed alien modern perversions in society, which, according to the President, will increasingly appear.

As the Head of State noted, a mother's affection and woman's love have protected Belarus at all times, shielded it from trouble, healed wounded hearts, and given meaning to life and strength in the fight for the Fatherland.



According to the established good tradition, the Belarusian leader presented the women with state awards on the eve of March 8th — the Order of the Mother, the Medal For Labour Merits, the Francysk Skaryna Medal, as well as the honorary title of Honoured Teacher.

Aleksandr Lukashenko had a long conversation with representatives of the Belarusian Women's Union and answered

all their questions. The topics of motherhood and childhood, support for families with many children, extension of the family capital programme, protection of traditional values, family education, patriotism and the future of the country, the advantages of a rural lifestyle were raised.

The President, among other things, was asked what a woman should be — a thrifty housewife, a keeper of the hearth modest in her requests, or rather live here and now.

***"A Belarusian woman has everything in balance. She needs no advice. A real Belarusian woman knows when it is necessary to save and to spend at the right time," the Head of State underlined. "We must live here and now, looking into the future."***

Inga Stankevich, a mother with many children, who lives in the village and is currently on parental leave, thanked Aleksandr Lukashenko for the support of

large families at the state level. She shared her experience of holding various family competitions for families, which help to unite parents and children even more, to pass on traditions and family values.

Aleksandr Lukashenko, as a man who was born in a village, considers it important to love the land and work on their own plot of land.

"An important feature of the president is to be able to come down from high diplomatic stands to the ground, literally. The president must be aware of earthly issues," the Head of State noted.

The President drew attention to the timely decision taken at the state level on the possibility of buying houses abandoned in villages at minimum cost so that the land plots would receive a new life.

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



# Lukashenko on Council of the Republic formation: everything there should be democratic

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has been reported by the Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, Natalya Kochanova, and the formation of the Upper House of Belarusian Parliament was among the issues on the agenda



The Head of State noted that work is currently underway in the House of Representatives on the formation of its leadership, as well as the preparation and holding of the first session of the new deputy corps. “This is not an easy job. The volume is large, so all instructions have been given, and work is underway,” he said.

The House of Representatives is to primarily elect its leadership and chairpersons of the commissions. The necessary organisational support will be provided, and the parliamentarians will then have to oversee the process. “I want the deputies to decide for themselves how to live and work,” the Head of State explained.

In turn, the Council of the Republic represents territories, and the nomination of candidates for its members from among the regions began on March 12th. The right of nomination belongs to the presidiums of local councils of deputies of the basic level and the relevant executive committees; in the city of Minsk — to the Presidium of the Minsk City Council of Deputies and the Minsk City Executive Committee.

In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed,

“Everything should be in a very democratic way there. An honest approach is needed, and this should be done not to report to someone. We have no one to answer to except our own people. Everything should be in a worthy manner, with no formalism. After all, this is such an expert council — the Upper House of Parliament — where all the laws are studied once again after being passed by the House of Representatives. Therefore, it is necessary to carefully look at the proposed candidates elected by the relevant councils.”

There are five permanent commissions in the Council of the Republic, and Aleksandr Lukashenko particularly focused on the selection of candidates who would head them in the future. “These five people, together with the chairman and the deputy [of the Council of the Republic] will form the main core of the Upper House. I would like to know how this work is progressing, and what problems might have emerged — from the point of view of whether I need to get involved in some issues or not. We need to form Parliament, since its role is increasing. It will include members of the Belarusian People's Congress, so we can say that the core will be concentrated there. This is very important for us,” the President stressed.

## ELECTIONS, WORK IN REGIONS, DRAFT LAWS

**Professional and competent candidates are expected to participate in the upcoming elections to the Council of the Republic of the eighth convocation — as stated by Natalya Kochanova, the Chairperson of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, commenting on the details of her report to President Aleksandr Lukashenko**

On March 12th, the nomination of candidates for members of the Council of the Republic of the eighth convocation began, and the elections are scheduled for April 4th. Ms. Kochanova shared her expectations, “We hope that sufficiently professional, competent representatives will be nominated, who will represent each region with honour and dignity in the territorial representation chamber.”

In addition, the meeting also focused on the results of the work of the Council of the Republic of the seventh convocation. The tasks of the upcoming convocation and the draft laws were discussed as well.

Ms. Kochanova summed up some of the results of the work of the Council of the Republic of the seventh convocation, “The emphasis was placed on working in the regions, which are among the most important directions of Belarus’ socio-economic development — as determined by the 6th Belarusian People's Congress. The Council of the Republic members work directly in the regions; actually, only seven people work on a professional basis, and the others work in the

regions. This is a great responsibility that rests on the one who will represent [the region]: eight people from each region. Persons of worth should come, who — regardless of their time — are able to work with citizens and understand the tasks that the country faces.”

The Chairperson of the Council of the Republic expressed confidence that the current stage of the electoral campaign will be held smoothly and in an organised manner. By the way, five members of the current Council of the Republic have become deputies of the House of Representatives, and twelve have been elected to local councils of deputies.

During the work of the Council of the Republic of the seventh convocation, more than 30 thousand appeals from citizens were submitted, many meetings with citizens focusing on their personal issues and direct telephone lines were organised. In addition, 8,000+ meetings with labour teams took place countrywide.

“Aleksandr Grigorievich [Lukashenko] was interested — as he always does — in the issues and problems that people came to us with,” Ms. Kochanova added.

# ‘President has no days off’

Belarus’ President has no days off on his schedule — as noted by the press secretary of the Head of State, Natalya Eismont, in her talk with the Belarus 1 TV channel

“The President’s schedule includes not just public events, not just that Belarusians can see in TV or read on the Internet: it is full of daily reports from the heads of various authorities, structures, enterprises, and so on. These reports are made throughout a day, and often until late in the evening — and the President’s schedule has no such notion as ‘a day off’. I know for sure that our various officials, including heads of the security, law enforcement agencies and other branches of government, report to the President on an ongoing basis, also on Saturdays and Sundays. Moreover, these reports are often quite lengthy,” Ms. Eismont said.

In her talk with the Belarus 1 TV channel, the press secretary of the President of Belarus also shed light on some nuances of the formation of Aleksandr Lukashenko's work schedule.

As noted by journalists, unpredictability is peculiar for the Belarusian leader's work schedule, so they asked the press secretary what events with the President’s participation are planned for the coming future.

Natalya Eismont recalled that 2024 is Year of Quality in Belarus.

“We understand that the President will definitely turn to a wide variety of spheres and industries this year, focusing on the quality of their operation,” she said. “We know that a big conversation on industry is planned, and the President has already announced it. These are the interesting nuances of the formation of the President's schedule, when the event is promptly prepared, its materials, participants and speakers are chosen, but the President — after looking at the specifics of the proposed scenario — instructs to intensify the preparation for the event and its plan. Actually, our President believes that a meeting of the kind cannot take place, for example, without the participation of the directors of our main enterprises. The format will be expanded and strengthened, and this will be a fundamental event related to our most important branch: the industry. This is a simple example of how an event can transform, how closely the President studies it, how seriously and attentively he investigates all its nuances and details.”

Ms. Eismont is convinced that the President will pay attention to absolutely all areas this year, which is the most important for Belarus from a political point of view as well. “I think and am convinced that — together with you — I will travel a lot around the country, visiting the regions. By the way, I can tell you that the Head of State has already travelled around the fields in the Minsk Region, not far from the places where he lives — not inviting the media representatives. I know for sure that he inspected, looked at the condition of the soil, and so on. Accordingly, based on this fact, we can say that a sowing campaign is beginning, and this is also an important aspect. There will be a lot of regional trips and major events, and we can announce this already for sure.”



Natalya Eismont

## Aleksandr Lukashenko signed decree to appoint Aleksandr Yegorov as Deputy Head of President Administration

Aleksandr Yegorov has been appointed Deputy Head of Belarus’ President Administration in line with Decree No. 87 signed by Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko on March 11th, BelTA reports with reference to the Belarusian leader’s press service.

Aleksandr Lukashenko made his decision on the appropriate appointment a few days ago. On March 7th, the President held a working meeting with Aleksandr Yegorov, explaining what was the reason for the choice of his candidacy, “You are a young man, and you can see my policy that generations are changing and new persons are coming. This is how it should be, nothing should be frozen. I thought this pyramid could be topped by the Deputy Head of the Administration, and a fresh look of a young man is needed for this purpose. I have seriously studied your candidacy and biography.” Aleksandr Yegorov was born on June 16th, 1986 in Minsk. In 2007, he graduated from the Belarusian State University and, in 2012, received the master's degree at Williams College.

From 2021 until March 2024, Mr. Yegorov was Chairman of the Board of the Development Bank of the Republic of Belarus.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



# Chinese express



Aleksandr Chervyakov on the record trade turnover between Belarus and China last year and the expectations of bilateral co-operation between the countries in 2024

**In 2023, Belarusian manufacturers began to supply 134 new product names to China, thereby setting a record trade turnover between the countries. Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to China Aleksandr Chervyakov revealed what allowed the countries to secure this achievement.**

By Anastasia Zberenovskaya

Exports of domestically produced goods increased by 20 percent last year compared to 2022. Both our enterprises and the Government are currently working systematically to expand Belarus' presence on the Chinese market, which ensures consistent sales growth. Still, the potential for co-operation is higher than that, according to the Ambassador.

Aleksandr Chervyakov told in detail which Belarusian goods are most in demand in the Celestial Empire, "If we talk about export structure, the products of chemical industries are in the lead. These include various types of mineral fertilisers and so on. The second place is occupied by food and agricultural products, like dairy products, livestock products, beef. Wood-working products and rapeseed oil take the next place.

The diplomat also revealed what products Minsk supplied to Beijing in 2023 for the first time, "Our exports are formed by 332 commodity items. Last year alone, we introduced 134 new product names to the export assortment. Among these, I would mention canned meat, ice cream, wheat flour, and instant mashed potatoes. We also supply lifting machines, animal feed and more."

The Chinese side is building

a national football stadium and an international class swimming pool in Belarus. In this regard, Aleksandr Chervyakov shared what Belarusian facilities will appear in China, "The establishment of a Belarusian cultural centre in Beijing is under consideration at the moment. We really hope to launch it. This will open up a new level of opportunities for us, enabling continuous work in China. A restaurant of Belarusian cuisine

was opened in the Chinese capital last year. It is now possible to try Belarusian national dishes in Beijing."

In conclusion, the Ambassador of Belarus to China spoke about the expectations of the bilateral co-operation between the countries in 2024, "This year will be no less eventful than last year. We envisage holding a fairly large-scale economic forum in Minsk with the participation of China's and Belarus' regions."



## The pool of partners is getting wider

**The Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) has taken part in the China International Allfood Expo for the first time. This forum is one of China's largest food-related fairs. This time, the expo was held in Shenzhen (Guangdong Province), bringing together over 1.5 thousand food manufacturers from all over the world. BUCE showcased its possibilities to increase exports of Belarusian agricultural products to the market of the People's Republic of China, and to expand a pool of participants from this country in exchange trading, reported the BUCE press service.**

By Maria Druk

"Within the framework of the event, the BUCE delegation held meetings with the management of more than 50 Chinese companies on the procurement of domestic meat and dairy products, sugar and rapeseed oil, as well as on the supply of machinery and equipment for food industry to Belarus. As a result of negotiations, an agreement was reached to accredit buyers of skimmed milk powder, whey powder and beef at BUCE. In addition, Chinese manufacturers of packaging lines, freezing chambers, pasteurizers and beverage filling systems showed interest in our exchange platform. Applications for the sale of this equipment are planned to be placed at the BUCE industrial and consumer goods (ICG) platform, where an electronic import substitution service has been operating specifically for enterprises in the real sector of the economy since 2022," BUCE spokesman Roman Yaniv shared the details.

Currently, 167 Chinese residents are accredited to



BUCE. They have concluded exchange deals totalling \$26.1 million since the beginning of the year. This is 3.5 times more than in the same period of 2023. Mainly woodworking products have been supplied to China via BUCE, while products made of ferrous and non-ferrous metals have been imported.

## The project is gaining momentum

The Great Stone is developing by leaps and bounds

**This was stated by Deputy Economy Minister Alesya Abramenko during a visit to the Industrial Park**



"The total amount of taxes paid to the budget since the beginning of activities of the residents and the joint company has exceeded \$120 million. This is three times more than the government's infrastructure costs. Last year, the main indicators of the residents continued to grow. As compared to 2022, the production volume increased by 1.6 times, revenue — by 1.5 times, whereas the amount of taxes, fees and payments paid by the Great Stone residents rose by 1.8 times. The exports of goods demonstrated slight growth, yet the tendency remains positive," the Deputy Head of Economic Department pointed out.

The Deputy Economy Minister also took part in the registration ceremony of the new Industrial Park resident — Gerkon Plant LLC. The company plans to implement a project for the production of automotive electrical and electronic systems.

"These products will be in demand by the domestic flagships of the machine-building industry — MAZ, BELAZ, MTZ," the Deputy Minister stressed. "We have high hopes for this project and believe in its success."

Based on materials of sb.by



Safety, eco-friendliness, innovation, design aesthetics — what other aspects BELAZ focuses on

The road in the automotive industry of this technologically advanced and powerful auto giant, which can be compared to the symbol of Belarus — the bison, was not always so smooth. The company experienced ups and downs. Still, even in the difficult 1990s, thanks to the President’s support and talent of the plant’s leadership, BELAZ not only did not sink into oblivion, but even entered a new stage. It became possible due to the continuous development, improvement, and responsible attitude to work. This work is ongoing now — in the year that passes under the quality mark. We have learnt about what aspects the company puts emphasis on, how they work on an import-independent product at the plant, and much more in the course of our conversation with Vitaly Bylitsky, Deputy Director General for Quality System Management at BELAZ JSC.



# Powerful forward movement

By Vera Arteaga

## The key to successful competition

— This year was declared the Year of Quality in Belarus. What kind of work is being carried out at BELAZ in this direction?

— The quality of products is the key to successful competition of any enterprise. It is especially true if we are talking about BELAZ, a global manufacturer of mining equipment, whose quality is checked every day in dozens of countries around the world. In order to remain competitive, our enterprise has built a quality management system for the development, production and maintenance of dump trucks, special vehicles, automotive and road construction machinery based on the risk-oriented design and process approach using management techniques and tools in accordance with the requirements of the international standard ISO 9001:2015 and an identical national standard STB ISO 9001–2015, quality management methods in accordance with the requirements of STB 16949–2018/ IATF 16949:2016. The analysis of the causes and consequences of design and process failures has been implemented and is actively applied at BELAZ. The Production Part Approval Process (PPAP) has been implemented, and a procedure for analysing and solving product quality problems using the 8D problem-solving method is being introduced.

We also pay attention to the improvement of the professional level of our employees. This allows us to use the latest information systems in product design, industrial management, sales, warranty and post-warranty service.

This year, our enterprise, like the whole country, places special emphasis on quality. **Therefore, BELAZ JSC has developed and is implementing a Quality Programme for 2024, which provides for a number of measures in 11 sections. According to this document, this year we are particularly monitoring the effectiveness of the implemented measures in the process of product operation.**

— At a meeting on the main directions of work on quality improvement and the Quality Mark on January 5th, 2024, the President of Belarus noted that such flagships of the machine-building industry as MAZ, MTZ, BELAZ and others cannot but have a Quality Mark on their goods. Their products must be unique, competitive in international markets, and impeccable. How do you rate BELAZ’s current products? And how do you see the work on compliance with the Quality Mark?

— Being one of the world’s leading manufacturers of dump trucks, BELAZ cannot but take part in the Republican competition for the Quality Mark award. In addition, if we recall the history, it was specifically our vehicle — BELAZ–540 — back in 1967 that became the first holder of the USSR State Quality Mark.

Today, we plan to participate in the competition with a BELAZ–7513 series mining dump truck, with payload capacity of 130–136 tonnes, which has been produced since 1996. In our opinion, it is a worthy successor to innovative traditions and the result of the selfless work of many thousands of employees — it is competitive, reliable, easy to operate and, most importantly, effective.



In total, from 1996 to the present, over 5,200 units of the BELAZ–7513 series dump trucks have been manufactured in 12 modifications and more than 140 versions with a share of almost 70 percent of the global market in this class of payload capacity.

## Unique approaches and solutions

— All enterprises of the country, including those in heavy engineering, face the task of import substitution, as well as the intensification of co-operation within the framework of the Union State.

— The objectively emerging external factors serve as a good test of our ability to adjust to difficult circumstances. Striving for technological sovereignty allows BELAZ to maintain the integrity of the established production system and the technologies used.

The Russian Federation has always been and will remain to be a key strategic partner for BELAZ. The share of Russian components and materials, on average, accounts for two thirds of the production cost of our company’s goods.

The main task of BELAZ JSC today is to provide the mining industry of our key market — the Russian Federation — with an import-independent product. Within a short time, our technical spe-

cialists have developed and assembled an almost completely import-independent 220–tonne dump truck, which is more than 90 percent made up of components manufactured by the Union State enterprises.

Another equally significant product of joint work with Russian colleagues is a 130–tonne BELAZ–7513M, which stands out not only for its high level of import independence, but also for a fundamentally different operation scheme — a hybrid one, which uses a low-power diesel engine in combination with accumulator batteries.

BELAZ–7555A with payload capacity of 55–60 tonnes is worthy of special mention. The model is equipped with a Russian engine and

has a high degree of import independence of foreign components.

## The eco line is expanding

— What whole new vehicles is BELAZ working on this year?

— We continue to consistently expand the range of vehicles belonging to the eco-BELAZ line. The efforts of the best engineering potential of our company are currently focused on this direction. Last year, we already introduced a 130–tonne mining dump truck with a hybrid operation scheme, which uses hydrogen fuel cells instead of diesel.

In 2023, we also showcased a 90–tonne BELAZ–7558H dump truck powered by liquefied natural gas. This 90–tonne truck with a gas piston engine demonstrated fuel savings of up to 35 percent compared to the classic version of the dump truck.

BELAZ–7558E with payload capacity of 90 tonnes on accumulator batteries with a recovery system deserves a separate mention.

— BELAZ is actively re-equipping its machine-tool fleet as part of the investment programme. What will change in this regard, and will this become another step towards product quality improvement?

— In 2024, the enterprise continues to implement the investment project ‘Modernisation of BELAZ JSC Production for 2020–2025’. This is our most significant investment project — its total cost is estimated to be 527.3 million BYN. As part of its implementation, measures are being taken to upgrade and technically re-equip almost all technological areas at BELAZ and at its branch in Mogilev. A number of facilities are under construction at these sites; 173 units of equipment are to be purchased and 43 units — to be upgraded. One of the main priorities includes the modernisation of the assembly shop, testing of cars and truck tractors, where a wide range of work will be done — from the launch of a new automated and robotic painting complex to the replacement of all lifting cranes, the conveyor belt upgrade and much more.



ECONOMY

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# Africa is emerging as a driver of the global economy

## The South Pole of attraction



Last year, 1.46 billion people, or almost 18 percent of the world's population, lived on the African continent. It is projected that it will be inhabited by over 2 billion people by 2050. In addition, Africa can boast the ongoing rapid production growth. These are serious factors of global politics.

By Aleksey Avdonin,  
analyst at Belarusian Institute  
for Strategic Research

### Searching for points of growth

The current confrontation in Eastern Europe, the Middle East, and the Asia-Pacific region (Japan, China, North Korea, South Korea, and Taiwan) is an attempt to compensate for the existing crisis in the global economy by increased military spending and by directing budget resources to enterprises of the military and industrial complex of the West.

Nevertheless, such a war economy allows supporting GDP growth only for a while. In fact, the military and industrial complex does not create any material benefits for society in terms of housing, cars, appliances, computers or equipment. We saw the effect of such 'militarisation' on the example of the late USSR, where excessive focus on defence within the Cold War eventually led to the devastating shortage of consumer goods.

Therefore, armed conflicts are a temporary measure to combat the overproduction crisis in the global economy.

And what's next?

Next, we need to find points of growth in places which, on the one hand, have cheap labour, and on the other hand, can ensure large consumer potential to maintain the process of constant purchase and sale of new goods and services.

*After the Second World War, Japan, South Korea and Germany became such points. Since the 1970s of the 20th century, China should certainly be considered the main centre for capital attraction. Now, Africa is becoming such a centre.*

### The planet's storeroom

As many as five African countries entered the top 10 world's fastest growing economies last year, according to TradingEconomics.com — Nigeria, Rwanda, Mauritius, Angola, Namibia. For example, Nigeria's economy grew at a rate of 9.17 percent last year. The average GDP growth rate of African countries in 2024 is expected to be 4 percent.

One of the key areas of African economies is traditionally the extraction of minerals — hydrocarbons, metals, including rare earths. Up to 40 percent of the world's gold reserves, as well as up to 90 percent of chromium and platinum are concentrated on this continent. It has the largest deposits of cobalt, diamonds and



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

*"Minsk speaks in favour of a just, multipolar world and we go to Africa as friends. Our machines, vehicles, and technologies are known well on your continent. Many medics and engineers of yours have been trained in Belarusian universities. This is why we should not have any particular difficulties with establishing the dialogue. I am convinced we will not have."*

**From the statement during the talks with President of the Republic of Equatorial Guinea Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, on September 7th, 2023**

uranium. The Republic of South Africa, Madagascar, Malawi, Kenya, Namibia, Mozambique, Tanzania, Zambia and Burundi have reserves of neodymium, praseodymium and dysprosium. Guinea, in turn, contains 35 percent of the world's bauxite reserves.

Africa accounts for 65 percent of the world's arable land and about 10 percent of renewable internal freshwater resources. This determines the huge potential for agricultural development.

*That is why the President of Belarus is so actively focused on developing relations with African countries — they are potential buyers of Belarusian engineering products, fertilisers, equipment and technologies. According to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Belarus, our country has established diplomatic relations with 51 out of 54 countries of the African continent.*

Economic diplomacy in Africa is of particular importance for our country considering its export-oriented economy. With the assistance of our Ministry of Foreign Affairs, a number of Belarusian exporting enterprises, primarily MAZ (a widely known brand of Minsk Automobile Plant) and MTZ (Minsk Tractor Works) have arranged the activities of their representative offices to promote goods and services to local markets in Africa.

*It is worth noting that Belarus is going to Africa not just to supply its products and profit from exports. Our President is welcomed at a high level due to his deep conceptual understanding of the needs of African people. It is necessary to provide them with food, education, teach them*

*how to earn well and show the justice they lacked during the age of colonialism and debt slavery enforced by the International Monetary Fund and the World Bank.*

### Work within unions

As part of our work with Africa, we do not just focus on building relations with one or several states. There are a significant number of associations of countries there. One of the key unions is the African Economic Community, within which free trade zones, customs unions between countries and a single market are created. The Bank of Central African States also operates within this union. It serves as a central bank for six states of the region.

*Regional problems are solved through local unions, such as the Sana'a Cooperation Grouping, the Arab Maghreb Union, the Mano River Union, the Common Monetary Area and others.*

Along with that, the high profitability and attractiveness of this continent holds significant risks, which are taken into account by corporations when building work in this region. The main economic risks include a price rise in food products and energy sources, significant unemployment and high loan rates, the lack of adequate road infrastructure, increased costs for servicing internal and external debts, strong population stratification in terms of income and an uneven educational level of the workforce.

The raw material export model of African economies makes them extremely dependent on fluctuations in world prices and global crises. In addition, it should be pointed out that despite having gained independence, African countries have for a long period remained de facto at the mercy of Western corporations. Africa was forced to sell them its mineral and labour resources at an extremely low cost.

African economies are characterised by a high level of structural budget deficit and an increase in public debt. The dependence on international financial institutions such as the IMF and the World Bank hinders the development of new sectors of economy and the implementation of structural reforms. Moreover, climate disasters and changes in the political course of countries act as negative factors, as well.

Despite all these risks, Africa attracts key players in global politics and economy.

### The core of the new world

Thus, in early February 2024, the Italian government held the 1st Italy-Africa Summit. The international meeting in Rome was attended by delegations representing major African organisations and 44 countries of the continent. The Italian plan for the development of co-operation with Africa — the Mattei Plan — presented at the summit, assumes the development of relations in the main areas of economy and in the field of sustainable development.

Italians intend to gain a foothold in Africa in the agricultural sector, too. The Mattei Plan provides for collaboration in five pillars — water, education and training, agriculture, healthcare and energy.

However, illegal migration and the flow of refugees serve as a deterrent to good relations between Italy (that is — the EU) and Africa. Italy bears the brunt as refugees from Africa head to Europe.

The rapid withdrawal of African countries from pro-Western organisations also has a negative impact on the successful outcome of European initiatives in Africa. Thus, on February 3rd, 2023, it became known that three ECOWAS member countries, against which the other community members plus France imposed sanctions — Mali, Niger and Burkina Faso — announced their withdrawal from the association. The countries are determined to abandon the French patronage and achieve independent sustainable development.

*For us, Belarusians, the very fact that African countries are close to us in terms of ideology is important — we jointly advocate for an equal world without patronage, colonies, hegemony and exploitation. Africa can become the ideological core of the struggle for a new multipolar world.*

Summing up the above, Africa is a fast-growing region, a promising driver of the global economy. Yet, only those countries that carry the ideas of justice, honesty and equality can win the co-operation with it. Belarus is one of them.





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

*"We pursue an open and peaceful policy. Yet, not all Western democracies like this. And then, the arguments of powerlessness — sanctions — come into play."*

**During the presentation of credentials, on September 28th, 2023**

**By Anton Popov**

### The 'democratic' genocide

The current sanctions against Belarus were imposed after our country had repelled a powerful attack by the West that used the full range of 'colour revolution' technologies. The blitzkrieg, like the one back in 1941 near

Moscow, failed. Thus, the second phase of the confrontation began — a slow siege. The economic pressure had almost zero effect, though. The republic quickly refocused on co-operation with the global East and South, in a sense even benefiting from the restrictions slapped against our country. And then, the West decided it was the time to move on to the old all-time favourite methods, which reek of the cremation furnaces of Auschwitz a mile away.

This refers to the West's decision to stop the supply of critical medicine, which is vital for people with disabilities and sick children, to our country. At the 154th session of the WHO Executive Board at the end of January, outrageous facts were announced to the Belarusian representatives. Those facts were related to an unmotivated cessation of medical supplies that some categories of patients urgently need. The report provides specific examples of European companies. Thus, the Swedish company Mölnlycke Health Care refused to supply Belarus with bandages for palliative treatment of children suffering from epidermolysis bullosa. It is a hereditary disease characterised by the formation of blisters and erosions on the skin and mucous membranes, skin vulnerability and sensitivity to minor mechanical injuries. The main method of symptomatic treatment is wound care using special dressing material produced specifically by Mölnlycke Health Care. The absence of atraumatic non-adhesive materials causes additional suffering to the patient, significantly impairing the quality of life and leading to complications.

The list of the companies that have put politics above medical ethics and universal concepts of humanism and compassion also includes the Polish Tarchomin Pharmaceutical Works Polfa S.A., which canceled the supply of drugs for treating epilepsy and somatic diseases; the manufacturer of drugs for osteoporosis, the British company Atnahs Pharma UK Limited, as well as the Finnish pharmaceutical Orion Corporation, whose products are used to treat patients with Parkinson's disease and various forms of cancer.

The report notes the special role of the UK Medicines and Healthcare Products Regulatory Agency, which artificially delays the procedure for issuing a licence to export morphine tablets to Belarus used to alleviate the condition of patients suffering from cancer and the consequences of severe traumas.

***The West is deliberately targeting the most vulnerable categories of our citizens supported by the state.***

Unscrupulous political tycoons are trying to destroy the image of Belarus as a social state built up by hard work. The systematic approach of foreign political managers in this direction is evidenced by the fact that problems with the supply of medical equipment and medicines are not on the wane.

In May last year, when speaking at the plenary session of the World Health Assembly, the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the UN Office and other international organisations in Geneva, Larisa Belskaya, pointed out that increased sanctions pressure by individual states could pose a threat to providing the necessary drugs to those most in need. The representative of Belarus called for the WHO to keep this issue in the focus of attention and counter the sanctions policy.

At the end of December 2023, Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko drew attention to the hypocrisy of European politicians who had stated that the

sanctions would not affect the humanitarian sphere, but in fact it turned out that at their behest, large pharmaceutical companies actively joined the illegal sanctions pressure, as well.

***The cessation of the supply of medical equipment and drugs looks like an attempt at genocide. There is hardly any fundamental difference between punisher Vladimir Katriuk, a participant in a punitive expedition during World War II, who is now posthumously tried for the murder of hundreds of civilians, and top managers of Mölnlycke Health Care or Orion Corporation, who neglect people in need of their help. For sure, the Belarusian state will not abandon anyone in need and will do everything possible to provide its citizens with all the necessities. However, it is the context that is important in this case — the true goals of the West are now visible as under a magnifying glass.***

### A dreadful practice

Belarus, alas, is not the first country to face such a disgusting attempt to exert pressure. Cuba, Venezuela, Iran, Syria are countries that dared to challenge Western hegemony. In response, western politicians tried to bring these countries to submission, including by depriving them of vital medicines. The critical situation unfolded during the Syrian Civil War. In an interview to RT, Head of Cancer Care Syria Muzzna al-Ulabi said in October 2016 that in almost all cases where children died of cancer, European sanctions were to blame as they blocked the supply of vital medications.

***The ban on the supply of anticancer drugs in Aleppo alone led to the death of 30 out of 200 children with cancer at that time. A year later, ten little patients died in the oncology department of the Children Hospital in Latakia per month due to the lack of necessary medicine. A high mortality rate was also recorded in the cardiology department due to the cardiovascular drug shortages artificially created by the West.***

A similar situation was observed in Venezuela, where even before the COVID-19 pandemic, 85–90 percent of medical supplies and critical medicines were missing due to sanctions. In this regard, Pablo Zambrano, Executive Secretary of the Federation of Healthcare Workers, emphasised the wear and tear of diagnostic equipment in 2019.

The ban on the supply of vital drugs and medical equipment is the crime against humanity on the part of the West.

Belarusian pharmacologists, in liaison with their counterparts from Russia, China, Cuba and other countries, are actively working on import substitution. And the problems are solved. We have made sure of the fact that sovereignty should also spread to the medical area. A lot has been done to achieve this. At present, there are no difficulties in providing clinics and pharmacies with basic medicines. Individual medical positions are covered, as well. Yet, the stigma of punishers who are trying to kill sick children and the disabled will never be removed from the face of Western governments. Then again, it is difficult to expect otherwise from those who once put racial discrimination on a pedestal, bringing antihuman ideology to the level of practical implementation in ghettos and concentration camps.

**EU officials are very fond of pontificating about 'democratic values' and how to best put them into practice. Especially if this is the case of not Western countries, but of those who seek to develop independently. Various types of punishment have been invented for the disobedient, and one of them is sanctions. International political bigwigs adore this instrument of pressure and consider it an extremely effective tool. Our 'zmagary' [Belarusian protesters involved in an attempted 2020 coup d'état] play along with them, adhering to the 'the worse, the better' principle. This is how they show their true colours. Our state, in contrast, strives to build international contacts and make people's lives better, regardless.**

Why the West denies medical care to the disabled and sick children

# Medical fascism





# Effective intercultural communication

Belarusian–Chinese resource centre for effective intercultural communication proposed to be established during the *Modern Woman in Development of Science and Education* two-day Belarusian–Chinese forum held at the Minsk State Linguistic University

The forum — focusing on new ideas and projects, as well as the discussion of topical problems and untapped opportunities — gathered more than a hundred of representatives of the People's Republic of China, as well as rectors of Belarusian universities, school directors and teachers.

As noted by Belarus' First Deputy Education Minister, Aleksandr Bakhanovich, during the opening ceremony,

the role of women in science and education is steadily growing. Women's professional qualities in the education system are not worse than those of men, but even tower above them: they are intensified by female wisdom and sensitivity, warmth and maternal care towards students and pupils.

Mr. Bakhanovich added that the event aimed to continue and enhance the initiatives of the Belarusian

Women's Union at the international level, "Friendship between our peoples is really all-weather. We share common traditional values, and these include respect for women and recognition of their significant contribution to the development of all spheres of society — especially in the field of education and science."

In turn, Xie Xiaoyong, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the People's Republic of China to Belarus, noted that the co-operation between women of Belarus and China plays an important role in strengthening relations and mutual understanding between peoples. "Women are now making a special contribution to the development of science and education, and our governments attach great importance to this process. After all, women play an increasingly important role here — due to their talent, patience, responsibility, and enthusiasm," he said.

The diplomat stressed that Chinese–Belarusian relations are now at a high level, "Co-operation between the countries is developing very successfully and effectively in various fields. In particular, active interactions have been established between our women's organisations. The Chinese Federation of Women and the Belarusian Women's Union enjoy good relations, and our female parliamentarians also have strong working ties."

Xie Xiaoyong believes that — thanks to the interaction between women's organisations, multi-level and specialised exchanges — ladies take an active part in political life. "This helps concentrate the power of women for sustainable development of Belarusian–Chinese relations," he stated.

The idea of creating a Belarusian–Chinese resource centre on the basis of the Minsk State Linguistic University to ensure effective intercultural communication was voiced during the forum. As explained by MSLU Rector Natalia Lapteva, a foundation in the form of effective intercultural communication is needed to solve the task of dynamic development of relations that Belarus and China face today.

"We hope that the guests of the forum will support our proposal to create such a centre and will also become its participants to gain more in-depth knowledge about the culture of communication in Belarus and China, meet with speakers who will share their experience of communication at the international level, and participate in training sessions and master classes," Ms. Lapteva said.



## US bill to ban TikTok

Republican and Democratic lawmakers have introduced legislation that would ban app stores from distributing TikTok unless ByteDance, its Chinese owner, divests control of the popular video-sharing platform

The bipartisan bill from Mike Gallagher, the Republican Chair of the House China Committee, his Democratic counterpart Raja Krishnamoorthi and 17 lawmakers would give ByteDance 165 days to divest TikTok to avoid the app from being banned.

The measure could have implications for the US election. President Joe Biden's re-election campaign has started using the video streaming service to try to connect with young voters, even though the White House previously backed a bill that would have given the commerce department the authority to ban apps such as TikTok.

TikTok said, "This bill is an outright ban of TikTok, no matter how much the authors try to disguise it. This legislation will trample the first amendment rights of 170m Americans and deprive 5m small

businesses of a platform they rely on to grow and create jobs."

The Biden administration and the previous Trump administration both identified TikTok as a security risk, partly because Chinese law requires domestic companies to share data when requested by Beijing. Some lawmakers say China could use the platform to spread disinformation to try to meddle with US democracy.

In recent congressional testimony, FBI director Christopher Wray said the streaming service was a tool that was ultimately under the control of the Chinese government and that it 'screams out with national security concerns'.

One congressional aide said the bill was a 'monumental moment' and that there was a 'huge groundswell of bipartisan support' for the measure on Capitol Hill.

## Fury of EU farmers continues

A majority of European Union countries are urging the bloc's executive to speed up its review of agricultural policies and develop a concrete plan for measures to ease unrest among farmers across the region — as reported by Bloomberg News

Agriculture ministers from 22 of the EU's 27 states say they want to see strong and immediate action with specific milestones to resolve issues including conditions for financial support, according to a letter sent last week to the European Commission and seen by Bloomberg News.

"It is crucial for us to be able to communicate to farmers about the mid-term changes before autumn and to make them as visible as possible," said the ministers from countries including France, Spain, Poland and Italy. The letter was addressed to commission Vice President Maros Sefcovic and Agriculture Commissioner Janusz Wojciechowski.

European farmers have been protesting falling incomes and rising costs, unfair competition from countries out-

side the bloc, as well as climate-focused legislation under the EU's Green Deal to zero out emissions by 2050.

Meanwhile, Poland saw its most violent protest by farmers and supporters yet as some participants threw stones at police and tried to push through barriers around Parliament, injuring several officers. Police used tear gas and said they detained more than fifty participants after this major protest. Farmers on tractors blocked highways leading into Warsaw while thousands of their supporters gathered in front of the PM's office before marching to the Parliament. Some trampled a EU flag and burned a mock coffin bearing the word 'farmer'.

Farmers were joined by miners, foresters, hunters and other supporters.



Farmers burn a coffin symbolising the death of Polish agriculture on a bonfire outside the PM's office during the demonstration in Warsaw

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Para bellum?

This phrase is literally translated from Latin as ‘prepare for war’. Let us reflect on what a new arms race gaining momentum is leading the world to.

It is generally believed that the main trends that shaped the world agenda from 1945 to 1991 were the confrontation between the USSR and the USA, known as the Cold War, and the arms race between them. Both of these concepts are inseparable, since both giants could dictate an unyielding will relying on colossal military power sufficient to destroy a rival and its allies, and the rapid development of the military and industrial complex would be impossible without a political order.

By Anton Popov

## Stake on modernisation

It is believed that the end of the first arms race coincided with the end of the Cold War. The Soviet Union fell due to a number of external and internal reasons. The West in general and the United States in particular considered themselves the winners in that confrontation, and philosopher Francis Fukuyama published his famous essay ‘The End of History’ and proclaimed the triumph of liberal values. Throughout the 1990s, this concept seemed to be quite fair — Russia and the CIS were struggling to get out of the crisis of the late and post-Soviet era, while NATO was cleaning up the breakaway countries of the former socialist camp around the world that refused to voluntarily agree to join a global consumer society.

With the collapse of the USSR, the West had no need for constant rapid upgrading of its armed forces. During the Cold War, this need was compelling — as soon as one of the parties showcased a certain military novelty for the troops, the opponent immediately developed an antidote, at the same time hastily strengthening the on-duty samples. In contrast, in the era of the neocolonial wars of the 1990s – 2010s, it was enough to use gradually upgraded, well-proven equipment.

Vyacheslav Shpakovsky, a well-known Russian researcher of the history of weapons, has suggested calling this process sluggish modernisation. Indeed, if you look at the timing of creation, commissioning and upgrading of new pieces of armament during the Cold War and in the next three decades, it becomes clear that the expert is not far from the truth.

## Food for the god of war

The start of confrontation with the West and the beginning of the special military operation (SMO) in Ukraine brought the global military and industrial complex out of thirty years of dormancy. A large-scale conflict, equal to which Europe has not seen since 1945, brought civilisation back to the days when artillery shells were the main deficit, and a keen engineering thought started to work anew on inventions in order to hit the enemy even more effectively.

The arms race, the initial stage of which we

## BY THE WAY

In the current situation, the Republic of Belarus has chosen the path of a reasonable approach to the army modernisation. Our country does not enter an arms race, yet at the same time we maintain a high level of combat readiness of the Armed Forces. As the Deputy Defence Minister for Armament, Chief of Armament of the Armed Forces, Major General Andrei Fedin told the VoenTV channel in an interview, the arsenal of the Belarus’ Armed Forces will be replenished with Mi-35M attack helicopters and Tor-M2 surface-to-air defence missile systems this year. The ground forces will be supplied with upgraded T-72BM2 tanks. Modernised BTR-70MB armoured personnel carriers will continue to be sent to special operations forces. The intelligence agency will receive *Rogneda* air monitoring complexes. There is heightened interest in drones and means of combating enemy drones. “Definitely, a lot of attention will be paid to such areas as rocket science and the fight against unmanned aerial vehicles. This is the key direction nowadays,” Dmitry Pantus, Chairman of the State Authority for Military Industry, told BelTA before the meeting of the board ‘On Results of Activities of the State Authority for Military Industry and its Affiliate Organisations in 2023 and Tasks for 2024’.

are witnessing now, touches upon quality and quantity issues. The latter indicator primarily concerns not only units of equipment or weapons, but also the amount of ammunition they can be provided with. According to the data announced by Russian President Vladimir Putin in March 2023, the Armed Forces of Ukraine use about 5 thousand shells a day. In November last year, the British daily broadsheet newspaper, *The Telegraph*, specified the figure of 6 thousand shells for the Armed Forces of Ukraine and about 20 thousand shells for the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation per day. Other sources report that during the peak moments of the summer offensive, Ukrainians fired more than 7 thousand shells daily, while Russians — about 40–50 thousand. Such expenditure figures are comparable to those during the times of world wars. This burden falls on the shoulders of economies that existed in a different paradigm for the last 30 years.

Russia successfully overcame the difficulties with ammunition supply that the troops experienced in the autumn–winter of 2022 and that persisted in some areas until the spring of 2023. According to the Russian Defence Ministry, the Armed Forces received more than 20 million rounds of ammunition with an 82 to 240 mm caliber over the past year. The West seriously lags behind — in 2022, the United States produced 14–15 thousand 155 mm shells per month, and in 2023, it boosted its production to over 20 thousand. By 2025, a sharp increase to 70 thousand shells per

month is planned. NATO can offer some more — the organisation is going to produce 42 thousand shells per month in 2024 and 75 thousand a year later. The EU had planned to transfer 1 million artillery shells to the Kiev regime by spring 2024 before German Defence Minister Boris Pistorius confirmed that the EU would be unable to fulfill its promise, ‘It is safe to assume that the one million rounds will not be reached’.

*In terms of the SMO, it is important to understand that Russia relies on its own industrial base. Ukraine, however, having exhausted the Soviet-era arsenals, totally depends on supplies from NATO countries. The shell starvation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in recent months is nothing else than the consequence of the depletion of the alliance’s reserves and the fact that Germany, France and other Western countries have failed to promptly transfer their economies to military rails.*

## Robots go into battle

The second aspect of the arms race is qualitative. It is generally admitted that major military conflicts push engineering forward. Thus, the SMO became the catalyst for a real revolution in military affairs. This refers to the massive emergence of drones on the battlefield.

Sea, air, and ground drones are not only used today in a wide variety of theatres of war, from Ukraine to Sudan, from Gaza to Yemen, but are also being continuously upgraded. For example, the Russian *Lancet* kamikaze drone, which has become one of the main means of counter-battery warfare, received a target acquisition and guidance system and a thermal imager just in the last year and a half, increasing the range up to 70 kilometres.

The next stage of the military revolution will be the use of artificial intelligence. The first steps in this direction have already been taken.

AI is already actively used to analyse large amounts of



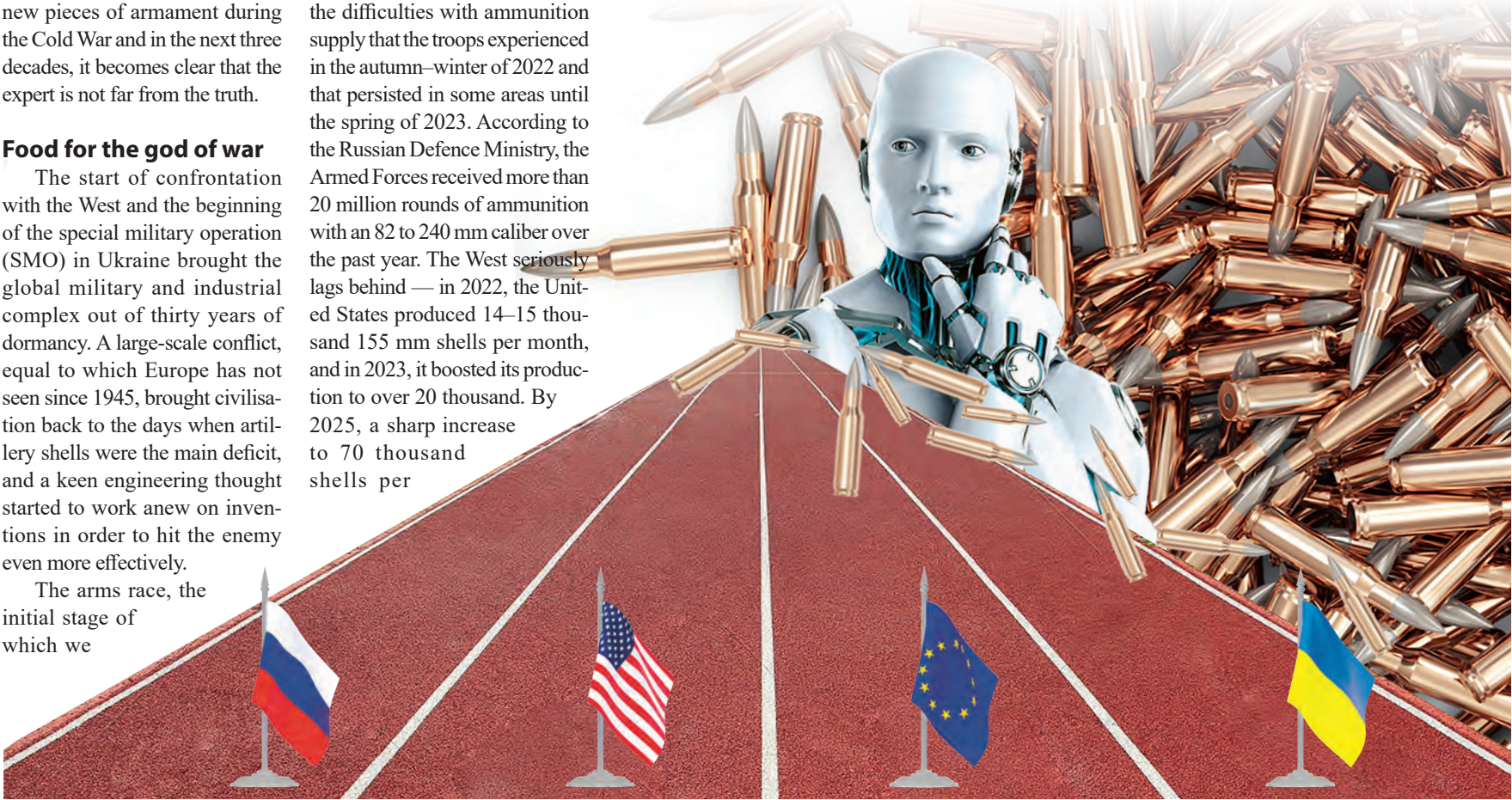
The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“Today, European nations are dragged into a reckless arms race, mired in economic stagnation and moral depression. They are being drawn into a conflict with Russia, into a confrontation with China. And look, they are afraid to even lift a finger and make a decision in the interests of their people. Do you think they wanted to deliver Leopards there [to Ukraine]? Especially the Germans, who were forced to ramp up their production and send them there. Did they want it? No. Still, they supply everything there. They were ordered by the Washington regional committee — and they did it. Here is the discipline!.. Yet, not long ago, the pragmatic co-operation of the European Union with Belarus and Russia brought them tangible benefits.”

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

data, especially those related to traditional reconnaissance and open-source intelligence (OSINT), as well as analysis of satellite images. An American company, *Palantir Technologies*, whose main investor is the CIA, provided the Armed Forces of Ukraine with the integrated battle management software used in the battle for Bakhmut last year. The report by David Ignatius for *The Washington Post* revealed that the software package collected data from participants in the battle, Ukrainian spies on the ground, and UAVs in the air, allowing a complete picture of what was happening on the battlefield to be formed.

The new arms race is a serious challenge for humanity. It is not once nor twice that the world was on the verge of destruction during the Cold War. The challenges that civilisation is facing now are even more severe. After all, artificial intelligence is entering the arena now along with politicians, military commanders and soldiers of flesh and blood.





# Maslenitsa celebrations in Belarus



Danya Titova



Anton Stepanischew



Aleksandr Kushner



BELTA

A richly set Maslenitsa table with a variety of pancake dishes is the tradition of the week to see off the winter

By Sofia Arsenyeva

## Dudutki

The popular museum complex of ancient crafts and technologies is famous for its large-scale festivities. Dear guests are greeted with pancakes and branded brews literally from the doorstep. Next — dancing! The *Guliaj*, *Bulbash* and *Zhyvitsa* ensembles, the *Svyata* band will perform here at the Maslenitsa festival. Pillow fights, throwing wooden clubs, and wooden horse speed riding will take place in separate locations. Belarusian folk tales ‘The Devil’, ‘The Proud Piglet’ and ‘The Certified Ram’ will be shown at the *batleika* site (Belarusian puppet theatre). An interesting feature is that the guests will need to make fire themselves to burn the Winter effigy.

## Zdravnevo

Ivan Shmelev wrote about Maslenitsa better than anyone, “... pancakes again and again. Stuffed pancakes. These are followed by aspic, and pancakes again — this time, with two fillings. After them, steamed sturgeon, baked pancakes... milk pancakes, light pancakes, pancakes with eggs...” You may want to add only one thing — mouth-watering!

In the Zdravnevo estate near Vitebsk, it is planned to feed several hundred guests with pancakes. The delicacy will be cooked right outdoors, according to a special *Zdravnevsky* recipe. Various fillings and fragrant tea from the samovar will be served for pancakes. The festive programme also includes round dances, burning the effigy and pony rides for the youngest. By the way, every participant in the celebration will be able to go on an excursion to the Ilya Repin Museum Manor.

## Pripyatsky National Park

Our ancestors believed that all circular movements and round objects help the sun to complete the annual cycle faster and accelerate the arrival of spring. That is why they saw off the winter with round dances and pancakes. The Pripyatsky National Park, which is in the heart of Polesie, traditionally arranges ethno style Maslenitsa celebrations.

Folklore songs and dances, folk rituals and hearty oven-baked dishes are waiting for tourists. Local hostesses will teach children how to beautifully paint gingerbread cookies, and men will show how to make birdhouses.

## Korobchitsy

For delicious impressions, go to the western part of the country — just five kilometres from Grodno, the local Meat-Packing Plant has equipped a luxurious agro-tourist complex. People normally come here to ride horses and take a break from the city hustle and bustle. But during the Maslenitsa celebrations, the complex always guarantees a rich cultural and gastronomical programme for its visitors. The complex makes sure to provide master classes on baking thin pancakes, and never-ending tastings of meat processing plant products.

You can also ride on the stove with Yemelya [Russian fairy-tale character] or try your hand at mock mace fights. Of course, the celebrations would not be complete without conquering the Maslenitsa pillar! Sausages, polendvitsa [dry-cured pork fillet with spices] and jamon will be awaiting the winners at the top. Here is the entertainment for the bravest — a swimming race in hats with earflaps and kokoshniks [traditional Russian headdress worn by women]. All participants will receive exclusive treats from the organisers.

## Stankovo

Large families with children will definitely enjoy the ecotourism centre near Minsk. Before the start of Maslenitsa festivities, it is offered to visit the zoological garden there to see peacocks and pheasants, foxes and raccoons, llamas and mouflons, lynxes and tigers, and more. Everyone is delighted to watch the two besties — Vasilisa the bear and Anfisa the dog. Having walked along the eco-paths to your heart’s content, you can recharge your batteries by eating pancakes and then participate in a variety of games and contests. The Minsk retro women’s trio ‘Pink Roses’ will be in charge of the music programme in Stankovo this year. A spectacular fire show is planned before the burning of the straw-stuffed effigy.



BELTA



# Facing an ace

## The international sports law has turned into a cheap circus

**Fiat iustitia, ruat mundus! In ancient times, they used to say, ‘Let justice be done, though the world perish’ and they tried to adhere to this principle. At least, they did not trample cynically on it, demonstrating an utterly disrespectful attitude towards the opponent and everyone else. Nowadays, the rules have changed and a different postulate is in use — the one is right who has more rights.**

**In other words, whoever has the gold makes the rules. It is a secret to no one that Russian and Belarusian athletes have to face a continuous ban from all international competitions, contrary to all norms of law and moral integrity, forced to bend to selfish political interests of Western bigwigs. However, the blatant arrogance and unscrupulousness of the latter seem to go beyond the bounds of reason at times.**

By Sergei Kanashits

### Turn the judge into soap!

All credit goes to the ATP and WTA — the governing bodies of the elite level of tennis competitions for men and women, respectively — for the fact that our tennis players continue to participate in the largest tennis tournaments. There have been attempts to back them into a corner by exerting serious pressure on both associations, but it did not work out. Aryna Sabalenka, Daniil Medvedev, and other Belarusian and Russian representatives of the big tennis keep collecting victories, and delight their fans with new trophies. However, the International Tennis Federation (ITF) persists in doing everything in its power to ensure that the Belarusian Tennis Federation (BTF) has the status of an outcast. Back in the second half of 2020, Belarus was banned from organising and holding international tournaments on its territory. After that, referring to the IOC’s recommendations, the ITF deprived Belarus of the right to compete in team competitions. In addition, the ITF membership of the Belarusian national tennis federation was suspended. Such decisions, accompanied by the demonstration of outright hostility and contempt, do not stand up to scrutiny and have no grounds whatsoever. The Belarusian Tennis Federation has been trying to prove this from a legal perspective by appealing to the courts and filing appeals for several years now.

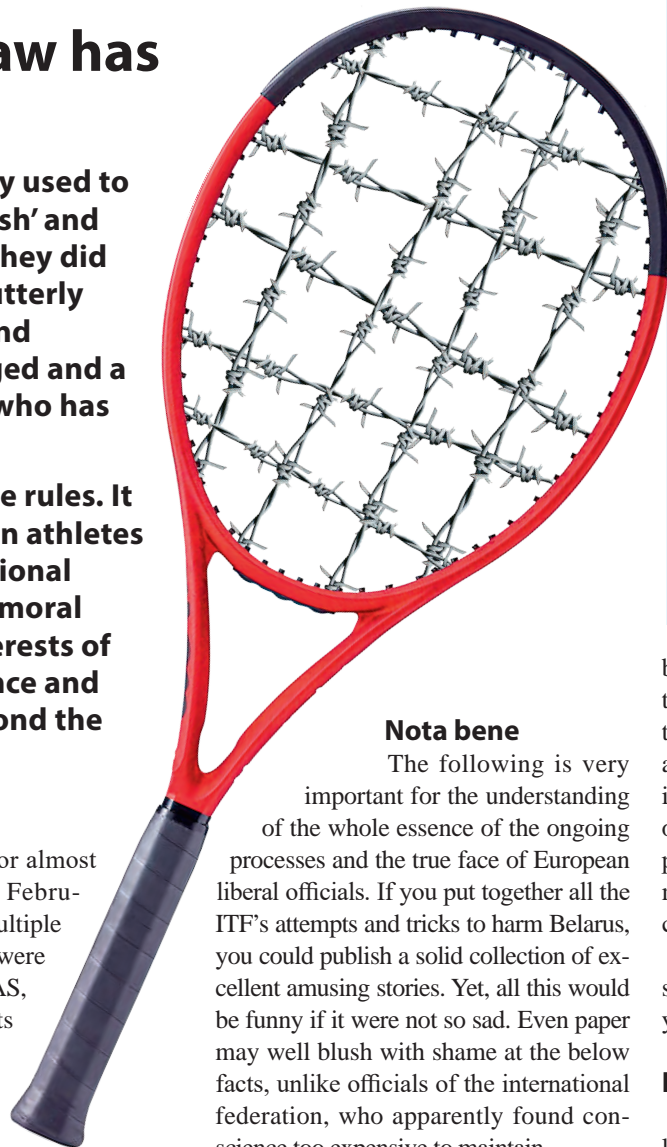
The imitation of the proceedings in this regard at the Court of Arbitration for Sport (CAS) in Lausanne, which until now had a reputation as a more or less

honest office, lasted for almost two years. Thus, on February 9th, 2024, after multiple postponements (there were seven of them!), the CAS, shamelessly closing its eyes to a host of obvious violations, lies and fraud, ruled... in favour of the ITF!

*“Unfortunately, I clearly see that the Olympic movement is degrading,” summed up BTF Chairman Sergei Rutenko. “Moreover, neither the IOC, the ITF, nor the CAS oppose this situation in any way. In fact, they contribute to the split in the Olympic movement. Regrettably, athletes are just a source of profit and income for them; they do not try to protect them in any way.”*

Sergei Rutenko called the CAS’ decision and all the surrounding circumstances ‘a legal disgrace’ — and this is the mildest of all possible formulations. They are just hammering our country brazenly into the ground with a sledgehammer, while the so-called legal guarantors prefer to watch this mayhem of lawlessness silently from the sidelines and not interfere.

Having made public all the facts of the lawlessness taking place, the BTF has clearly demonstrated that the Belarusian side has to confront monsters and complete scoundrels, who have recently stopped even trying to hide behind any norms or laws, but hit where it hurts most.



### Nota bene

The following is very important for the understanding of the whole essence of the ongoing processes and the true face of European liberal officials. If you put together all the ITF’s attempts and tricks to harm Belarus, you could publish a solid collection of excellent amusing stories. Yet, all this would be funny if it were not so sad. Even paper may well blush with shame at the below facts, unlike officials of the international federation, who apparently found conscience too expensive to maintain.

Here are just a few disgraceful facts of many.

- The ITF explained the ban on holding competitions on the territory of Belarus by alleged insecurity for foreign participants, based on a report by some ‘independent’ consultants and articles on the Internet.

- The Davis Cup World Group I Playoff match postponed from Belarus to Mexico was cancelled only after the last official representative of our team had arrived in Mexico City; although just the day before, ITF representatives assured that the match would take place.

- At the ITF extraordinary general conference, where the suspension of the BTF and the Russian Federation membership was ratified, Sergei Rutenko’s microphone was simply turned off during his speech, although he had spoken even less than a quarter of the time allotted according to the regulations. This was done intentionally, to prevent the BTF Chairman from providing ironclad arguments of the Belarusian side.

- Sergei Rutenko’s refusal to comment on the conflict in Ukraine, referring to the fact that the conference was being held in a sports organisation which is not the proper place to discuss political issues, was interpreted by the officials for their own benefit. The counter-argument that,

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

*“You are trying to exclude strong competitors from international sports. You want to take away our sports victories. You are killing the spirit and meaning of the Olympic movement. This is a sign of weakness and your fear. This is an attempt to hide behind the iron curtain from the truth of life. This is recognition of the strength of our deep values, which are shared by the vast majority of people on the planet, including ordinary Europeans and Americans.”*

**At the solemn opening ceremony of the 2nd CIS Games, on August 5th, 2023**

based on their logic it could be argued that the ITF and CAS support and contribute to wars, for example, between Palestine and Israel or the US military intervention in Syria, Iraq, the former Yugoslavia and other countries, since they have never publicly condemned these conflicts, was met in the same way — with the threat of cutting off the microphone.

This is democracy and freedom of speech in action. And what else would you expect?

### Lying through his teeth

During the appeal proceeding, the Belarusian side repeatedly caught ITF President David Haggerty in a lie. This highly dishonourable gentleman did not even try to stick to the truth. Instead, he was talking such nonsense and absurdity that one might get scared. Thus, he made up a story that FIFA and UEFA allegedly suspended Belarusian football players from their matches. Haggerty claimed that the majority of representatives of the world community demanded in writing that Belarus be removed from the ITF membership. Yet, he could not provide any confirmation of his words. He stated that President of the Kazakhstan Tennis Federation Bulat Utemuratov advocated the removal of our federation from the ITF membership, although it was exactly the opposite — Utemuratov is a great friend of our federation and he openly stated this.

Who Mr. Haggerty is after those far-fetched statements and what epithets he deserves — decide for yourselves. We will only say that he is an American, a graduate of the elite George Washington University School of Business and a former chief of the United States Tennis Association. You would agree that these facts explain a lot. And, for sure, he is also a big scoundrel on top of that. Like all those who continue to suffocate our country with unjustified sanctions.

## ARENA

### ● Belarus President’s hockey team has won its sixth victory in the Republican Hockey League

On the ice of Minsk’s Olympic Arena, the Presidential squad defeated hockey players from Vitebsk Region in the final match of the preliminary stage with a score of 13:3 (4:0, 3:0, 6:3). Nikolai Lukashenko and Ruslan Solodkin were recognised as the best players of this match. Earlier this season, the Presidential squad was victorious against hockey players from Brest Region (7:2), Minsk Region (9:4), Gomel Region (12:6), Mogilev Region (8:4) and Grodno Region (10:4).



### ● Belarusian taekwondo fighter Gurtsiev has secured Olympic licence

The 2024 European Taekwondo Qualification Tournament for Paris Olympic Games was held in Sofia, Bulgaria, where 16 licences were at stake. Belarus’ taekwondo athlete Georgii Gurtsiev performed in the weight category up to 58 kg. Having won a number of bright victories, Gurtsiev took first place and, accordingly, obtained an Olympic licence. Another athlete from the Belarusian national team, Artsiom Plonis performing in the weight category over 80 kg was close to winning an Olympic licence, but stopped just one step away from the goal, taking third place.



### ● FC Minsk football players raise the Belarus Women Super Cup for the seventh time

In the match for the first trophy of the new season, Andrei Pyshnik’s charges defeated on their field the national champions, Dinamo–BGUFC football players, with a score of 1:0. This is the first victory for FC Minsk over Dinamo–BGUFC in all tournaments in many years and the first trophy since 2020, when they also took the Super Cup.

The FC Minsk players have the total of 7 Super Cup wins, Dinamo–BGUFC and Zorka–BDU owned it three times, and FC Bobruichanka won two Super Cup trophies.





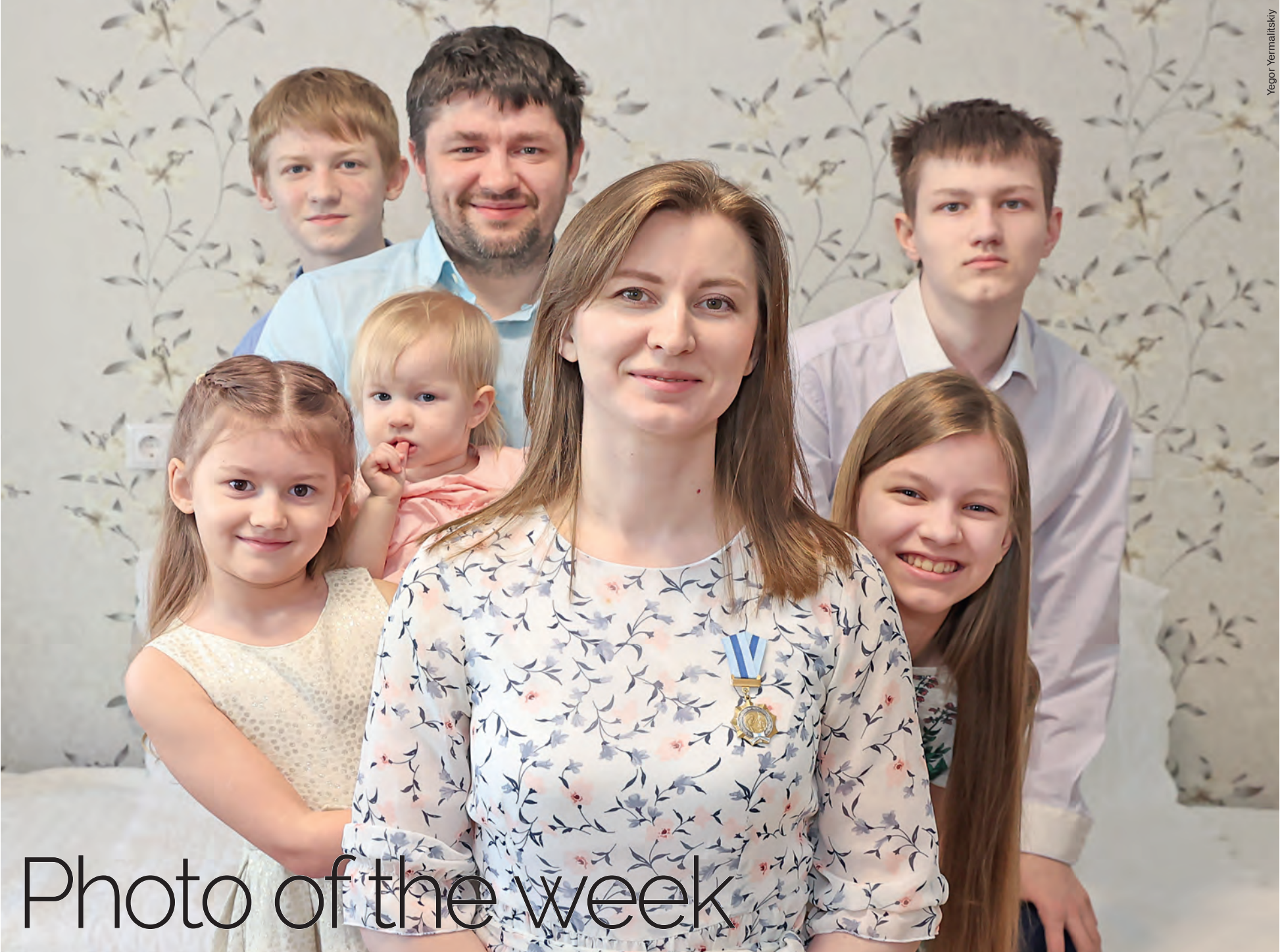


Photo of the week

On the eve of March 8th, Svetlana Zuyeva, musical director of kindergarten No. 337 in Minsk, received a state award — Aleksandr Lukashenko presented her with the Order of Mother. In the photo: the Zuyev family with their children.

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**March 15th, 2024** is World Sleep Day. Sleep is a special state of organism, no less complex than daytime wakefulness. On

average, every person spends a third of their life sleeping. Sleeping less by only 4 hours reduces reaction, impairs memory, and can lead to an exacerbation of various diseases.

**March 15th** is the International Day of Action for Seals aimed at the protection of seal pups. Harp seal pups have been hunted for many decades, primarily because of their beautiful fur. The demand for fur, most often dictated by fashion trends, pushes people to kill these animals in huge numbers. On this day, various campaigns and demonstrations against the slaughter of seal pups take place in many countries.



**March 16th, 1859** marks the date of birth of Alexander Popov (1859–1906), a Russian physicist and electrical engineer, one of the first to use electromagnetic waves for practical purposes, including for radio communications. On May 7th, 1895, he demonstrated the world's first radio receiver he had invented.



**March 16th** is the Coloured Pencil Day. Coloured pencils became widespread only at the beginning of the 20th century. Mass production and

availability of coloured pencils turned them into an indispensable attribute of creativity for children and teenagers enabling them to express emotions, mood and thoughts through drawing or colouring.

**On March 18th, 1844,** Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov (1844–1908) was born, a Russian composer, teacher, conductor, and a well-known public figure. He is the author of 15 operas, symphonic music, romantic songs, and collections of folk song arrangements. He is known as a 'fairy-tale' and 'folk' composer thanks to his operas for folklore and fairy-tale subjects.

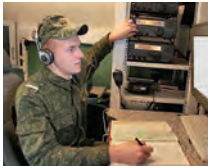


**On March 18th,** Belarus celebrates the Day of Internal Troops. The official task of the Belarus' internal troops is to 'protect the life, health, the rights, freedoms and legitimate interests of citizens, society and the state, the constitutional system, safety and sovereignty of the Republic of Belarus from criminal and other illegal encroachments'.



**March 18th, 1965** is the day of the first spacewalk in human history. The *Voskhod 2* spacecraft with two cosmonauts on board entered Earth orbit with the task to conduct a new grandiose experiment — the man's exit into open space. That mission marked an important milestone of the Soviet Space Programme. The whole country was watching cosmonaut Alexei Leonov's spacewalk.

**On March 19th, 1944,** Soviet troops liberated prisoners of Ozarichi and other death camps in Gomel Region. In early March 1944, the Nazi invaders created three concentration camps in the former Domanovichi District, at the front line of defence near the town of Ozarichi, the villages of Dert and Podosinnik. During the existence of the Ozarichi death camps, over 9 thousand people died. In 1965, a memorial complex was created near the town of Ozarichi.



**On March 20th,** Belarus observes the Day of Electronic Intelligence. The domestic electronic intelligence service, created on the basis

of units and divisions of radio and radio engineering intelligence of the Belarusian Military District, is the legitimate heir to the glorious combat traditions of Soviet military intelligence.

**March 20th** is the International Day of Happiness, established by the United Nations General Assembly on June 28th, 2012. The holiday's purpose is to show that happiness is a fundamental human goal. In 2015, the UN adopted 17 Sustainable Development Goals aimed at eradicating poverty, reducing inequality and protecting our planet — three key conditions necessary to achieve well-being and happiness.



**March 20th** is known as the International Earth Day. This is the day of the vernal equinox — the first day of spring in the northern hemisphere and the first day of autumn in the southern hemisphere. It is a time when the biological rhythm of the planet changes and it moves to a new stage of development, when nature awakens and its renewal takes place. The Earth Day is a reminder that our planet is beautiful and defenceless, and it needs our careful attitude.

