



The Belarusian People's Congress will assume the function of a stabiliser for society

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Straw weaving of Belarus is included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List

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The estate of the Belarusian Ded Moroz in Belovezhskaya Pushcha is the country's most famous tourist brand. The owner of the fabulous estate manages not only to communicate with tourists, but also to answer letters that come to him from all over the world.

Time for miracles and presents

New Year and Christmas is a special time! This is the time of fairy tales, miracles, good mood, family warmth, happiness and, of course, presents and fulfilment of desires. Ded Moroz is responsible for the fulfilment of New Year's wishes. The winter wizard has already begun opening residences across the country. Now is the time to plan a trip for gifts and festive mood. Let us tell you where to find Ded Moroz in Belarus. → **10**



True athletes keep the flag and anthem in their hearts

The President of Belarus received a report on the development of sports. Attending the meeting were Sport and Tourism Minister Sergei Kovalchuk, Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration Igor Lutsy, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko, President of the National Olympic Committee Viktor Lukashenko.

“Here are the people who are responsible for the development of sport in our country. Yet, I sometimes wonder: what to develop here? What else is needed in order for our teams, our athletes to perform at the highest level? During this meeting, I would like to hear from you what is missing, what sports grounds, facilities and other things do you need to win 20-30 medals at the Olympics. We used to do that when we had no sports facilities at all,” stressed the Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced that everything is in place in Belarus to discover and nurture talent, to determine in what sport a child can excel the most.

“Rhythmic gymnastics, artistic gymnastics, athletics... Please, choose. Coaches spot someone and take them under their wing. What else do you need? If we have to pay for good, high results, say how much? But first, show the necessary results,” the President emphasised.

The Head of State continued with irony, “The World Cup is on. I somehow didn’t spot our football players there. Or am I just missing something? They are nowhere near. Moreover, I compare the performance of our football players with the football played at the World Cup today. And as a former football player who played a lot of football, I just get scared. This sport [football], like many others, is in dire straits in our country.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also asked if Belarusian athletes, along with Russian ones, would be allowed to participate in the next Olympic Games. He was told that no final decision was taken on this matter yet.

Returning to the topic of sanctions the domestic sport is subjected to, the President stressed that if they put pressure on you, then you need to strive to show even better results,

“And you tell me about sanctions. If you are pressured, you should push back even harder in sport, that is how I see it. If people know that they are unfairly punished, they go all out and show even better results. Do we do it? We don’t. How come, the more we invest in a sport, the less we get?”

The Head of State shared his thoughts, “It is bad that they have to compete without state symbols (flag, anthem and other

things). But it’s not a disaster. True athletes, not the ones who fled abroad and who have not improved their performance since then, keep the flag and anthem in their hearts. This is how it should be if you are true athletes. They compete primarily for people. Not only for themselves but for people, their family, children, who will follow in their footsteps in the future. Money and other benefits are less important.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko demanded answers to these questions, since they are related to another topic of the report — the ‘On Measures to Stimulate Good Performance in Sport’ bill.

“You came to me asking for salaries and incentives for athletes. Listen, such topic has to be discussed secretly somewhere in a dark corner so that people will not hear. If they do, not only you will come in for



Maksim Nedasekau

heavy criticism (at least you deserve it), but also I will. People will ask: What are you paying them money for?! They [athletes] play football, hockey or some other skating [sports] — speed skating, short track like they are half-dead. Therefore, I want to hear what you have to offer,” said the President.

Aleksandr Lukashenko wanted to see the government’s concept of financial incentives for athletes for achieving results.

“If you say that we need to support athletes, I am on board with it. Yet, this pertains only to those athletes who show world-class results.”

Is it so hard to compare your performance in the 100-metre dash with the best results at another world championship? This should be a benchmark. If one shows a high result at the level of first, second, third place, this person will be able to claim commensurate benefits, subsidies, and so on,” considers the President.

The Head of State recalled the upcoming 2023 CIS Games.

“This will be a test for you, the most serious criterion. Well, if after this rearrangement of personnel at the beginning of the year, if you hold on to this position, then there is nowhere else to go. If you fail at the second Games, I’ll tell you frankly, you have nothing to do in sports,” the Belarusian leader warned.

The outcome of the conversation was later reported to journalists by Sport and Tourism Minister Sergei Kovalchuk. The minister considers the criticism from the President for the lack of results in some sports unconditionally fair.

“The Head of State gave instructions on the development of certain areas. First of all, on joint actions with athletes of the Russian Federation during the period of sanctions, in the period of preparation for holding sports events, on loading sports facilities, on holding various competitions at a high organisational level, including the Second CIS Games, which will be held next year in our country, for the training of coaching staff,” he said.



Tatsiana Khaladovich

Answering journalists’ questions, Sergei Kovalchuk assured that a differentiated approach to remuneration of athletes and coaches would be observed and included in the draft decree. Moreover, such decisions are envisaged at the level of the commission so that none of the coaches who do a lot of work or athletes are offended and that everyone is adequately rewarded in accordance with the results they show.

“For example, Anastasia Maslova

threw a hammer at 74 metres this season. This is the level of a European champion. So, she should receive the corresponding remuneration in accordance to the level of the European Championship,” the minister explained. He also gave an example of the performance of Tatsiana Khaladovich, who threw a javelin at 66 metres, and this is the level of the European Championship, the silver medallist of the World Championships.

As for specific sports, federations where work is not organised in a worthy manner, they cannot cope and there is no result, the minister is sure that they need to be spurred on, including by making personnel decisions.

“Those people who do not cope with the tasks set will look for work elsewhere, will be engaged in other activities,” he emphasised.

Sergei Kovalchuk is convinced that even in the current conditions, when there are restrictions on the admission of Belarusian athletes to international competitions in some sports, they have enough competitive practice.

“In many sports, the competition with the athletes of the Russian Federation is much higher than the competition in the European arena. Our task is to train and be ready at any time at any competition to adequately represent our country, raising the flag of our Motherland high,” Sport and Tourism Minister Sergei Kovalchuk concluded.



Anastasia Maslova

Answering journalists’ questions, Sergei Kovalchuk assured that a differentiated approach to remuneration of athletes and coaches would be observed and included in the draft decree — the President has already supported the document.

OFFICIALLY

SUPPORT FOR TALENTED YOUTH

Aleksandr Lukashenko has signed Decree No. 429 ‘On the activities of special funds of the President of the Republic of Belarus’.

The document is aimed at providing targeted state support to the best of the best representatives of gifted and talented youth, creating favorable conditions for the further development of their scientific and creative potential as well as stimulating youth initiatives for the benefit of the country.

The decree provides for the improvement of the mechanism for supporting talented and gifted youth with special funds of the President and the consolidation of the highest status of holders of the awards of the Head of State. Excessive detailing and duplication of individual norms are eliminated, 9 normative legal acts regulating the activities of foundations are recognised as invalid, fixed financial expenditures of the budget for these purposes are established, the procedure for the formation and maintenance of data banks of gifted and talented youth is specified.

Annually, it is planned to encourage about 500 people with awards from the fund for the support of gifted youth, about 150 people from the fund for the support of talented youth.

The types of fund incentives have been unified. Such incentives as the Grand Prize, a special award, ‘For the Contribution to the Training of Talented Youth’ and ‘For the Contribution to the Education of Talented Youth’ rewards, material support — a grant have been established. Prizes, incentive scholarships, financial assistance are excluded.

The amount of payments for outstanding achievements to pupils, students, creative teams that took first or third places in competitions has been significantly increased, which will allow the funds received to be used to create works of art and conduct research, purchase materials, costumes, and tools.

Incentives range from 40 to 150 base values. For teachers who have educated and trained gifted and talented youth, remuneration from 40 to 60 base values is provided.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



PERSONNEL DECISIONS

The Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko made new appointments in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus on December 13th.

Sergei Aleinik, who until now held the post of the First Deputy Minister of Foreign Affairs, has been appointed Minister of Foreign Affairs of Belarus.

Andrei Lukyanovich has been appointed Commander of the Air Force and Air Defence of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus. Previously, he served as Deputy Commander of the Air Force and Air Defence — Chief of Aviation.

The President said that he had a detailed discussion with them the other day. The Head of State signed the decrees on their appointment in the presence of the new minister and new Air Force and Air Defence commander.

Strengthening of Belarusian-Russian relations is a natural response to the changing situation in the world. This was stated by the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, during the talks with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, in Minsk on December 19th.



Presidents of Belarus and Russia made decisions on strategic matters

Aleksandr Lukashenko personally met the distinguished Russian guest at the National Airport Minsk. The Heads of States went together to the Palace of Independence in one Aurus car.

Welcoming Vladimir Putin and the Russian delegation, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, “You haven’t been here for quite a long time due to certain circumstances. You are always welcome here. A break in visits to Minsk has not prevented us from staying in constant contact. Even our so-called Western partners were very concerned about our frequent meetings. We met regularly both in the Russian Federation and at international venues.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the governments of the two countries have also been actively working together, and many meetings take place at the regional and business level. Stable growth in trade and the resolution of many issues that used to hinder co-operation testify to the fact.

According to him, the momentous decisions on closer integration between Belarus and Russia once again demonstrate to the entire world that only together it is possible to overcome pandemics, crises, or sanctions.

“Vladimir Vladimirovich and I often say that Russia and Belarus are open to dialogue with other states, including European ones. I hope that they will soon heed the voice of reason, and we will engage in a constructive discussion of both common security and also the future world order. Defending democracy and progress with the use of restrictions and military force against our states no longer impresses even local voters [in Western countries] who have fully experienced the shortcomings of such a policy,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

According to the Head of the Belarusian State, thanks to joint steps the sides have managed to overcome possible negative effects of the sanctions-fuelled pressure as a whole.

“Belarusian and Russian specialists have worked hard on the Union State programmes, which Vladimir Vladimirovich and I approved back in the day. Certain progress has been achieved virtually in all areas. But not everything is working out for now, and it slows down our development. You know, the governments say they have exhausted negotiation options on a number of sensitive topics. The governments believe that it is impossible to come

to an agreement on individual matters without you, Vladimir Vladimirovich, and I. It is the reason for our conference today,” stated the President of Belarus.

Aleksandr Lukashenko suggested doing productive work on the strategic areas able to determine the future of Belarus and Russia.

According to the President of Russia, last year the countries made a very good breakthrough in the development of trade and economic ties: the trade rose by a third and reached \$38.5 billion. Therefore, there is reason to believe that this year we will hit a new record trade of \$40 billion.

Vladimir Putin noted, “I would like to note what everyone is already well aware of. But still, it should be emphasised that Belarus is not only our good neighbour, with whom we have been working, taking each other’s interests into account, in previous decades, but is, of course, our ally in the truest sense of the word.”

The President of Russia added that Belarus and Russia are working hard virtually in all areas. He also remarked the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant, emphasising that the Russian side is ready not only to develop this project on a full scale, but also to promote the creation of a nuclear industry in Belarus.

During their communication with journalists, the Presidents of Belarus and Russia summed up the results of the talks, which were held first in expanded and then in face-to-face format.

Emphasis was placed on strategic matters, primarily in economy. Traditionally, a lot of attention was paid to the foreign policy agenda.

“The situation in the world is changing rapidly. In terms of depth and scale, these changes are truly fateful, without any exaggeration. In fact, the future of the Belarusian and Russian peoples is being determined now,” said the President of Belarus.

Speaking about Western sanctions, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, “Now it is obvious to everyone that such restrictions have boomeranged. It is not those who invent the sanctions that suffer, but ordinary people and business. This is on the conscience of those who unleashed an economic war against our countries and then a proxy war with Russia by the hands of Ukrainians.”

The Head of the Belarusian State is

convinced that the year 2022 gives us grounds to state with cautious optimism that Belarus and Russia are coping with the economic challenges and are doing it quite well, “Unexpectedly for ourselves, we are revealing our huge potential, which at other times we simply would not see or would not believe in it. We need to be fast however in making and implementing decisions. Time is more important than money today.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko urged to concentrate joint efforts on transforming the economies of Belarus and Russia towards higher knowledge intensity, innovativeness, digitalisation and technological sovereignty, “When Western partners left, we happened to be in demand for huge Russia. We go there to replace those, who have left. We will replace them if given a bit of time. Together with Russian scientists and engineers we will create products that the world has never seen.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus is happy with the results of the discussion of a common gas market with Russia and the price for energy over the next three years. At the same time, the leaders of the two countries did not disclose the details of the agreements reached, saying that the corresponding decisions would be formalised by the governments of the two countries in the near future.

The President of Belarus said that, taking into account the situation evolving along the border perimeter, they discussed some important details of co-operation in the sphere of military security, “I thank you, Vladimir Vladimirovich for our finding mutual understanding and support on all the matters and for our making the necessary decisions. I offer special thanks not only from me and from the military for fulfilling your promise. Today we’ve commissioned an S-400 air defence missile complex that you have handed over to Belarus. And most importantly the Iskander complex, which you’ve also handed over to us after promising it half a year ago.”

Another important fact voiced by the Presidents is that Belarus and Russia will train the crews of combat aircraft of the Belarusian army, which have already been converted for the possible use of special air-launched ammunition.

Aleksandr Lukashenko also confirmed, “I have to tell you that we’ve prepared the aircraft. It turned out we’ve had such aircraft since the So-

viet times. We are now working with Russians to train the crews able to fly these aircraft that carry special ammunition.”

Addressing his Russian counterpart, the President of Belarus noted, “It is not a threat for someone. I told you several times that we are greatly concerned about tensions along the border perimeter of the Union State. Primarily in the west. And we had to safeguard the Belarusian state. You made a decisive and very important step in support for Belarus.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed gratitude to Vladimir Putin for the warm, deep, energetic and constructive conversation.

During a press conference, Vladimir Putin emphasised: Russia and Belarus are the closest allies and strategic partners, co-operation between which is based on the principles of mutual respect and consideration of each other’s interests,

“Russia has no interest in absorbing anyone. There is simply no expediency in this. Aleksandr Grigoryevich is absolutely right by saying that today’s meeting was very constructive and very substantive... It is not about absorbing anyone. It is about aligning the economic policies. This is the way it is done in many other integration associations. Everything else is nonsense. These are just the attempts of the ill-wishers to slow down our integration. They are doing it only to make sure efficient competitors, that might be dangerous for them, do not emerge in the international market.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko concurred with what the President of Russia said, and added, “These theses are coming from abroad, from Belarusian self-exiled opposition. Several thousands of them have fled there, and they need to earn money (you cannot get money for doing nothing). They do not even write these theses. These theses are fed to them.”

Vladimir Putin also drew attention to an important fact: to date, 600 out of almost 1,000 integration events scheduled for implementation by 2023 have been implemented. This is over 60 percent — very good progress, good pace. He added that in the near future an integrated system for the administration of indirect taxes and the establishment of a supranational tax committee are to be created.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



During the 6th Belarusian People's Congress

The formula of supreme democracy

The Belarusian People's Congress will assume the function of a stabiliser for society

Last week, the President held a meeting to discuss the draft law 'On the Belarusian People's Congress', which was finalised taking into account public discussion. The bill is almost ready to be submitted to the Parliament. However, until now, one can often hear all sorts of speculation and reasoning that the Belarusian People's Congress, they say, is an extra structure, which requires some fabulous expenses for the country, that only officials and leaders will be part of the People's Council, and they don't seem to decide anything at all. At the meeting, the Head of State dispelled all doubts and misconceptions of this kind and, as they say, dotted the I's in this matter. So, what should the Belarusian People's Congress be, and what is its essence and meaning?



President Aleksandr Lukashenko

"The Belarusian People's Congress is the stabiliser of society. This is its main role — to stabilise society throughout all stages of its evolution. And if the need for negotiations arises, it will provide a platform... They will not let us live a quiet life. If such internal reasons for a clash emerge... Are we going to go against each other head-to-head? This should not happen. In addition, how can we prevent this? We are offering people and the state this mechanism — the Belarusian People's Congress... And if suddenly something happens, the main question will be solved there."

During a meeting to discuss issues related to the harmonisation of certain laws with the updated Constitution on December 13th, 2022

By Yevgeny Kononovich, Maksim Osipov

Maintain sustainability and continuity

President Aleksandr Lukashenko,
"In the event of a conflict political parties will get agitated, various branches of power will bend in different directions, the turmoil will pass on to society, and this might spiral into civil war... What shall we do then? In this case the Belarusian People's Congress will step on the scene. And people should know that in such a situation this body will convene and make a decision."

Political analyst and researcher at the Institute of Philosophy of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, Piotr Petrovsky,

"The main role of the Belarusian People's Congress is to maintain the stability of the political system and continuity. This is an alternative to all sorts of Maidans, riots, Ukrainian scenarios, this is exactly what is commonly called the civilised path of political processes. The Belarusian People's Congress is the option that will allow us not only to survive as a sovereign independent state in the current most difficult conditions, but also to form a continuity. Any 'colour revolution' is a clear example of how, instead of natural democratic processes and the legitimacy of the system, there are riots, coup d'état, chaos and destabilisation of the situation, devaluation and zeroing of the institutions of both civil society and democracy in general. So, our main task is to prevent such scenarios."

Strategic decisions

President Aleksandr Lukashenko,
"It is necessary to tell people that they should not rush to the Belarusian People's Congress asking it to help resolve issues related to construction of houses, fences, roofs and toilets. This is not its function. It will deal with big issues, major issues facing our country... This is a strategy for how we will continue to live, how we will develop further."

Associate Professor at the Department of Political Science of the Belarusian State Economic University, PhD in political sciences, Nikolai Veremeev,

"Indeed, the Belarusian People's Congress should consider strategic tasks. As far as I remember, even at the stage of formation and work of this body, there was talk that this Congress would become a 'collective President'. And if this is a structure — the highest form of popular representation, it should also consider issues that correspond to its scale. It makes no sense to duplicate the powers and duties of the executive authorities that deal with tactical issues — there are representative bodies, executive committees and administrations of cities and regions, it is at their level that local issues should be resolved. Thus, we can discuss significant, strategic issues that require the attention of the general public of the country as a whole at the level of the Belarusian People's Congress."

Professionalism and competence

President Aleksandr Lukashenko
[about the delegates of the Belarusian People's Congress], "These should be professionals. These should not be random people who would come, attend the meeting, while away their time, understand or not understand something and leave. Such people should not be there. These should be competent people with a wealth of experience under their belt."












Chairman of the Belaya Rus non-government organisation, member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus, Oleg Romanov,
"The role of civil society in the nomination of the Belarusian People's Congress delegates will be to ensure that all significant social groups are represented in the Congress — so that the Belarusian People's Congress reflects the complexity and multidimensionality of the social structure of Belarusian society. And so that when discussing the issues that will be put on the agenda of the Belarusian People's Congress, the opinions, visions, positions of all our communities: professional, regional, and so on, should be taken into account. The delegates of the Belarusian People's Congress should not just be representatives of certain social groups, they should be the best representatives of their regions, professions and labour collectives."

The combination of two functions — professionalism and a deep understanding of public life — will allow one to be real subjects of political creativity, real participants in the discussion, but not passive spectators and listeners."

Structure, role and functions of the Belarusian People's Congress

The Belarusian People's Congress is the highest representative body of the people's power of the Republic of Belarus, which determines the strategic directions for the development of society and the state, ensuring the inviolability of the constitutional order, the continuity of generations and civil harmony.

FUNCTIONS AND POWERS OF THE BELARUSIAN PEOPLE'S CONGRESS:

- ▶ it approves the main directions of domestic and foreign policy, the Military Doctrine, the concept of national security; 
- ▶ it approves the programmes of social and economic development of the Republic of Belarus; 
- ▶ it hears the Prime Minister on the implementation of programmes for the socio-economic development of the Republic of Belarus;
- ▶ it proposes amendments and additions to the Constitution; 
- ▶ it proposes holding republican referendums; 
- ▶ it has the right to consider the question of the legitimacy of elections;
- ▶ it decides on the removal of the President from office in the event of a systematic or gross violation of the Constitution or the commission of treason or other serious crime; 
- ▶ it has the right to impose a state of emergency or martial law on the territory of the Republic of Belarus if there are grounds provided for by the Constitution, and in case of inaction of the President on these issues; the introduction of a state of emergency or martial law is considered by the Belarusian People's Congress at the initiative of the Presidium of the Belarusian People's Congress or the Council of the Republic; 
- ▶ it awards the President with state awards, and also proposes persons for awarding state awards; 
- ▶ at the proposal of the President, previously agreed with the Presidium of the Belarusian People's Congress:
 - it elects the Chairman, Deputy Chairman and judges of the Constitutional Court and dismisses them from office on the grounds provided for by law; 
 - it elects the Chairman, Vice-Chairmen and judges of the Supreme Court and dismisses them on the grounds provided for by law;
 - it elects the Chairman and members of the Central Electoral Commission and dismisses them on the grounds provided for by law;
- ▶ at the proposal of the President, it makes a decision on the possibility of sending military personnel, employees of paramilitary organisations, other persons outside the Republic of Belarus to participate in ensuring collective security and activities to maintain international peace and security; 
- ▶ it establishes state holidays and red-letter days; 
- ▶ it gives binding instructions to state bodies and officials, receives information from state bodies and officials, exercises other powers established by the Constitution and the law, necessary for the implementation of the constitutional functions assigned to him. 

Broad representation

President Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“Yet, representatives of labour collectives will account for 90 percent of delegates. Only the ways of getting into this Congress are somewhat different. It is not necessary for a factory staff to meet and nominate their representative to the Belarusian People's Congress. The congress will also include MPs and members of public associations and other organisations that represent labour collectives in one way or another. These are teachers, workers, agricultural people, doctors and so on.”

Chairman of the Board of the Minsk Regional Association of the Belkhimproofsoyuz, PhD in Economics, Dmitry Shvaiba,

“Even at a time when the idea of constitutional registration of the Belarusian People's Congress was maturing, there was a task to ensure the representation of labour collectives and regions. In general, considering the formed legal base and the projects proposed today, it is clear that this task has been completed, the main thing now is to ensure this in practice. Representatives of labour collectives will enter the Belarusian People's Congress through a quota of civil society, through the participation of deputies of local Councils of Deputies who carry out their activities on an undelivered basis (their main activity is work in labour collectives). They will provide the necessary linkage of ideas and objectives to be considered at the Belarusian People's Congress level.”



Therefore, the assertions that the Belarusian People's Congress will turn into another meeting of officials are simply insignificant. This can be said by people who are either unfamiliar with the legal framework and the proposed draft legislation, or deliberately throwing a destructive line into the information space.”

IMPORTANT TO KNOW

Decisions of the Belarusian People's Congress are binding and can cancel legal acts, other decisions of state bodies and officials that are contrary to the interests of national security, with the exception of acts of the judiciary.

NEWS IN BRIEF

In Minsk, a 100-year-old woman was presented with a passport



Minsk resident Vera Romanovna Borodnya became the lucky owner of the passport in connection with the 100th anniversary. During her long life, she saw and participated in many historical events.

The staff of the Zavodskoy Regional Internal Affairs Directorate told how employees of the Citizenship and Migration Department solemnly congratulated the centenarian.

The hero of the day herself refers to her age with humour. He says that her health, of course, is not the same, but she is still strong. “Relatives cheer me up, my daughter lives with me, helps a lot. In general, I have a big family. Two children, two grandchildren and two great-grandchildren,” explains Vera Romanovna.

Before retirement, the woman worked at the post office. She has the title of ‘Shock Worker of Communist Labour’ and the medal ‘Veteran of Labour’.

2022 was a record year for Belorusneft in black gold production

This was reported to journalists by Belorusneft Director General Aleksandr Lyakhov.

He stressed that oil production keeps growing in Belarus, “This year has be-



come a record one. Oil output is expected to grow by almost 75,000 tonnes year-on-year. There has not been such an increase in production — up to 1.8 million tonnes — for more than 20 years. This is the main result for the company in 2022. We are going to keep working and use every opportunity to further increase the output.”

The work associated with oil production requires the use of new technologies. The years 2021-2022 were marked by the construction of new wells using state-of-the-art world-class technologies. This work has given its result.

However, Belorusneft will open the first complex of superfast electric vehicle charging stations in Minsk soon.

Industrial park to be built in Baranovichi

A branch of the Brest Technopark will be located in Baranovichi. “The concept is not quite typical for Belarus, but is somewhat similar to the China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park. Pilots projects will be implemented in Baranovichi and Pinsk. We are talking about providing ready-made industrial space for organisations interested in producing something. The emphasis is on the production of innovative prod-



ucts,” said Director of the Brest Science and Technology Park Dmitry Makaruk.

The project provides for the construction of three workshops similar to an industrial hotel. Residents will be able to go there to engage in production. For their service, a logistics centre, a small administrative building with laboratories and offices will also be built. The first building of the technopark in Baranovichi is planned to be put into operation in 2025. Polesian Technopark will undertake the implementation of a similar project in Pinsk.

The new Belarusian-Russian satellite will be among the most promising in the world

As part of the implementation of the decision taken by the Presidents of Belarus and Russia, a Russian-Belarusian spacecraft for remote sensing of the Earth with a spatial resolution of 0.35 metres is being created. “The created spacecraft is one of the most promising solutions in the world in terms of the totality of its characteristics,” First Deputy Chairman of the Presidium of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Sergei Chizhik emphasised.

Since its launch in 2012, the Belarusian satellite for remote sensing of the



Earth has been operating in a joint Russian-Belarusian orbital constellation. In accordance with an agreement between the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus and Roscosmos, the capabilities of this group were expanded thanks to the use of the information resource of five Russian spacecraft of the Canopus series last year.

From heart to heart

In order to ensure that no child feels deprived: the country hosts the *Our Children* New Year's charity campaign

INSIDE

There is magic! The *Our Children* campaign taking place in Belarus under the patronage of the President is the very proof of that. Every year the number of participants in these warm and sincere festive meetings is only increasing, which means that there are more happy children's smiles. Moreover, completely new activities are added to the traditional congratulations. Interactive programmes on the ice, excursions, sports matches are organised for the children... To please, surprise and inspire them! It is expected that more than 20,000 children will take part in the campaign at the national level alone.

The *Our Children* New Year's charity campaign runs from December 15th to January 15th. Each ministry, department, organisation tries to take a certain institution under the patronage, so that not a single child in need of support is left without attention. Deputy Head of the Department of Social, Educational and Ideological Work of the Ministry of Education Yelena Simakova talks about a trend that cannot but rejoice, "If earlier one department or organisation undertook to help one

or two institutions, today we are talking about three or four. This is a personal initiative of managers and employees. Business representatives are also actively involved. Everyone himself offers the form of support that they consider necessary and appropriate: gifts, equipment or sports equipment...

Guests come to rehabilitation centres, boarding schools, family-type orphanages with congratulations and surprises.

The range of participants who receive care is also expanding. Today, these are not only orphans, hospital patients, schoolchildren, but also students, gifted children and students of cadet schools."

Furthermore, everyone can join the campaign. Chairman of the Board of the Belarusian Children's Fund Lyudmila Kondrashova suggests, "Fundraising is open to diagnose and help children with autism. Details can be found on our official website. For the first time this charity marathon started last year. It was attended by both ordinary people and organisations from all over the coun-



try, collected more than Br30,000. In addition, we launched the *Our Hearts to Children* traditional campaign: 10,000 children received gifts from the Belarusian Children's Fund, its regional and district branches in the amount of more than Br160,000. I am sure that this year even more people will want to do a good deed."

Last week, Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko, together with Education Minister Andrei Ivanets and Chairman of the Board of the Belarusian Children's Fund Lyudmila Kondrashova, launched a charity event at the National Centre for Art Creativity of Children and Youth.

The month-long marathon started simultaneously throughout the country — in cities and towns, villages and agrotowns.

"We will congratulate our children everywhere so that the wishes that they made on New Year's Eve will come true. And it is the adults who should embody them. As well as to protect, defend, stimulate the all-round development of our children. So that the guys are proud that they live in such a beautiful, safe and, most importantly, promising country for their further implementation," Igor Petrishenko said before the start of the event.

He noted that all conditions have been created in Belarus for obtaining a quality education, engaging in creativity, sports, and social work.

"All paths, all doors are open for our children. The



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

*"We have been holding this event for more than a quarter of a century. The youngest spectators of the first New Year Eve's performances, perhaps, have already become parents themselves. Some of them might be in attendance with their kids today... I am happy that over the years of the *Our Children* charity project, every little Belarusian has learned that his country infinitely cares about them and needs them."*

During the event as part of the *Our Children* national charity campaign in Minsk on December 27th, 2021



Our Children campaign has become a real brand, because this is our Belarusian tradition — to help each other. Not only in difficult moments, but also in joyful and festive. On the part of the state, children are given increased attention so that they never feel disadvantaged in some way," emphasised Igor Petrishenko.

According to the Deputy Prime Minister, the purpose of the campaign is to envelop each child with kindness and warmth of the hearts of adults, so that they can make sure that miracles come true in our country.

There are many meetings and concerts ahead. The main Christmas Tree of the country, which will be held on December 26th at the Palace of the Republic will become the traditional culmination of the holiday. Spectators from 8 to 14 years old will be shown a fabulous story here. A New Year's Eve Ball for youth will be held at the Palace of Independence. In addition, various festive events are planned for children at the Palace of Independence on January 4th, 5th and 6th, 2023.

Based on materials of sb.by

The Minsk Times
Thursday
December 22
2022



6





The royal gates in the Grodno State Historical and Archaeological Museum



Straw weaving of Belarus is included in the UNESCO Intangible Cultural Heritage List

Impressive phenomenon of Belarusian culture

Straw weaving is an original element of traditional folk art, a bearer of a unique cultural code and a national treasure of the Belarusians. Recently, it was decided to include the Belarusian nomination 'The Straw Weaving of Belarus: art, craft, skills' into the Representative List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO at a regular meeting of the Intergovernmental Committee for the Protection of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO in Morocco.

Fancy patterns, aerial amulets, outlandish birds and even mighty bison — Belarusian craftsmen do everything from straw! Since ancient times, this craft has helped to create durable and comfortable products for everyday life and everyday household chores. But filled with light and warmth, the sunny yellow straw became an inspiration for creativity. Skillful hands created real masterpieces for beauty and joy, while filling them with deep folk symbolism. Nowadays, art products and souvenirs made of straw are taken away by guests as a heartfelt gift to their loved ones and a reminder of the blue-eyed Belarus. Such products have no analogues in the world, because this is one of the distinguishing features of the artistic traditions of the Belarusian people, their original spiritual culture.



The definition of 'Belarusian straw' has acquired the meaning of a national brand. Art products and souvenirs made of straw are unmistakably associated with Belarus, they testify to the creative abilities and diligence of Belarusians. In Belarus straw weaving has been practiced for a long time. This craft lived through many thousand years. The beginning of the use of straw by the Eastern Slavs as a material for weaving dates back to the period of expansion of agriculture at the turn of the 2nd-1st millennium BC. e. This craft has its origins in ancient rituals associated with the cult of bread and fertility. The ancestors of the Belarusians consid-

ered the straw, which absorbed the warmth of the summer sun, an analogue of gold, so it was often used in the design of church decoration, for example, the main gates of the iconostasis in an Orthodox church.

At the end of the 18th — the first third of the 19th century a

rienced a rebirth, which is associated with the development of technology at art craft factories for the production of souvenirs and decorative items, as well as the expansion of the techniques of this craft. Moreover, the genre of decorative animalistic sculpture appeared in the works of such

mensional braids (these two types are used for the manufacture of straw hats, baskets, boxes, decorative items), straw plastic (appliqué), design from straws ('spiders').

Women predominate among the masters. Men mainly practice the creation of traditional prod-



local art school was formed to create straw iconostases for Orthodox churches in the Belarusian Polesie (Drogichin and Kobrin Districts of the Brest Region). There are two examples of iconostasis thatched gates of the early 19th century in the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus and one in the Grodno State Historical and Archaeological Museum-Reserve. Direct analogues of these works of art have not been identified. The royal gates from the iconostases of Polesian churches are unique examples of Belarusian straw weaving of high complexity, which have become the pinnacle of the skill of straw weavers.

Since the beginning of the 20th century, straw weaving has gained popularity throughout the country. In the 1960s and 1980s, the straw seemed to have expe-

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It is impossible to be silent!



Crimes of Polish and Lithuanian border guards will not go unnoticed

Last November, a large-scale investigation of crimes against refugees committed on the Polish and Lithuanian borders was launched in Belarus — initiated by the Belarusian Union of Journalists, the Republican Znanie Belarusian Society and the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House. Belarusian journalists took photos and videos at the scene of the events. They feature Polish security forces poisoning refugees with gas and chemicals, using water cannons and stun grenades against them. Since criminal prosecution is a long and difficult process, especially at the international level, a decision was made to include all the atrocities against refugees committed by the state authorities of Poland and Lithuania and representatives of various services of these states on the sections of the state border adjacent to Belarus, starting from the H2 2021, into the so-called White Book. As a result, the Crimes of Poland and Lithuania against Refugees: Facts and Evidence book was published, and it is now available at all Belarusian bookstores and libraries. In addition, a relevant Internet project has been launched:

www.whitebook.by. So Belarusians urge all those who are not indifferent to read these texts, distribute links in personal Telegram channels — so that the world would know the true face of ‘civilised Europe’, which no border fences are able to hide.

“Polish and Lithuanian border guards continue to kill refugees. There have been found so many corpses already at the border — thrown into the Belarusian territory. Actually, the topic has merely left the front pages of newspapers, but refugees continue to migrate along the Belarusian route.”

Actually, this was not happening while the European Union had agreements with Belarus in the field of border security, from which it [the EU] withdrew on its own initiative. Of course, the route has always existed,” political expert Aleksandr Shpakovsky noted in his talk with Alfa Radio. “Several dozen refugees have already been killed (or actions of border guards have led to this). They were forced out into the Belarusian territory, but there is not the slightest hint that someone is going to investigate the situation. Actually,

Border guards of the ‘democratic European Union’ have again distinguished themselves — though not from the best side. A couple of days ago, Polish security services cynically forced a group of refugees out into the Belarusian territory: through a gate for the passage of animals — as if those people were cattle. Actually, such words are not a figurative expression: Polish guards left the refugees in the snow — to be killed by frost. Their Lithuanian colleagues acted in a similar way: on December 12th, representatives of Belarus’ State Border Committee came across a group of foreigners who told them about ‘a warm European welcome’, about physical violence with the use of stun guns, and about how they had been forced to slander Belarusian border guards (in case of refusal, they had been threatened to be thrown into a cold river). In order to hide these crimes, neither journalists nor doctors are allowed to enter the European border area. However, these atrocities will not go unpunished: Belarus is tracking each of them.



no one will pay attention to a new murder. I absolutely share the opinion that the website telling about the crimes of Polish and Lithuanian border guards should be translated at least into English, and also into the languages of Africa and the Middle East. This will be a help, of course.”

OFFICIALLY

In its Telegram channel, the State Border Committee reported,

“The inhumane policy pursued by the Polish authorities towards vulnerable groups of people is still ignored by the European Union. Polish security forces do not let volunteers, doctors and media representatives into a 200-metre zone on the border with Belarus in order to hide their illegal actions from the public. Similarly, in order to conceal its illegal actions from the public, Lithuania constantly extends the ban on the stay of volunteers, doctors and media representatives in the border area.”



EU Parliament hit with corruption and bribery

European Parliament Vice-President Eva Kaili and three others were charged and imprisoned in Belgium, amid a police probe into alleged corruption linked with Qatar

Kaili, one of 14 vice-presidents in the EU Parliament, was among four people arrested and charged in Belgium over the scandal that has triggered outrage in Brussels and risks damaging the EU’s image.

The case, in which police discovered stacks of cash, casts a shadow over the European Parliament which seeks to be a moral compass, criticising global rights abuses and taking EU governments to task over any hint of impropriety.

In November, Eva Kaili went to Qatar where she welcomed ‘reforms’ in the Gulf State. “Qatar is a leader in terms of labour rights,” the EU law-

maker said afterwards at the EU podium, sparking a fierce backlash from other MEPs.

The Parliament acted quickly to loosen ties with Kaili, with 625 MEPs voting in favour of the move, only one against and two abstaining.

Belgian police searched 19 homes and the offices of the Parliament as part of their investigation and seized computers, mobile phones and cash, some of it found in a suitcase in a hotel room.

It is the biggest scandal ever to hit an institution that is supposed to represent Europe’s role model for political morality and transparency.

European industry pivots to USA

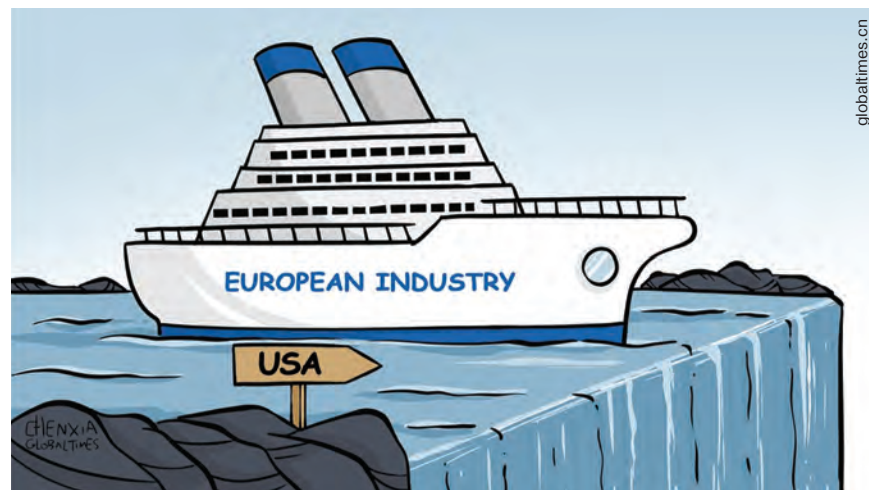
European companies are massively transferring businesses to the United States, where working conditions are more favourable, according to the French newspaper *Le Figaro*

According to the publication, Europe is concerned about Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act’s (IRA) possibly ‘discriminatory’ provisions and seeks a quick solution before they come into effect at the start of 2023.

The EU’s 27 member countries fear that the IRA tax credits and subsidies to EVs and other green product makers in North America and free-trade partner countries put European companies at a disadvantage and may push them to move critical parts of their supply chains to America.

Europe’s fears may not be unfounded as several automakers, battery makers and energy companies have already made announcements or shown interest in setting up shop in America. South

Korea and Japan have similar concerns too. For instance, Reuters reported that Swedish battery maker Northvolt was set to establish a lithium-ion battery factory in Germany, Europe’s top car manufacturer, but after the IRA, the company’s CEO Peter Carlsson said that it could get up to 800 million Euros in US state subsidies, which was nearly four times what the German government was offering. South Korean motor giant Hyundai said it would speed up the opening of its EV manufacturing plant in the US after the IRA was introduced. Italian power company Enel said in November that the IRA was more efficient than European Union aid to facilitate domestic production of energy sector components.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Who and why is trying to damage the greatest achievement of diplomacy in recent decades

The history of post-Maidan Ukraine is an almost continuous bloody turmoil, in which friends easily became foes, while foes put on masks and mimicked the sincerest patriots. The execution of the Heavenly Hundred, clashes in the South-East, the burning of people in the Trade Union House in Odessa, the Anti-Terrorist Operation in Donbass — this is how a book was written in blood in the light of fires about the sacrifice of one of the most powerful heirs of the Soviet Union. And yet, in the hopeless darkness of the last 8 years, there was a brief moment when the armed conflict in the DPR and LPR actually stopped, and the direct participants and guarantors of compliance with the agreements were able to agree on their positions for the first time.

By Anton Popov

The dove of peace took off from Minsk

Of course, we are talking about the Minsk agreements, a triumph of Belarusian and international diplomacy, when, after the catastrophic defeat of the Armed Forces of Ukraine in the Battle for Debaltseve, Aleksandr Lukashenko managed to put the leaders of Russia, Ukraine, France and Germany at the negotiating table.



On the part of Belarus, this was not only a practical step to establish peace on our southern borders, but also a deeply symbolic move: the Belarusian brother reconciled the Russian brothers and Ukrainian brothers, who came together in a deadly battle in the Donbass steppes.

There are few examples in the history of the last few decades when it was possible to find a diplomatic solution acceptable to all parties to an armed conflict of such magnitude and intensity, which has been dragging on since the spring of 2014 in the Donbass. Thus, the notorious Brussels agreements concluded between Belgrade and Pristina did not solve the problem of the persecution of ethnic Serbs in the northern municipalities of Kosovo, and the situation there continues to balance on the brink of a major war.

What happened in the Palace of Independence in Minsk in February 2015 was truly of great importance for world diplomacy. The plan agreed upon by the parties seems to be, if not ideal, then very close to such a road map.

The implementation of all the points of the Minsk Protocol would have avoided a direct clash between Russia and Ukraine in February 2022 and would have saved the cities and villages of Donbass from the ongoing military hell. But even the implementation of part of the agreements actually froze the conflict and prevented its uncontrolled esca-



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“We have different goals. I see that the authorities of Ukraine, apparently, the authorities of Ukraine in general are more committed to resolving this issue of Eastern Ukraine by force now. I proceed from different positions — I believe that there is no forceful solution to this problem. It will be a lot of blood, it will be an escalation of the conflict. Therefore, I am for a peaceful solution to this issue. And in every possible way contributed to this world coming there, including my position on the Minsk agreements — Minsk-1, Minsk-2.”

During an interview with Bloomberg media holding (USA) on March 31st, 2015

lation. The withdrawal of heavy weapons from the line of contact naturally deprived the parties of the opportunity to conduct major offensive operations — for 8 years everything was limited to the actions of sabotage groups in the grey zone and several larger clashes, which, however, were neither long nor intense.

In addition, the number and intensity of shelling has been reduced, resulting in fewer civilian casualties on both sides of the front line. Moreover, the parties established a reliable communication channel in the form of contact groups that met regularly in Minsk and resolved contradictions literally in manual mode.

Hope never dies

The conclusion of the Minsk agreements became possible not only thanks to the efforts of the Belarusian leader, who was able to do the seemingly impossible, but also because the representatives of the parties believed in the very possibility of resolving the conflict not on the battlefield, but at the negotiating table. Thus, the situation as of February 2015 was extremely difficult in Europe. Ukrainian President Poroshenko considered Russia a party to the conflict and for a long time did not agree that Putin would act as an intermediary between

him and the leaders of the LPR and DPR. German Chancellor Merkel and the head of the Fifth Republic, Hollande, had a similar opinion and decided to compromise in order to stop the bloody civil war here and now.

Most recently, Frau Merkel made, as it is fashionable to say in the West, a coming-out — she admitted in an interview that she allegedly took part in the pacification of the republics of the South-East and Ukraine only in order to give the Ukrainians time to build up forces in view of the imminent threat of Russian invasion. However, this loud statement smells strongly of an attempt to pull the owl of reality onto the globe of afterthought. In other words, the ex-chancellor is trying to show ‘wisdom’ and ‘sagacity’, attributing to her actions motives that did not exist at the time of the conclusion of the Minsk agreements.

“She acted in petty, obnoxious way. She wants to be in trend,” Aleksandr Lukashenko, the chief architect of the negotiation process, briefly and succinctly commented on Merkel’s revelations.

Indeed, the intention of almost a decade of a cunning and complex multi-level scheme for preparing Ukraine for a war with Russia by luring the Russian leader into a trap of agreements looks too large-scale for the then European politicians.

Unbridled propaganda trumpeting the invasion of Russian troops into Ukraine is one thing, but quite another is the objective reality that the German intelligence services, possessing a solid intelligence apparatus, could not help but describe to Merkel.

In other words, the former German Chancellor knew that Russia was not going to take part in the civil war as a party to the conflict.

The trend of unconsciousness

Many focused on the words that Merkel ‘wants to be in trend’ after the comments of the Belarusian leader. The point is that in the West, it has become fashionable to present the Minsk agree-

ments as a trap set up by the insidious West for the narrow-minded Russians amid a slowdown in the implementation of the special military operation. Like, over the past time, the Armed Forces of Ukraine have prepared according to NATO standards so well that they have been holding back the onslaught of the Russian army for the 9th month.

In fact, the participation of France and Germany in the conclusion of the Minsk agreements was one of the last meaningful and sovereign steps taken by European politicians. The cessation of the conflict was in the interests of the EU countries in order to restore the shaken stability on the continent.

The United States, on the contrary, showed no particular enthusiasm, wanting to preserve the smouldering hotbed of tension near the Russian border. Now, 8 years later, when the European politicians have become completely dependent on overseas masters, retroactive rewriting of the motives of the Minsk agreements has begun.

It may sound somewhat paradoxical, but this trend is somewhat similar to what they are trying to do in the West with the history of the Second World War. Just as they distort the memory of who actually defeated Nazism and downplay the role of the Soviet soldier, elevating the courage of the Americans and the British to the skies, so they try to revise the true meaning of the Minsk agreements, which, unfortunately, have become history.

However, Belarus is not subject to such weather vane tendencies. We honour the memory of those who fell in the battle against Nazism — and we know what the leaders actually agreed on at an endlessly long and difficult meeting in the Palace of Independence. And the very fact that Belarus is still a donor of security and stability in the region was once again confirmed by the February-March talks in Belovezhskaya Pushcha and the principled position of Aleksandr Lukashenko, who calls for peace and is ready to once again provide a platform for negotiations.

Where to find Ded Moroz

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Palace of the Republic

The brightest lights are traditionally lit on the country's main Christmas tree — in Minsk. The iconic concert hall prepares a fabulous performance for each New Year with the best artists, scenery, special effects and musical accompaniment.

This year, the writers have relied on fantasy. According to the scenario, children Ales and Rada come to their old village house with their parents on the eve of the holidays. The children will learn an old legend about the Star Bison and the wishing star that makes dreams come true on New Year's Eve. But this time all the stars went out. Ded Moroz sends Ales and Rada to help the Star Bison restore power to the cosmic luminaries. Together with the heroes of the performance, the little spectators will go on an exciting journey in search of the mysterious New Year's Star Thief. The organisers promise many interactive zones, entertainment, holiday customs and gifts.

Where: Minsk



The winter wizard has already begun opening residences across the country. Now is the time to plan a trip for gifts and festive mood. Let us tell you where to find Ded Moroz in Belarus.

Belovezhskaya Pushcha

Ded Moroz lives all year round in the thicket of the relic forest. The doors of his marvellous estate are open to visitors even in summer. A whitish beard to the waist, a fur coat with national embroidery and a funny straw hat — the magician loves to surprise. The fame of the wonders of Ded Moroz from Belovezhskaya Pushcha has long spread around the world, every year up to 150,000 tourists come to see him. About twenty thousand more people send him letters — he personally answers each one. In gratitude for fulfilled wishes, souvenirs and gifts are sent to the Pushcha. So many of them have accumulated over almost two decades of the residence' operation that it was necessary to start a separate treasury!

Here one can look into the tower of the Snow Maiden, walk through the glade for twelve months or grind all the bad things that have accumulated over the year in the Magic Mill. However, grandfather's assistants are not deer, but bison. Belarusian giants meet visitors at the entrance to the national park.

Where: Kamenets District, Brest Region



Khovanshchina

For real forest adventures, we are heading to the Ivatsevichy Historic and Regional Studies Museum. Cultural workers there collected information about how the New Year was celebrated in partisan camps during the Great Patriotic War bit by bit. On the basis of archival data, a whole quest appeared, which is carried out... in a swamp.

Among dugouts and tall firs in a snowy forest, children are offered to feel like scouts and find Ded Moroz. He looks to match the entourage of past years — in a sheepskin coat, belted with a machine-gun belt, with a linen beard and a duffel bag over his shoulders. There will also be combat missions — for example, to throw snowballs and cones at Adolf Hitler himself.

Instead of sweets, the kids are given gingerbread baked according to local recipes, they don't dance around the Christmas tree, but by the fire with a pot-bellied retro samovar.

Where: Ivatsevichy District, Brest Region



Stalin Line

If one wants a bright holiday, one should see Ded Moroz in uniform. An unusual residence with a patriotic twist will work in the historical and cultural complex.

The New Year's wizard will not let the kids down: the gift must be earned. During animated tours, children will be able to show their ingenuity, creativity and show themselves in sports. Young patriots will be offered to compete in accuracy and dexterity — to shoot not only 'snowballs', but also from a blanked weapon. At the end of the programme, each participant leaves a note with a cherished desire in a real sleeve. Ded Moroz and the Snow Maiden will bury messages under a fluffy Christmas tree until next December.

Where: Minsk Region



Naliboki

Ded Zimnik will be waiting for guests not alone, but with his companion Baba Zavrukha. Figures of Belarusian mythology have long settled down here. Together with them, one can see Koshchei, Kikimora and Baba Yaga there.

The fabulous company arranges holidays in their estate with songs, dances, fun and competitions. Each year, a new theme is chosen for the interactive performance. If one still has strength after the fairy-tale performance, one can take a walk along the eco-trails to the Pushcha. Deer and roe deer, capercaillie and owls, bison and wild horses — there is a whole zoo if one is lucky enough to see them.

Where: Grodno Region, the village of Zaleyki



Messi's mission

Argentina national team once again became the best in the world

The unbelievably heated finale ended with a dramatic series of penalty shoot-outs. Lionel Messi played like a god, while Kylian Mbappe scored a hat-trick and made a weighty claim to the title of king of world football in the next ten years. For two World Cups, this 23-year-old unique scored 12 goals (like Pele in his entire career), but his efforts were still not enough to defeat Argentina.

By Sergei Kanashits

Interestingly, the Saudi Arabia team is the only team that managed to defeat the future champions of the FIFA World Cup Qatar 2022! In the first leg, the Saudis upstaged Messi and company in brilliant style, giving them, as it turned out, an excellent gift. Firstly, they threw dust in everyone's eyes — they say that the king is no longer the same and all his retinue is no good as they were before. And secondly, they made the Argentines themselves wake up, mobilise and get angry. They woke up the tiger. So much so that the predator was furious in earnest.

It was one of the most spectacular finals in World Cup history. The last time such incendiary football was shown in a decisive match was 36 years ago at the 1986 World Cup, and then, interestingly, Argentina also won: the Argentines, led by Diego Maradona, derailed a powerful German football powerhouse — 3:2. Since then, Germany, Brazil and France have become champions twice, the Italians and the Spaniards have won, but Messi and his comrades have not been able to get to the title. But then thunder struck, exactly when it began to seem to everyone that Leo was not destined to become truly great and raise a gold cup over his head. In a crazy final, Argentina and France scored each other three goals each, failed to determine



REUTERS



Argentines really play in the Argentina national team, then it is quite possible to study the geography of Africa and adjacent regions by origin of French

football players. The vast majority of the players of this team have dark skin and are descendants of people from the hottest continent. In general, how do you like such a curious fact for reflection: most of the players who played in the semi-finals of the 2022 World Cup are guys with African roots! Congo, Angola, Benin, Cameroon, Algeria, Guinea-Bissau, Mali, Martinique, Guadeloupe... This is not a complete list of countries from which the mothers-fathers-grandfathers of the French national team come from. But that's not all. Hugo Lloris' father is Spaniard. Just like the Hernandez brothers. Antoine Griezmann's father is an immigrant from Germany, and his mother is from Portugal. Olivier Giroud is half Italian. Only three players in the French squad for this cup are really French in full — these are Benjamin Pavard, Adrien Rabiot and Jordan Veretout. So it is quite possible to say that Argentina met with the world team in the final match and won. It was a graceful and well deserved victory.



Gonzalo Montiel's final penalty shot

the strongest either in normal or extra time, and only in a series of post-match penalties did luck swing towards the South Americans. Who's to say it's unfair? In Argentina, they love football so much that they sincerely believe that the Earth originated from the ball, and a human took on its present appearance only after he or she struck the first shot on goal. 90 percent of Argentines consider football not a game, but part of their cultural code — almost a religion. There

are about five thousand officially registered teams in this country (we don't have even a hundred) and several million football players. There are 28 (!) clubs in the Primera Division of the Argentine Championship, however, there are five divisions in total! Apart from the whole network of regional leagues, which, like an octopus, enveloped the entire territory of the country. Indeed, they have Messi. The ways of the football god are inscrutable, he could not let this genius end

his career without a World Cup title. At the age of 35 he finally got his hands on the prize. Probably, in terms of the totality of results on the way to the final, France deserved the title a little more. The epidemic of injuries and illnesses knocked out almost half of the main performers from the 'Tricolores', but the French did not seem to notice this — they went ahead with the Napoleonic army and smashed everyone who got in their way. In France, football is also a cult. But it so happened that the principle of formation of the roster is completely different. If only

SCORE

Final. Argentina — France — 3 : 3 (Messi, 23, from the penalty spot, 108, Di Maria, 36; Mbappe, 80, 118 — both from the penalty spot, 81) (on penalties — 4 : 2).

Third-place play-off. Croatia — Morocco — 2 : 1 (Gvardiol, 7, Orsic, 42; Dari, 9).

ARENA

• Belarus national ice hockey team won Channel One Cup

The CSKA Arena hosted the Channel One Cup traditional international hockey tournament in Moscow.

The final match of the tournament represented the confrontation between the national teams of Belarus and Russia. Both teams started the 2022 Channel One Cup with a victory over the Kazakhs: the Belarusians were stronger than Andrei Skabelka's wards with a score of 4:1, the Russians coped even more confidently — 6:2. In the face-to-face meeting, our team took the lead already in the 9th minute thanks to a goal by Ilya Sushko, but even before the break the hosts equalised the score — 1:1. At the beginning of the second third, the Russians already took the lead, but the guests managed to answer with two goals at once: Shane



Prince and Roman Gorbunov made the score 3:2 in favour of Belarus.

The third period also ended with the score 2:1, but with the advantage of the Russians. Vladislav Kodola had the only Belarusian goal in the segment. At the end of regular time, the numbers 4:4 were on the scoreboard, and the meeting went into overtime. In the extra five-minute period, the teams failed to distinguish themselves, and the shootout was left for the wards of Craig Woodcroft. As a result, Channel One Cup went to Belarus, this trophy has become the second for our team in three days.

Earlier, the Belarusian team conquered international competitions in the 3x3 format. In the semifinal match, our team coped with the Chinese team. The rival of our hockey players in the decisive match was the team of Kazakhstan, which in its semi-final in a shootout beat the Russians (3:2). There was no intrigue in the final, the Belarusians simply didn't leave Skabelka's team a chance — 7:1.

• Belarusian weightlifters won 12 gold medals at international tournament

Traditional international weightlifting competitions in memory of Olympic champion Aleksandr Kurynov were held in Zelenodolsk, Russia.

About 200 athletes from Belarus and Russia took to the platform of the Sport Complex Mayak and competed for 20



sets of medals. On the first day of competition, the winners of the tournament were our Marina Markovich, Alina Shchepanova, Kristina Marchenko, Daria Naumova, Margarita Leshchenko, as well as Gennady Laptev. According to the results of the second day of the competition, Belarusians Ilya Zhernovsky, Nikolai Chernyak, Pavel Khodasevich, Igor Lozko, Yevgeny Tikhontsov and Eduard Ziuzulin received gold medals. In addition, Vladimir Zaitsev, Yulian Kurlovich and Alexander Venskel became the owners of silver medals in our team.



Yegor Yermaltitskiy



Photo of the week

Black Water Rabbit — a symbol of 2023 according to the Chinese astrology — promises that the coming year will be happy

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



December 22nd is Power Engineer's Day in the Republic of Belarus. On this day in 1920, the 8th All-Russian Congress of Soviets opened,

which approved the State Plan for the Electrification of Russia (GOELRO). In Belarus, a professional holiday was established by a Presidential Decree in 1995. This is a holiday for all workers in the industry, covering the generation, transmission and sale of electrical and thermal energy to consumers, which they celebrate on one of the shortest daylight hours of the year.

On December 22nd, 1938, coelacanth was caught near the southern part of Africa — the oldest fish on Earth. The discovery of coelacanth caused a sensation in the scientific world. The fish belongs to the coelacanth order, which belongs to the ancient order of the lobe-finned fish, which scientists considered extinct in the Cretaceous period. However, this is more than 70 million years ago!



On December 22nd, 1937, Eduard Uspensky was born (1937-2018), a Russian writer, author of *Gena the Crocodile and His Friends*, *Three from Prostokvashino* novels and stories for children, etc. He

organised the publishing house of children's educational literature called Samovar. He was the author and host of the popular musical TV and radio talk show *Ships Used to Enter Our Harbour*.



On December 23rd, 1952, the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, the largest business union in the country, was established. The BelCCI unites more than 2,500 member enterprises representing all spheres of Belarusian business and provides various types of services, providing comprehensive support for businesses in foreign economic activity.

On December 24th, 1982, the V.K. Byalynitski-Birulia Art Museum was opened in Mogilev — a branch of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus. The exposition of the museum introduces the life and work of the Belarusian artist. Among the exhibits are: documents, photographs of the artist and his family, personal belongings of V.K. Byalynitski-Birulia — a sketchbook, palette, brushes, a hunting rifle, furniture, etc. The museum also houses paintings and sketches of the artist.



December 25th is Christmas for the western Christians — a great feast



established in remembrance of the birth of Jesus Christ in Bethlehem. On this day, Christmas is celebrated not only by Roman

Catholic, but also by the Orthodox of a number of countries of the world, Lutherans and other Protestant denominations. Over the centuries, many traditions of its celebration have been formed — traditional Christmas trees, nativity scenes, divine services and feasts. But in one country or another, local customs are added to the generally accepted rules, giving this holiday national features and originality.

On December 26th, 1812, the Patriotic War of 1812 ended. The remnants of the 'Grande Armée' of the French Emperor Napoleon I left Russia, Russian troops crossed the Neman River. The war began to liberate Europe from Napoleon's troops.



On December 27th, 1912, Vladimir Korol was born (1912-1980), a Belarusian architect, Honored Builder of Belarus, People's Architect of the USSR, full member of the USSR Academy of Arts. His main works (all co-

authored) are located in Minsk: the project of planning and development of Leninsky (now Independence) Avenue, the building of the Main Post Office, the *Victory Monument*. He is also among the authors of the *Brest Hero Fortress* memorial complex. Laureate of the State Prize of Belarus.

On December 27th, 1832, Pavel Tretyakov was born (1832-1898), a Russian businessman, collector, founder of the Tretyakov Gallery in Moscow. He was an active member of the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts and honorary citizen of Moscow. Since 1854, he collected an art collection, since 1856 — works of Russian art, which laid the foundation for the Tretyakov Gallery. In 1892, he donated his collection to the city of Moscow.



December 28th is International Cinema Day. On December 28th, 1895, the first public demonstration of the 'live moving photography — cinematograph', invented by the Lumiere brothers, took place in the Grand Café on the Boulevard des Capucines in Paris.



On December 29th, 1972, The Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was awarded the Order of Friendship of Peoples by Decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR.