



How Belarus makes money on milk and competes with the world's leading producers

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Archaeological excavations are scheduled in Lida to clarify the date of the founding of the city

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Sergeant Aleksandr Khudoley guarding the state border with Lithuania

Courage and honour

Today the country solemnly celebrates the 105th anniversary of the Armed Forces of the Republic of Belarus and the Day of Fatherland Defenders. This truly national holiday is deeply significant for all the people of our country and carries the symbolic unity of the past and the present in its essence. On this day, we congratulate all those who walked the front roads, defended our freedom and independence during the Great Patriotic War, who were an example of selfless service to the Motherland in the post-war period, strengthened the combat power of the Red Banner Belarusian Military District, as well as those who fulfilled their international duty with valour and honour.

Today, the soldiers of the Armed Forces sacredly preserve and increase the combat traditions of the older generations, improve their combat skills and successfully solve complex combat training tasks.



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Yegor Yermalitskiy

Union State programmes fulfilled by 80 percent

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, and the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, held a meeting in Novo-Ogaryovo near Moscow

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that Russia and Belarus have an unprecedented turnover of goods and services by the end of 2022, “\$50 billion. About \$44 billion is trade in goods as you said. The rest are services...”

I was pleasantly surprised by what the ambassador told me on the way here. According to him, your companies ordered more than \$300 million worth of products from our IT specialists. They paid more than \$300 million. Everyone was screaming: IT specialists had fled from Belarus and Russia and so on... Russian placed orders worth \$300 million in Belarus alone. And if we take Russian IT specialists, orders will amount to several billion dollars. Thus, ‘peace-loving’ countries failed to drive us into a corner so that the brightest minds, as they said, would flee our countries. This means that import substitution is making progress.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also stated that Belarus fully abides by its defence and security agreements with Russia, “All our agreements on defence and security for last year that we discussed quite recently, three months ago, were fulfilled by Belarus by 100 percent. And even over-fulfilled.”

According to the Belarusian leader, there is also progress in the microelectronics industry, “We were concerned that we were too dependent on imports. In a week I am having a meeting on the topic that we discussed in Sochi. We have retained the microelectronics industry that we inherited from the Soviet



Union. We have also reached agreements with the Russian companies that were set up in the Soviet period. And today experts say: Don’t worry, tell Vladimir Vladimirovich that we will do everything. Well, the tasks are bigger this time... We know how to move forward. This is the most important thing. People know their job... We have made progress in import substitution. I will not say that we have resolved all the issues, but we did move forward.”

As noted, co-operation has also been established between enterprises that previously viewed each other as competitors. These are, in particular, MAZ and KAMAZ.

“Remember, there was some red tape with respect to the co-operation between these companies. Now there is no competition. We produce component parts for KAMAZ, and KAMAZ makes goods for us. Certain Western companies left. The domestic companies have enough room on the market now,” the President of Belarus stated.

However, there is still work

to be done. There are certain issues in matters of co-operation, noted the Head of the Belarusian State.

Aircraft construction industry was also cited as a positive example.

“You once raised the question of co-operation in aircraft production in the Eurasian Economic Union. So I should tell you that the Belarusians are already producing up to a thousand component parts for the MC-21 u and Sukhoi Superjet 100. We have three factories: two military and one civilian. They used to be repair shops. Today they produce component parts. As I was informed by the government, they are ready for the production of the Sukhoi Su-25 attack aircraft that have proved to be efficient in Ukraine. We are even ready to produce them in Belarus if the Russian Federation provides a little bit of technological support,” the President of Belarus noted.

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that we are doing everything to overcome the barriers that are artificially created for Belarus and Russia.

“I’m not talking about food. We have ensured food security. I’m not talking about clothes. We manufacture these products across the board. Therefore, the positive changes are huge. We will have something to say to the peoples of Belarus and Russia at the Supreme State Council meeting,” the Belarusian leader said.

In turn, Vladimir Putin, reacting to what was said by his Belarusian counterpart, stressed, “Well, not only to say, but, I think, to outline, together with our governments, ways for further development.”

“Indeed. The 28 programmes that we have outlined with you, have already been fulfilled by about 80 percent. As you noted in St. Petersburg, it is mostly humanitarian issues that are yet to be addressed. In terms of customs and tax matters, we have adopted laws,” Aleksandr Lukashenko continued.

“Key points have been resolved,” the Russian President agreed.

“Indeed, the key matters have been settled,” the Belaru-

sian Head of State concurred.

In this regard, Vladimir Putin expressed confidence that all this ‘will make our economies even more competitive’.

The President of Russia noted that Belarus managed to preserve the enterprises left over from the Soviet era and bring them to a new level of development thanks to the efforts of the authorities, “Together we can benefit from the results of this development. Moreover, by joining forces, we are creating a kind of synergy. On the one hand, there are your capabilities in manufacturing industries, and on the other hand, there are the needs of our market and additional efforts on the part of Russian enterprises, engineers, even the scientific school. These efforts have been very effective in some industries. We hope that this will yield good results for both Belarus and Russia.”

The leaders of Belarus and Russia are also set to discuss the ways of bolstering the Union State, the status of the Union State programmes.

“They have been worked out by our governments. They create conditions, a basis for moving forward in our co-operation, primarily, of course, in economy,” Vladimir Putin added.



Recently, co-operation has been established between MAZ and KAMAZ

The draft of the updated national security concept was submitted for discussion at the Security Council meeting chaired by the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko



Belarusian peacefulness is not synonymous to willingness to sacrifice

believes that the elements of the Cold War — the arms race and nuclear blackmail by leaders of individual Western states — have returned to today’s international agenda.

“There is an obvious resurgence of aggressive nationalism and extremism in various forms and manifestations. The ideology of neo-fascism is gaining ground. The risks associated with narcotic drugs, human trafficking, illegal migration, which are also used to achieve political goals, are not subsiding. The trend towards global cultural unification,

including the trend towards unconventional behaviours, endangers the foundations of the nation state, i.e. our moral principles, centuries-old values and historical memory,” the President said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that, unlike a number of countries, where security concept documents are classified, Belarus decided not to hide anything.

“We must clearly and openly declare our priorities, we must show the world the transparency of our policy, the reliability of Belarus as a

responsible partner. But our partners must also know that Belarusian peacefulness is not synonymous to willingness to sacrifice. In the event of any aggression, the response will be fast, tough and adequate,” the President explained.

The Head of State emphasised that the approval of the national security concept, which is one of the most important documents for the country, will be one of the key responsibilities of the Belarusian People’s Congress.

One of the documents submitted for consideration was the On People’s Militia draft law. In order

to avoid speculations on this topic, the President explained, “We have built an effective system of state defence. Its basis is the Armed Forces. It is they who solve the most important defence tasks that require the concentration of all the efforts of the state... But the situation is not easy. I have already said more than once: every man (and not only a man) should know how to handle weapons. At least in order to protect their families, homes, hometowns and, if necessary, the country.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met with representatives of foreign and Belarusian media. The meeting with journalists lasted more than three hours. Representatives of the media were interested in the opinion of the Head of State on the most acute issues: the conflict in Ukraine and the positions of the parties, Belarus-Russia Union State interaction, as well as many others. The event is unscheduled. The President responded to the requests of the foreign guests who arrived in the Belarusian capital.

“I am telling you honestly that the meeting has not been planned. The Press Secretary told me that we have such a powerful ‘army’, especially foreign journalists (I do not count Russians among as such). I thought that it would probably be inhospitable on behalf of Belarus not to give you some time,” the Head of State said. In addition to Belarusian journalists, media representatives from Austria, Azerbaijan, the UK, Qatar, Russia, Saudi Arabia, the USA, France, Japan and the interstate television and radio company Mir arrived at a meeting with the President. Let us give you key statements of the Belarusian leader.

Situation in Ukraine

In particular, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about those who do not want peace in Ukraine and also named the reasons for Belarus to use its army,

“I am ready to fight together with the Russians from the territory of Belarus only in one case: if at least one soldier sets foot in Belarus to kill my people. If they commit aggression against Belarus, the answer will be immediate. The war will acquire a completely different scale then.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that this pertained not only to Ukraine but also to other neighbours.

Answering the question from the BBC journalist, he recalled that even before Russia started its special military operation, Ukraine was preparing to use its multiple rocket launchers against Belarus, “Ukraine was doing it deliberately. I do not know why they needed it. They came under fire from the territory of Belarus in the first minutes. It was in the morning, a few minutes before the start of the special military operation.”

The President said that back in 2020, Ukraine was actually the first to impose sanctions against Belarus, even before the Western countries did it, “It was not the United States, not the Anglo-Saxons, not Western Europe. Unfortunately, it was our kin nation of Ukraine. It closed the airspace, launched provocations and trained fighters.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also recalled statements by Western politicians that the Minsk agreements were used as an opportunity to prepare the Ukrainian army for war,

“It’s not an invasion. The Ukrainian authorities provoked this operation. By actions like that. I just named a few of them. Had they reached an agreement with Russia there would have been no war. But everything was tailored, starting with the Minsk agreements, to unleash a war. I believe this is the protection of the interests of Russia and those people, Russian people.”

The President is sure that Ukraine was only a pretext for the war that the West was pushing. Moreover, there is interest in the dismemberment of Ukraine, including with the participation of Poland.

The peaceful proposals of Minsk

Aleksandr Lukashenko voiced intelligence data that the West wants to draw Belarus into the war and is literally dream-

Open talk



During the meeting with journalists

ing of it. Given the length of the borders of Belarus, this would further stretch the front by 2,500 kilometres, which would complicate the situation for the troops of Belarus and Russia.

“We won’t give you that chance. But if you dare to set foot on our land, the answer will be the toughest. The West knows how we will respond and what weapons we will use. Nobody needs war. While there is no expansion of the hostilities today, let’s negotiate peace. The eastern side is ready for this,” the Head of State said.

At the same time, the President believes that the West and Ukraine are not yet ready for this, “Not only are you not ready, it would be a terrible tragedy and a disaster for you if peace talks began now. You need war.”

In this regard, the Belarusian leader drew attention to another point — it is the West that sends mercenaries to Ukraine to fight. There are already more than 20,000 of them, “How many people did Lukashenko send there? How many? Zero! And you are throwing blame at me. I do not send people there, and I am not going to do it. I had already honestly and sincerely told you in which case I will be ready to do this... My point is that there is always someone to talk to about peace. It may seem strange, but I think this dialogue should be conducted with the Ukrainian military. I am convinced of this. Ukraine’s military have a kind of, to put it mildly, different point of view than Ukrainian politicians and President Zelenskyy. Volodymyr Zelenskyy is well aware of it. The upcoming, as many are already predicting, reshuffles in the military prove this point. The most professional military are most convinced that the war must be stopped. You will see that we — and the Russians in the first place — will have to negotiate with the Ukrainian military. People are used as cannon fodder there, they are ready to sacrifice millions of Ukrainians. The military understand that. The military will be able to negotiate peace agreements.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko called on Western politicians to change their mind,

“We don’t want war. We want peace negotiations. But you have Zelenskyy bound hand and foot and do not let him to the negotiating table. This is my conviction, and many facts prove it. This means you want war. Do you, the United States, hear me? We want peace. Give the corresponding command to Zelenskyy and sit down at the negotiating table yourselves together with Putin, and I will sit next to you. Wake up! Only the United States needs this massacre. Europe does not need it. Only them. Europe does not need it.”

Speaking about the regional group of forces, the President stressed that the Russian military stationed in Belarus have no plans of attacking Ukraine. They are undergoing combat training with Belarusian servicemen in order to be ready, if necessary, to repel aggression against Belarus together.

The Head of State asked a question, “Why is Biden going to Poland? Why Poland? We’re cool with that. But if he is willing we are ready to host him in Minsk and to have a serious conversation (please convey this to him through your channels). If he wants peace in Ukraine.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also said that he was ready to hold a joint meeting with Vladimir Putin and Joe Biden, “Even Putin will fly over to Minsk for the trilateral meeting: two ‘aggressors’ and the ‘peace loving’ President. Why not? For the sake of ending the war. If he wants to stop the war (Poland is nearby, I will send a plane, if anything, a Boeing for him), and we will host him. Here, in your presence, the three of us (I guarantee you that Vladimir Vladimirovich Putin will come) will sit down and solve the problem. We will be able to solve all the issues here... But, alas, he won’t come. Though he should for the sake of ending the war, for preventing further loss of life. He will stay in Poland, because Poland is the hyena of Europe and plays the most active role in escalating the war in Ukraine today.”

The best alliance for Europe

The President is convinced that all problems must be resolved peacefully at

the negotiating table. Belarus, and personally the Head of State, were involved in this process during the work on the well-known Minsk agreements.

“Well, come to an agreement, sit down at the negotiating table, you see that it is possible. And there were a lot of proposals. Yet you, together with the West, chose to deceive Russia having gathered in Minsk. Although it was not deception. It’s just a trend. Now Hollande and Merkel want to show that they played an important role in keeping Ukraine going, that they gave Ukraine the opportunity to prepare for war. Back in those days everyone believed that we needed to follow the path of the Minsk agreements. Today both Hollande and Merkel are lying. And Poroshenko is also lying. Because today it is not de rigueur to talk about what happened in Minsk. It is not de rigueur. That’s the problem,” the Head of State emphasised.

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed the opinion that the best option for the European Union is to ally with Russia. The USA and China would be jealous of such an alliance.

“The best option for the Europeans is to ally with Russia. The one has resources, the other — high technology. It would be the main centre of power on the planet. The United States and China (with all my due respect and friendly attitude towards China) would be jealous of such an alliance. There would be three powerful centres — the United States, China and the European continent together with Russia, think Eurasia. Perhaps a fourth centre can be formed around India or India and others can join these centres.”

The President believes that this is the direction in which the situation will be developing. Although the United States does not want this and is torpedoing any normal processes, including attempts to establish peace in Ukraine, which the Europeans want. The countries of the European Union ‘are still running behind the United States’ in decision making.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

Justified credibility

Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Steel Structures doubled production of welded grating



CNC machine operator Igor Plyuto

In 2022, the Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Steel Structures (NZTM) shipped 2,500 tonnes of welded grating to consumers: a double growth of volumes. That's just what concerns the new type of produce. In general, the enterprise is operating successfully, quickly improving and developing production that is unique for Belarus. Listing the advantages of a close public-private partnership, the Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Steel Structures doesn't hide the fact that without state support, it would hardly have been able to move forward at such a pace. The MT reporters visited the enterprise and saw everything for themselves.

State support as a key for development: Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Steel Structures is gaining momentum

By Yelena Begunova

Production turned up just at the right moment

A few years ago, there was desolation on the outskirts of the village of Farinovo, Polotsk District. The orphaned skeletons of buildings that belonged to the former rural housing construction plant did not inspire optimism. But entrepreneurs considered it, seeing in this place a great and important prospect for the country.

"The idea to create ultra-modern production here appeared in 2011. It took a lot of time for the dream to take on real shape, embodied in projects, investors, construction sites, and purchase of equipment. In 2015, the first products were released. These were designs for a logistics centre in Vitebsk. Uralkali was also among the first customers. The miners were reinforced with metal structures for two mine shafts. Step by step, NZTM successfully introduced its name to the foreign market, we received new large and complex orders..." Investor Relations Director at the Novopolotsk Plant of Technological Steel Structures Igor Shurpakov recalls.

Igor Shurpakov immediately notes: the role of the state in the development of the plant is simply invaluable. Its support is almost one third of the whole investment.

"At the initial stage, it turned out that, for various reasons, much more funds were needed than we had planned. Implementation of the idea stalled. Perhaps that would have stopped everything. But the production was really new and promising, so we won the competition of innovative projects of the Republic of Belarus, and we were given funds to purchase equipment. Such support immediately affected the position of banks — they changed their attitude towards the new business entity and allocated the necessary credit resources. Things got rolling," Director explains.

Step by step, shop by shop. In 2018, NZTM has already received a certificate for the supply of its steel structures to Europe.

All the parties benefit economically

But how are relations with European partners developing today? Igor Shurpakov states: the plant supplies all products to the Belarusian, Russian and Kazakh markets. There are enough consumers. The range is large and flexible. The production is tailored to fulfil a variety of orders and is very mobile: in the shortest possible time, they can be reorganised here to produce the necessary designs. Programmers and 3D designers will develop models, and then it's up to robotic systems that do not deviate from the specified parameters even by a tenth of a millimetre — high quality is guaranteed, which allows it to compete with similar enterprises, for example, in neighbouring Russia. As for spare parts for equipment, they used to be taken in the EU countries. Now it's many times cheaper to buy them in the Russian Federation and China.

...We walk through a large and spacious workshop where welded gratings are produced. A long production line, minimal human intervention, laser welding is carried out by a special robot. This

is the newest workshop, which went into operation in 2021. The production of welded grating is a very important import-substituting and export direction. There are no more such productions in Belarus, while Russian factories close their market by only 30–40 percent. Previously, they imported similar products from Poland and Germany.

"The initial capacity was calculated at 210 tonnes per month. But last month we already made 289 tonnes, now the task is to reach 300. And since the products have shown high demand, we will soon install another line here — we will be able to produce up to 500 tonnes of metal mats and 200 tonnes of flooring. Interestingly, the state also took part in the creation of the export-oriented division," Head of Production No. 3 Viktor Kosenok conducts a tour for us.

"Three of the most important projects implemented at our plant received state support from the innovation fund. We feel an interest in the development of the enterprise at all levels — both at the district, and at the regional, republican. What do we give in return? Strict implementation of the conditions indicated by

investment projects, import-substituting products urgently needed for various industries (construction, petrochemical, gas, trade, energy, etc.), export growth, decent wages for 400 people. Bottom line — everyone wins. Especially now, in the context of a difficult policy of external restrictions," Igor Shurpakov summarises.

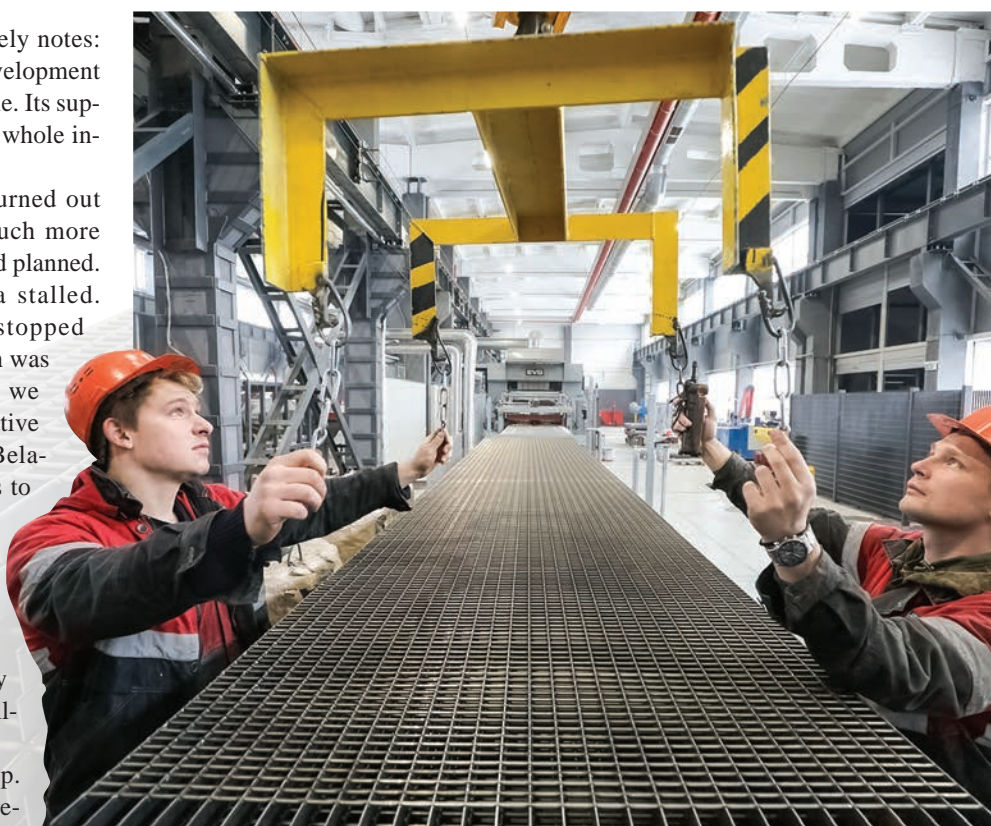
Previously, NZTM purchased a certain share of its raw materials abroad, but was able to quickly and without any problems reorient itself to the Russian market, expanding the list of its traditional suppliers.

Time for new ideas

The plant is developing rapidly, and, as its head notes, the prospects for production are good. Now NZTM will equip a new workshop and expand its product line with bridges and other technological structures. The project has the working title Industry 4.0 and is also supported by the State Innovation Fund. The project will result in plus another 25 percent growth in terms of output.

Igor Shurpakov explains, "We already have the name, business reputation, recognition both in the domestic and foreign markets. We are trusted with the most important projects. Their list is impressive: in St. Petersburg we took part in the construction of the Gazprom Arena, we performed complex tasks for Uralkali, gas processing enterprises in Yamal and Turkey, as well a chemical plant in Tyumen. Among the customers are Moscow and Omsk oil refiners, representatives of the mining industry. With the expansion of the range, we will develop new directions."

Industry 4.0, as they say at the enterprise, will complete the logical chain in production. And then there are new projects. In the future, industrialists plan to launch the production of square pipes for shaft reinforcement — this technology will be in great demand in the mining industry. We also learned the main secret: NZTM is currently preparing to build a galvanising plant for structures. The country's economy is also interested in this production — private and state interests have again come together. For the common good.



The state played an important role in the development of the plant by providing assistance in the purchase of modern equipment

Dairy business

How Belarus makes money on milk and competes with the world's leading producers

Representatives of 15 processing enterprises of Belarus went to Dubai to participate in the world's most popular food and beverage exhibition GulFood, which takes place from February 20th to February 24th. The largest annual industry event on the planet, attracting the attention of industry leaders, successful producers, importers, food distributors, restaurateurs, is very popular with visitors from the Gulf states. However, there is special attention to the Belarusians after the visit of the President of Belarus to Zimbabwe and the UAE.

The dairy industry has come a long way in the past 20 years. The decisions taken in the early 2000s to revive and develop the countryside, develop the raw materials zone of processing enterprises and directly optimise them turned out to be crucial for the state. Now Belarusian milk is among the best, and its high taste qualities are called indisputable.



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"No matter how they stifle domestic producers with sanctions, we traditionally occupy worthy positions in world rankings. We are one of the five largest exporters of dairy products, which today can be found on the shelves of supermarkets in almost 50 countries around the world. We make over 1,800 dairy product titles... We make cheeses, which taste and quality are on par with prominent world brands. A number of Belarusian companies have reached world level results in milk production."

During a solemn assembly held to honour top agribusiness performers on November 18th, 2022

B&W Belarus & World

The Republic of Belarus is in the top-5 exporters of dairy products:

3rd place in butter exports (after New Zealand and the EU)



3rd place in dry whey exports (after the EU and the USA)



3rd place in condensed milk exports (after the EU and Malaysia)



4th place in cheese exports (after the EU, the USA and New Zealand)



5th place in skimmed milk powder exports (after the EU, the USA, New Zealand and Australia)



DAIRY INDUSTRY OF THE REPUBLIC OF BELARUS

32 milk processing enterprises.



In 2022, the growth rate of milk processing is ensured — 101.3 percent by 2021.



In 2022, dairy products were supplied to 50 countries around the world.



In relation to the corresponding period of last year, the list of developed countries was replenished with such markets as: Niger, India, South Korea and Ghana.



The geographical structure of exports of dairy products is formed taking into account demand and price conditions of the market and is presented as follows:



EAEU countries — 88.2 percent,

EU countries — 0.1 percent,

other countries — 11.7 percent.

By Diana Bernikovich

Focus on the import substitution

Experts call the processing of agricultural products one of the key positions of the Belarusian economy. Firstly, this is food security, which our country has been successfully coping with for over ten years. Secondly, by increasing production, we are able to increase our export potential.

Belarus is among the leaders in the world rankings for the export of dairy products.

We export over 70 percent of products with high added value, thereby ensuring the inflow of foreign exchange earnings, stimulating the further development of the dairy industry. The list of the country's leading holdings includes Savushkin Product, Babushkina Krynka, Molochny Mir and others.

The food embargo imposed against Western countries by Belarus in response to sanctions gave impetus to the development of production with an undisguised emphasis on import substitution.

As a result, there is a wide abundance of dairy products of domestic production on the shelves of our stores.

effect and can significantly expand the consumer assortment.

In tandem with science

The development of interstate standards for low-lactose and lactose-free products currently being carried out by Belarusian scientists is of particular relevance. The Institute of Meat and Dairy Industry carried out complex scientific and practical work on the development of technologies for the production of ice cream, curds and curd cheese bars with a reduced carbohydrate content and a reduced calorie content.

According to scientists, products with a high protein content is a new promising direction. The list of innovations can be enumerated for a long time. Most importantly, enterprises implement them in their work and receive competitive products that are in high demand in the domestic and foreign markets.

World famous ice cream

During the visit of the President of Belarus to Zimbabwe, a Belarusian-Zimbabwean business forum was held there. Two processing enterprises took part in the event, useful for establishing new mutually beneficial contacts: Babushkina Krynka

President of Zimbabwe Constantino Chiwenga also tried it.

In general, Babushkina Krynka, management company of the Mogilev Dairy Company Babushkina Krynka Holding Company, produces over 250 product items under six trade brands.

It is also worth noting the brilliant participation of the Babushkina Krynka company in the 30th international exhibition Prodexpo-2023 in Moscow. They took first place in the number of awards: 43 — and all are gold. They managed to break their own record last year, once again confirming the highest quality of their products. The most honourable award is the victory cup in the 'Best Enterprise' nomination.

Also, other Belarusian enterprises return home with valuable awards, confirming the great opportunities and excellent prospects for the further development of the industry as a whole.



FACT

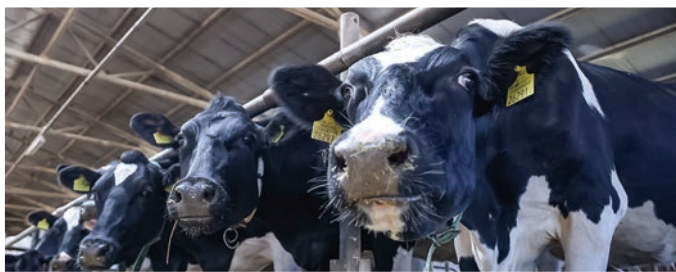
The level of self-sufficiency in dairy products through own production in Belarus exceeds 260 percent. For comparison: in Spain, Bulgaria, Romania it barely reaches 80.

Fly to Singapore

Strengthening our positions in the markets of other countries, confirming the high quality of our products is a strategic task for processors. A great way is to participate in national, international food and beverage exhibitions.

This year, our top dairy producers are scheduled to take part in more than 20 landmark foreign events. The exhibition in Dubai is one of the highlights. We are presenting our capabilities (for the eighth time already) at a single stand called Belarus. The Taste of Nature.

During the year, Belarusian plants and factories plan to take part in food exhibitions in Uzbekistan, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Singapore, China, South Korea, Mongolia, Algeria, Angola and Zimbabwe.



Aleksandr Kulevsky



According to the Agriculture and Food Ministry, the production of elite hard cheeses with long maturation periods, elite blue cheeses according to the formula developed by domestic scientists and soft cheeses, etc. has been rapidly gaining momentum recently. These areas provide a high import-substituting

and Mogilev Meat Processing Plant.

In particular, Babushkina Krynka organised a tasting of its products, including whole milk, yoghurt and dessert groups, cheeses, and curds. They presented delicious soft ice cream, they make the dry mix for it themselves. The main nuance: to prepare the desired consistency, one need to add juice. The Zimbabweans offered their own, orange. It turned out extremely delicious. The First Vice

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Katya Albini, the representative of the Italian Solidarity Committee, and Lyudmila Gladkaya, an observer at Belarus Segodnya Publishing House

We can live in different countries and speak, in fact, the same language — look at seemingly obvious things in the same way. Love the Motherland and respect the right of other states to independence. Respect elders and honour heroes, remember history and preserve traditional values, a unique nationality. Be grateful, appreciate what we have. Rejoice in the world, sow and plough, but not be horrified by more and more lives and entire countries torn apart by the West... We talked about this with the representative of the Consortium of Solidarity with Belarus Katya Albini, because it is very important. This is what the whole world is now trying to deprive and what it, the world, should by no means lose. Otherwise, as they say, lights out!

We speak the same language

By Lyudmila Gladkaya, Anastasia Tselyuk

— On May 9th, 2021, the Consortium of Solidarity with Belarus was established in Italy. For what purpose?

— It was created after the events of 2020, and its main goal was to support the Belarusian people, to help avoid the occurrence of the situation that Ukraine has found itself in. Moreover, it was important for us to show different, multi-sided points of view.

— What do Italians know about Belarus, and what sort of information are they asking for about the country?

— Actually, there is a big difference between the population and the government of Italy. Sadly, many Italians had wrong information about the events in Belarus in 2020, or they were even unaware of them. Our government and journalists were showing in every possible way that Belarus' Government was bad, and that there was absolute dictatorship here. As a result, ordinary Italians had a wrong idea about Belarus and the events happening in the country. At present, many Italian citizens wish to know as much as possible about your people and your culture.

As before, our citizens treat Belarusians respectfully. The families who once hosted Belarusian children affected by the Chernobyl disaster would like to reunite with them, to invite them to visit.

— Your colleagues often visit Belarus. Some of them worked as international observers at elections and the referendum. Accordingly, they can see the real situation. What is your opinion about the political course chosen by Aleksandr Lukashenko?

— You are right. We visit Belarus quite often, and our organisation's representatives even worked as international observers during the nationwide referendum on amendments to the Constitution. Our last visit took place on November 7th, and we also came on May 9th. By the way, our consortium enjoys good relations with Belarusian political parties.

On coming to Belarus, the cordiality and hospitality of its people, as well as their devotion to the native land strike the eye. Our colleagues speak of the kindness and warm-heartedness of Belarusians, who really respect the history of their state and cherish the memory of their grandparents who brought victory during the war.

It is hardly possible not to notice the calmness on Belarus' streets. In Italy, for example, the police and the military are everywhere, but there is no such practice



A rally in Milan against arms supply to Ukraine

in the country. Despite this, it is calm and safe in Belarus, and this is the merit of the country's authorities. After talking to ordinary passers-by or shop assistants, it is evident that the unemployment rate is low here, and this — among other things — creates a sense of security for people.

Belarus is an independent state that will not kneel to foreign forces and will not allow the loss of its sovereignty in favour of the collective West and Europe, despite the pressure exerted.

We have all seen the videos featuring how Aleksandr Lukashenko was giving tractors to Zimbabwe, and this is not the single case. For me and for my colleagues, he is not just the President who cares about his people: he is a person who openly opposes the creation of new colonies. He is truly the father of the state, the man who is concerned about people. Believe me, many Italians say they would wish to have a leader like him.

Italians are angry that their country has no competent politicians able to take care of the nation and do the work they should.

The authorities sign orders issued overseas, without caring about the well-being of ordinary citizens. Belarus is the only healthy island among all the madmen who surround it. Our consortium is aware of what is happening, and we share your position. We are coming to you to gain experience in a multipolar model of the state building, among other things. We hope there will be less American dominance in the future, and people will be able to breathe freely.

— What do you think about sanctions? Have they made someone's life better?

— We understand that the sanctions have failed to produce the expected ef-

fect. Moreover, they have returned like a boomerang to those who imposed them. Italians understand this well, especially considering the fact that the difference in living standards between the rich and the poor is becoming increasingly obvious. Problems — that we knew little of — have come to the fore. And this has become especially noticeable amid the manifestation of Anti-Russian sentiment in Europe.

— Why have the left split in Italy and Europe? Why have some of them turned to left's Atlanticism?

— There has been fragmentation in Italy's political parties, and most of the latter are now represented by Democrats with pro-American views. The other part is a minority. Real chaos is reigning in Europe: history is being rewritten, and monuments are being demolished in Riga and other cities. Nationalism and fascism are equated with communism today, and the situation happening in Europe might soon be repeated in our country. Attempts to rewrite history are already visible: i.e. fascists are presented as nationalists in new history textbooks. Sooner or later, this will lead to a tragedy and an outbreak of war, as in Ukraine.

— As reported by the Italian media, at the end of 2022, the Pentagon Head talked about further supplies of arms to Ukraine — i.e. air defence systems — with his Italian colleague. Defence co-operation between the two countries is being discussed. There has been a statement recently that Italy's Council of Ministers approved a resolution on the extension of arms supplies to Ukraine until the end of 2023. Why is this being done? What are the Italian government's intentions?

— Italy really continues this theme. We are risking our own protection. We

are actually disarming ourselves in order to deliver weapons to Ukraine. We — ordinary Italians — have no information of what kind of weapons is being sent there.

I think these actions have one goal: to continue relations with the European Union and the United States. Differently speaking, Italy is going ahead, and it is doing all the same things that others are doing. As I see, diplomatic negotiations could be a way out of the situation.

We — ordinary Italians — support neither sanctions, nor arms supplies. Italians realise that peace cannot be built upon weapons and deaths. Ordinary people understand that this should not happen, and this is also confirmed by the polls conducted in the country.

— Italian mercenaries, neo-fascists are now fighting in Ukraine. Moreover, they brag by posting their photos with weapons and military equipment on social networks. Trips to Ukraine are like a safari or an entertainment for them.

— People go to Ukraine as volunteers, upon their own initiative. I can tell you of a woman who used to visit the country in this way. She was later shown on all our TV channels. She was interviewed, though she was actually engaged in illegal actions and should have been prosecuted. As regards the Italian military, there is no official confirmation about them.

Speaking of our nationalists, they are watching the Ukrainian battalions, and they are heroes for them. This trend is observed not only in Italy, but it embraces other countries as well.

There is also a fear that those who are fighting there will return back to Europe — bringing chaos and destruction. After all, we supply weapons to them as well. Terrorism in Europe is the main danger for us. The Prosecutor's Office of Naples has found out that, even before the events of February 24th, there had been connections between Italian and Ukrainian nationalists.

— It would seem that Europe could become strong by living in peace and co-operation with us, Russia, and so on. We have nothing to quarrel over. Why are European leaders still listening to those beyond the ocean?

— Ordinary Italians really believe that it is necessary to unite, and that it is right. The problem is rooted in the government that supports the United States. We, the Consortium of Solidarity with Belarus (we are almost nobody), are trying to maintain relations and establish ties by doing even small steps.

Archaeological excavations are scheduled in Lida to clarify the date of the founding of the city

Happy New Age!

The rich and complex history of this city today is evidenced by the high walls and impregnable towers of the castle. The district centre will celebrate its 700th anniversary next year. Surprisingly, only 43 years ago, it celebrated... the sixth anniversary on a grand scale.

The city made an incredible leap in time thanks to the perseverance of researchers who proved and disputed the new date of its foundation. However, it is possible that in the very near future Lida will again change the number in its birth certificate.

By Katerina Charovskaya

Testament of the Grand Duke

There are two explanations of the appearance of the name of the city: beautiful and realistic. According to the first, the settlement bears the name of the daughter of the Grand Duke Gedimin Lida, who, in order to avoid an unwanted marriage, jumped into the river from the window of the castle. Unfortunately, historians have not found confirmation that such a character actually existed. Therefore, the second theory has come to the fore today: most likely, the original name of the city sounded like 'lyada', which in Old Belarusian means an area on the site of an uprooted forest.

If the researchers were able to come to a common opinion on this issue, then the date of the founding of Lida is still



Olga Lukyan



Night of Museums at Lida Castle, May 2022

Director of the Lida Historical and Art Museum Olga Lukyan,

"Due to the fact that in order to change the date of the founding of the city, artefacts must be in our hands, the Chairman of the Lida District Executive Committee Sergei Lozhechnik took the initiative to conduct archaeological excavations in the anniversary year. This is all the more important, since archaeological excavations have never been carried out on the territory of Lida, they were carried out exclusively within the boundaries of the Lida Castle on an area of less than a hectare. Now we are planning to lay temporary pits to find the deepest cultural deposit. Places have already been identified in the area of the city park."

history of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania by the scientist Teodor Narbutt. There is also an opinion that during excavations conducted by archaeologists from Vilna University 100 years ago, women's jewellery and utensils dating back to the 9th-10th centuries were found, but due to political upheavals, reports about this were sent either to Poland or Lithuania. Many archives were destroyed during the Great Patriotic War. For a long time, historians tried to find them, but to no avail. And only in our days there is hope for establishing the true age of the city.

The spear keeps a secret

By the way, the regional authorities plan to make this excavation another tourist attraction. Visitors will be able to watch the work of archaeologists, and if they are lucky, they will also witness a historical event: the discovery of a unique artefact that will allow the date of the founding of the city to be postponed for the third time in half a century. And who knows, maybe not one, but as much as two or three centuries ago...

In addition, optimism is inspired by the surviving reports on the study of the cultural layer on the territory of the Lida Castle in the 70-80s of the last century. It lists many unique items that could become an important part of the exposition of any museum. One-piece ceramic dishes of the 14th century, copies of tiles and much more. Now enthusiasts are looking for participants in those excavations to

document their memories.

Historians are also ready for the fact that future research will bring not only new discoveries, but also new mysteries. Like, for example, a silver tip on a Viking spear of the 9th-10th centuries, found near the walls of the Lida Castle. Where could an artefact that belonged to a northern warrior come from here? So far, there is no definitive answer to this question. Nevertheless, each such find is an element of a large canvas on which the history of ancient Lida is written. Apparently, quite a bit of time will pass — and it will sparkle with new colours.

Wander around the Zamkovaya

Preparations are underway for the creation of a pedestrian street in Lida.

It is planned that already this year the townspeople and guests of the city will be able to enjoy a walk along the most ancient street of the city — Zamkovaya. It is located on the northwestern side of the Lida Castle, it has ten buildings, five of which are of historical value. This street has a rich history. Long before the construction of the castle, a road passed between the Kamenka River and Lideika River, connecting the territories inhabited by Lithuanians and Slavs. Prince Gedimin placed the castle on the road from the new capital, Vilna, to the former, Novogrudok. Along this road, residential buildings were laid for the builders of the castle, and a street was formed, which was called Zamkovaya.



Lida. Suvalskaya Street, 1930

shrouded in mystery and is the subject of scientific disputes. A few decades ago, it was believed that it was formed as a city in 1380 — it was this year that the deed to Lida to Voidyla, the servant of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Jagiello, was allegedly dated, and 1323 was the date of the start of the construction of the castle, near the walls of which its builders settled, gradually building the local cartography: streets, houses, shops, workshops and market square. But later, the testament of the Grand Duke of Lithuania Gedimin

became the basis for determining the time of the appearance of the settlement. In it, he left the right to manage Lida to his son Narimunt. Lida is going to celebrate the 700th anniversary of this event this year.

Nonetheless, there is another date that today excites the minds of historians and inspires hope that this city was born at least in the same century as Moscow, Grodno, Tula... A number of world encyclopaedias designate 1180 as the year Lida was founded — in particular, it is indicated in the fundamental work on the



Brazil's traditional Rio Carnival

Get out the glitter, drums and jewel-encrusted bikinis: Rio dances through the night at its famed carnival, a reembrace of samba spirit after the turmoil of COVID-19 and Brazil's bitterly divisive elections

Rio de Janeiro's iconic carnival returned last Friday with outrageous costumes, head-spinning samba dancers, and enormous floats parading down the streets to the sounds of live music until dawn.

This year marks the first time the celebration has returned to normal since the COVID-19 pandemic began three years ago. Last year, Rio was forced to delay the event by two months and imposed some restrictions on the fun, which was mainly attended by locals.

The Brazilian government expects around 46 million people to attend the week-long festival across the country in cities such as Salvador, Recife and Sao Paulo.

Many Brazilian mayors marked the start of the celebrations by symbolically

handing the keys of the city to their Carnival Kings. And the first street parties of the carnival weekend kicked off, with costumes ranging from Pope Francis to the devil himself.

"We've waited for so long, we deserve this catharsis," Thiago Varella, a 38-year-old engineer wearing a Hawaiian shirt drenched by the rain, said at a party in Sao Paulo.

The Rio authorities issued permits for over 600 street parties, known as 'blocos', much to the joy of locals and tourists alike. The most popular 'blocos' can draw millions to the streets.

Adding to the festivities are the samba parades at the Sambadrome, with top samba schools showcasing their talents

in hour-long parades with elaborate floats and costumes.

Speaking to the media, Jorge Perlingeiro, president of Rio's league of samba schools welcomed the return of full-scale celebrations.

"It's such an important party. It's a party of culture, happiness, entertainment and leisure," he said.

This year's parades mark a return to the roots. Many of the schools are returning to their roots, choosing themes linked to founding figures of the samba genre, the Afro-Brazilian culture from which it emerged, and Brazil's northeast — the poor, majority-black and multiracial region that is the percussion-heavy musical style's spiritual home.

EAEU and China to simplify transportation of goods by rail

The Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) and the People's Republic of China have signed a roadmap aimed at enhancing and saturating the trade-economic co-operation between the parties in a practical way — as reported by the Eurasian Economic Commission (EEC) trade bloc

The ceremony took place during the third meeting of the joint commission on the implementation of the agreement on trade-economic co-operation, held in the format of a video conference chaired by Minister for Trade of the Eurasian Economic Commission Andrey Slepnev and Chinese Assistant Minister of Commerce Li Fei.

The document includes three sections: the digitalisation of transport corridors, dialogues on foreign trade policy issues and a joint scientific study on the effects of various scenarios for deepening collaboration between the EAEU and China.

"The activities of the first section involve a phased transition of the parties to an electronic form of document exchange for freight rail transportation. The second sec-



tion is focused on building a sustainable dialogue on trade policy issues while the third section involves a comprehensive analysis of the effects of various scenarios for deepening trade-economic liaisons between the EAEU, its member states and China by the scientific community of the EAEU and the PRC," noted Andrey Slepnev.

Grain from Ukraine — to pigs in Spain

According to an investigation by Austrian outlet eXXpress, almost half of all Ukrainian wheat and corn exports to the EU ended up feeding pigs in Spain to produce the world-famous, and very expensive, jamon

"The EU fought to create a corridor for the sea supply of Ukrainian grain so that the poorest countries did not face starvation. But the wheat almost did not reach there, instead it was mainly sent to Spain, where it was used as fodder for pigs," Michael Koch said in a publication.

Koch complained that too little was coming to third world countries. According to him, the reason lies in the financial interests of the Kiev authorities.

The Austrian edition said an estimated 2.9 million tonnes of wheat and corn from Ukraine ended up in Spain, where it was used as animal feed.

According to the publication, only 15 percent of the exports ended up in the countries at risk of famine, including 167,000 tonnes in Ethiopia and 65,000 tonnes in Sudan. "Spain paid more money — and Ukraine delivered," the outlet said.

Turkish Minister of Agriculture and Forestry Vahit Kirişçi stated in January that the share of grain provided to needy countries reached only 5.4 percent. Deputy Head of the Russian Foreign Ministry, Alexander Grushko, issued a statement that the EU is not keeping its promises to lift restrictions on the export of Russian grain and fertilisers as part of the grain agreement.



The Nairobi River runs through waste clothing at Gikomba market

EU litters Africa with clothes

EU countries are dumping 37 million items of junk plastic clothing in Kenya every year that are too dirty or damaged to be reused, creating serious health and environmental problems for vulnerable communities, an investigation of trade data and conditions on-the-ground has found

The probe by Clean Up Kenya and Wildlight for the Changing Markets Foundation (CMF) highlights fast fashion's dependence on cheap plastic fabrics.

Investigators say that exporting junk clothing to poorer countries has become an 'escape valve' for 'systemic overproduction' and this hidden stream of waste should be illegal.

Clean Up Kenya and investigative NGO Wildlight discovered junk clothing in some places piled as high as four-storey buildings and spilling into rivers.

"We went to the Ground Zero of the fast fashion world to unmask an ugly truth — that the trade of used clothing from Europe is, to a large and growing extent, a trade in hidden waste," says Betterman Simidi Musasia, founder and patron of Clean Up Kenya. Exporting plastic waste from the EU is restricted and is soon to be banned in the bloc. Despite this, the investigation found that more than one in three pieces of used clothing shipped to Kenya contained plastic and were of such low quality they immediately become waste.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

The Western economy is slowly but surely preparing to switch to a military footing

Steel monsters

Any prolonged war is a very serious test of strength for the economy of the warring parties. In addition to the nationwide character of resistance to the invaders, the rapid and high-quality mobilisation of industry was one of the keys to the victory of the Soviet Union over fascist Germany. The Third Reich, on the other hand, failed to gain access to serious reserves of resources, as well as to organise its economy according to the 'Everything for the front! Everything for victory!' principle. The result was that the German system had overstrained itself by the time of the radical change on the fronts, and since then its situation has been constantly deteriorating.

Now we are in the third decade of the 21st century, and the world is again facing the prospect of being drawn into a full-scale conflict and the transition of the economy to a wartime format. The global West has already begun this process, increasing the production of weapons and ammunition.

By Anton Popov

Bloody billions

Special military operation has become real pennies from heaven for weapons manufacturers around the world. With its help, the already mentioned German concern got out of the crisis and jumped straight into the top military-industrial corporations of the continent without a run-up, increasing its profits by 122 percent. In total, the assets of the European defence industry have risen in price by an average of 22 percent for almost a year of active fighting in Ukraine and the continuous pumping of the Kiev regime with all kinds of weapons, and the total capitalisation has exceeded \$705 billion. If the share of Rheinmetall on the stock exchange in March last year was worth only 53 euros, then by December its value soared to 220.

Overseas partners also gained profit following 11 months of confrontation: they supplied the Armed Forces of Ukraine with weapons worth \$25 billion, twice as much to their allies around the world. Such giants as Northrop Grumman, Raytheon, Pratt & Whitney and Lockheed Martin still remain among the leaders of the death conveyor. Soon this list may be replenished by the manufacturer of Abrams tanks, General Dynamics.

During a December reception on the occasion of the 31st anniversary of the creation of the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the US Embassy in Kiev, the logos of the largest supplying companies flaunted on invitation cards as a reminder of what hundreds of thousands of Ukrainian soldiers actually die for at the front.

Each of the listed arms concerns increased the value of their shares by more than 15 percent. Thus, Javelin ATGM manufacturer Lockheed Martin has risen in price by 26 percent, and the production of new HIMARS launchers both for Ukraine and for other countries will bring the company at least another \$1.1 billion in profit.

However, Northrop Grumman is now considered the most promising player. Compared to competitors, it did not rise as high — the value of shares rose by 15 percent. However, the fact that this particular corporation is engaged in the production of artillery shells, the



shortage of which is now observed both in the Armed Forces of Ukraine at the front and among the Europeans who support it, can bring Northrop Grumman to the top of the deadly list in the second year of the war. Moreover, on January 25th, the US Department of Defence issued an order to increase the number of 155-mm shells produced in 2 years by 6 times.

Gnashing of metal

The Rheinmetall AG concern is perhaps one of the most visible and weighty symbols of German militarism. Within a couple of decades of its inception in 1889, it had grown from a small firm into Germany's largest arms and ammunition manufacturer. The defeat of the Second Reich in the World War I almost put an end to the prospects for the development of the enterprise, but the Nazis came to power literally saved it.

Now, when the largest military conflict since the World War II has unfolded in Europe, and Germany has actively sided with the now Ukrainian Nazis, the defence giant is again declaring its readiness to expand production and calls on the government to finance the construction of new military factories throughout the country.

To begin with, it is assumed that Scholz and his comrades will allocate money to businessmen from Rheinmetall for the construction of a gunpowder production in Saxony worth €700-800 million. Next, the management of the concern, headed by Armin Papperger,

plans to put into operation a line for the production of medium-calibre ammunition, and then, in co-operation with the Americans from Lockheed Martin, to launch the production of HIMARS MLRS that have proven themselves well in the Ukrainian steppes.

Napoleonic plans, you see. But where does Germany, which is experiencing serious economic problems due to the imposition of sanctions against Belarus and Russia, get the money for militarisation in the style of the early Third Reich? The answer seems to have been given at the end of the week before last by an unnamed Blumberg source in the government: defence funds will be redirected from projects to build a green economy. This is how the 'environmentalists', for whom the unforgettable Greta Thunberg campaigned so sweetly in 2021, easily forget their ideals.

A year and a half after the elections, it became clear that Germany was ruled by paradoxical people. They advocate an environmental agenda, but lobby for arms deals with the oil monarchies of the Persian Gulf, talk about peace, but send hundreds of tanks to Ukraine.

Traps and pitfalls

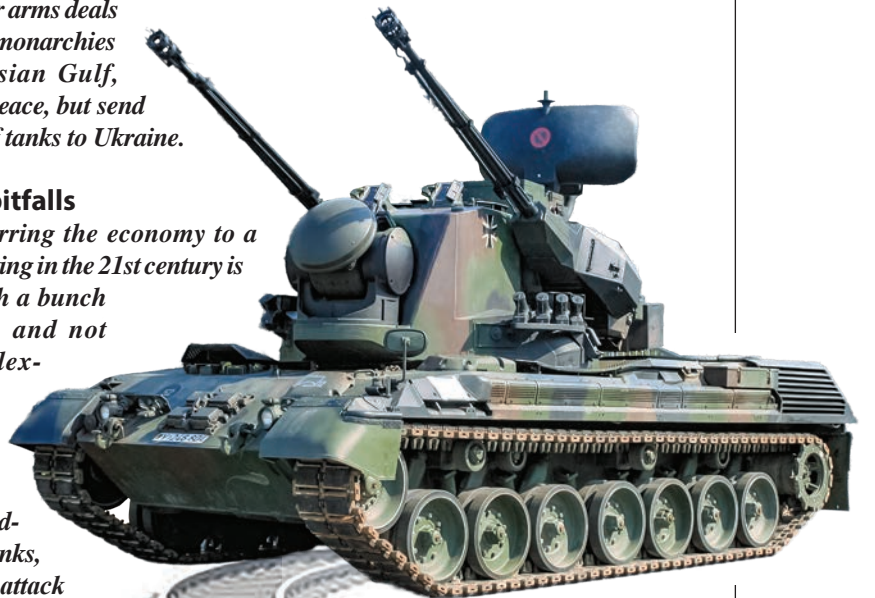
Transferring the economy to a military footing in the 21st century is fraught with a bunch of obvious and not very complexities. First, many types of weapons, such as modern battle tanks, jet fighters, attack helicopters, are difficult to manufacture and require significant labour costs.

For example, the Abrams MBT is produced at a single plant in the United States at a rate of 12 units per month. Accordingly, in preparation for a major war or to continue deliveries to Ukraine at the same pace as now, Western

concerns will either have to increase the number of factories or urgently develop mobilisation models of equipment that will be less technologically advanced and not as effective on the battlefield, but relatively simple and cheap to produce.

Secondly, the sanctions war unleashed by the West against Belarus and Russia dealt a blow to the defence industry of opponents. For example, the production of new Leopard tanks to replace those transferred to Ukraine will face a number of serious obstacles.

On the one hand, the manufacture of armoured vehicles is a very energy-intensive process, and in the conditions of the energy and fuel crisis, the production of heavy vehicles will become more difficult. On the other hand, the Rheinmetall concern does not independently produce a number of important components: engines are produced by MTU Friedrichshafen, armoured steel is produced by the Swedish SAAB. All of these companies, in one way or another, have faced the consequences of a failed sanctions policy and will not be able to immediately meet the increasing demand for their products.



Both the German leadership, which is preparing to invest billions of euros in the expansion and re-equipment of the army, and the top managers of the defence giants understand the essence of the current situation and are taking measures to remove obstacles. So, permission for the production of armoured steel was issued to Saarlouis, but its management will have to work hard to complete a responsible task: production volumes had to be reduced due to high energy prices, and workers were massively transferred to part-time jobs.

However, if the leadership of the Western countries really tuned in to a protracted confrontation with Russia, it will gradually begin to transfer the economy to a military footing. Experts believe that this will take from 2 to 5–7 years and will cost simply mind-boggling costs, which will inevitably lead to a further deterioration in the lives of ordinary citizens.

Nonetheless, the accumulated weapons, by the mere fact of their presence, will provoke nervousness between states and increase the risk of a collision even due to a minor incident. After all, if someone in the first act hangs a gun on the wall, in the final it will definitely shoot.

Where to celebrate Maslenitsa in Belarus



It is necessary to say goodbye to the winter and meet the long-awaited spring with songs, delicious food and folk rituals. Belarus is an ideal place to travel during Maslenitsa Week, which runs from February 20th to February 26th.

Maslenitsa is one of the most ancient Slavic holidays. It began to be celebrated eight weeks before Easter. Butter and cheese are the obligatory attributes of this holiday. Besides, what is Maslenitsa without pancakes? During Maslenitsa Week, pancakes acquired a truly royal significance — people tried to eat them every day. Cooking butter, sour cream, honey, jam, fish, caviar, cabbage — everyone wrapped everything in pancakes that his or her heart desires. Each day of the festive week was special, requiring certain actions.

In addition, Forgiveness Sunday was the very culmination of the whole Maslenitsa Week. On this day, family members asked each other for forgiveness for all the troubles and wrong committed during the year. The most long-awaited moment of the holiday was the burning of the effigy of Maslenitsa, which personified all the dark and negative that was in people's lives. The holiday ended with jumping over the fire. Today, Maslenitsa traditions are not so strong, but this holiday is still bright, noisy and cheerful. The celebration of Maslenitsa calls to wake up after hibernation and prepare for a new spring, and therefore a new life.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Strochitsy

The Belarusian State Museum of Folk Architecture and Rural Lifestyle lurks just a few kilometres from the noisy capital. In fact, this is a real village from the past: original wooden huts of the late 19th-early 20th century were brought here from different regions of the country. There is a church, a mill and a tavern. But the main thing is that the museum staff celebrate traditional Belarusian holidays with amazing scrupulousness.

Maslenitsa [Maslenka in Belarusian] is no exception. What day of the week did you go to your mother-in-law for pancakes? Why was 'grandfather buried' on the holiday? Why were 'wooden decks' hung around the neck of unmarried guys? Reconstruction of folk rituals will help to find answers to all questions. The programme also includes master classes from artisans, a pole with prizes and, of course, a spectacular burning of a scarecrow.

Dudutki

The famous museum complex of ancient crafts and technologies is famous for its incredible tastings. There is even a motto for the holiday: 'Whoever comes to Maslenitsa in Dudutki will definitely get his or her treat'. Every hour they promise to meet dear guests. Adults — with drinks, children — with sweet. Pancakes, stewed fruit and berries, potato pancakes.

There is plenty of entertainment as well! Pillow fights, mace tossing, speed riding on wooden horses, bagel games, wall to wall. A humorous interactive



called Maslenitsa Wooden Decks will be held for single guys and girls. The kids will love outdoor games — quart, balance, cone ball, labyrinth. They will even teach historical fencing. But before burning the effigy, everyone will have to sweat and find a fire.

Sula

In the interactive history park, they relied on an entertaining quest. The theme is the struggle between Winter and



Spring, in which all the guests become participants. Each point is an immersion in rituals and ancient traditions with a visit to unusual locations.



The territory of the park is huge: there is something to marvel at, something to see — from the pagan temple to the castle of Mindovg. Cheerful buffoons are



'In the Land of Myths' eco-trail.

The Maslenitsa animation tour promises treats in nature, rituals and outdoor games. The main feature is acquaintance with the inhabitants of the reserve. The mighty bison Valera, the Umka and Vasilisa bears, the red deer Volodya, and the cute pony called Ponchik will not leave anyone indifferent.

The Dukorsky Estate Museum Complex

Celebrations in the spirit of the nobility are held in Dukora. Organised groups are waiting for Maslenitsa to surprise with unusual entertainment. The mythical Hatnik will tell you how to prepare for the holiday. And the artisans will teach how to make a Morena doll — it serves as a prototype for a stuffed animal, which is then burned. There will be a Batleika with live music, britzka riding, excursions and refreshments.

In their free time, visitors can look into a local landmark — an upside down house. And also ask for strength from a four-hundred-year-old oak tree and admire the local collection of vintage cars.

responsible for the musical part. One can take a sleigh ride with the breeze and try branded drinks (all-inclusive). For an additional fee — one can try a special lunch made according to the recipes of chefs of the 16th century.

The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve

If you want to spend a holiday in nature, but without a noisy crowd, you are welcome to the wilderness on the border of Minsk and Vitebsk Regions. The Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve is a specially protected natural area of the highest rank. The Centre for Mythological Tourism is also located here, which includes the Museum of Mythology and the

We have overcome all challenges



Sports and Tourism Minister Sergei Kovalchuk summarised last year's performance before the meeting of the board of the Ministry of Sports and Tourism on the results of the industry in 2022 and the tasks for 2023

“We ended 2022 with good results, despite the fact that since March our country has been subject to sanctions on sports. But we coped with these challenges: the number of competitions in Belarus has not decreased. Moreover, in many sports it has even increased. The performances of our athletes

are encouraging, and if tomorrow we are allowed to qualify for the next Olympics, I think that the athletes will show good results. The beginning of this year turned out to be good for Belarus thanks to the triumph of Aryna Sabalenka at the Australian Open Tennis Championship, we have not won Grand Slam tournaments for 10 years. This is an undoubted success for our country. Our athletes also dominate in other sports, es-

pecially in martial arts and shooting. Trampoline, biathlon, freestyle, rowing and rhythmic gymnastics also deserve praise. Belarusian fencing is also beginning to come out of the shadows. Football raises the most questions, there are a lot of problems here. Therefore, in the first place, we will devote 2023 to this particular sport,” the Minister said.

Sergei Kovalchuk also

stressed that in recent years the Sports and Tourism Ministry has placed special emphasis on the development of children's sports. “We work very closely with our children's and youth sports schools, with Olympic reserve schools. We see that a worthy new generation is growing up, in many sports there is a good reserve. In addition to children's sports, mass sports are the basis of our direction. The more people who go in

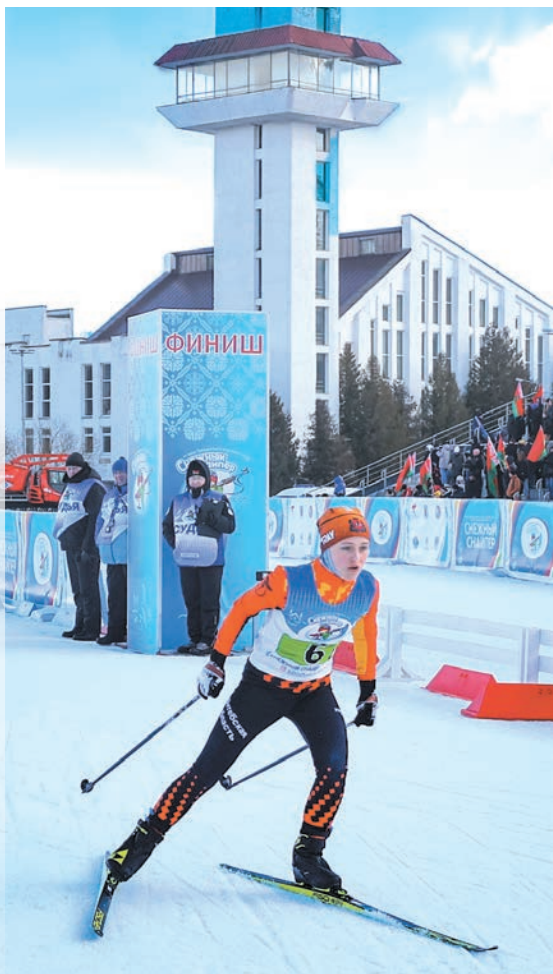
for sports, the better for the country, so the task is to engage teams of organisations in this concern at all levels. The country has excellent conditions, there are facilities in any district and regional centre. The state does a lot for the development of physical culture and sports, any country in the world can envy such an approach,” Sergei Kovalchuk is sure.

Based on materials of belta.by

They fought and won

The final of the Snow Sniper competition ended in Raubichi

In the days when the final stage of the Snow Sniper was held in Raubichi, the famous biathlete, multiple world championship winner Liudmila Kalinchik was in the thick of things. The senior judge in the start and finish area saw all the emotions of the schoolchildren and, when the competition was over, she said: there were both joy and tears. “I personally approached the athletes. I told them that they don't need to get upset — they need to analyse unsuccessful races and move forward with the hope that everything will work out next year,” Liudmila admitted. Despite the fact that these competitions are amateur, and none of the guys taking part in them go in for biathlon in youth sports schools, Snow Sniper is still real and serious competition.



By Tatiana Pastushenko

Intrigue until the last metres

The finalists of the Snow Sniper have been preparing for the final stage of the tournament for months. Milana Romanyuk from Novogrudok, who won the sprint on Friday and the mass start on Sunday, for example, said that she trained very hard: every day she went to the Selets sports and biathlon complex. It was not easy to train and study at the same time, but the girl did it! Schoolchildren from Mozyr started training in August: first they trained on roller skis, then on skis.

By and large, each of the finalists has already become a winner, having passed the qualifying stages in their schools, then districts and regions. But no one wanted to stop there. Therefore, the intensity of the struggle in some races was simply amazing. In the mass start among young boys of middle age, all three medallists finished in the interval of 8.4 seconds. In a similar race among older boys, the struggle was no less stubborn. And the mixed relay race in the middle age group tickled the nerves of all those present. Especially the final stage.

The finalist of the Minsk team Yaroslav Shulpenkov was the first to run to the track, and Roman Dashkevich from the team of the Mogilev Region took the baton after 22.8 seconds. But after the first approach of the guys to the shooting range, the alignment of forces changed. Shulpenkov went for four penalty loops, while Dashkevich, using only one extra round, hit all the targets and ran away. At the second shooting

range, Roman already encountered problems — he was forced to swim two penalty laps. Yaroslav, in turn, managed with two additional rounds, but went to the distance behind an opponent from Mogilev Region. Soon he caught up with him and walked around. It seemed that disputes about the winner were closed, but just before the finish, Yaroslav Shulpenkov fell. However, he didn't get lost! So — sitting and helping himself with his hands — and crossed the line, bringing victory to his quartet, which also included Milissa Popko, Liana Golovachenko and Bogdan Bobrik — the gap from Mogilev team was only 4.3 seconds.

“If I tried to stand up, I would lose! The guys from my team, of course, were delighted with the victory. They also said that it was the most unusual finish!” the slightly embarrassed boy said after the race.

Well, it's a fair point...



The format has changed, but not the essence

The final of the Snow Sniper, which ended in Raubichi, became the 15th in history. In recent years, the decisive stage of the competition invariably takes place in the main biathlon complex of the country, but this was not always the case. The chief referee of the tournament and the head coach of our national biathlon team Yuri Albers recalled: 5–6 years ago everything was quite different, “Winters were not always snowy, so shooting and cross-country skiing and sometimes cross-country competitions were held separately. The tournament has improved over the years. Now the finalists are performing in Raubichi in excellent conditions and on an excellent track. Before the final stage, there are training camps that help them open up.”

After the races, the coaches carefully study the protocols and analytics of the races so as not to miss the talented guys. Not all participants of the Snow Sniper will become professional biathletes, but these competitions will certainly remain in their memory for a long time.

Medals and cups, prizes from the Presidential Sports Club and cash certificates, which were awarded to the winners and prize-winners of the competition by Deputy Prime Minister Igor Petrishenko, Sport and Tourism Minister Sergei Kovalchuk, Education Minister Andrei Ivanets and more will be a wonderful reminder of the busy days in Raubichi for the guys who have already returned home.

Pavel Bogush

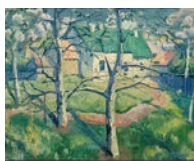
Photo of the week



Field work began on the Batchi farm in the Kobrin District — the machine operator Aleksandr Moroz feeds perennial grasses with the help of the Rosa complex

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On February 23rd, 1878, Kazimir Malevich was born (1878-1935), a Belarusian and Russian abstract painter. One of the founders of abstract art, the founder of Suprematism. Author of the famous *Black Square*. Among his paintings are: *Flower Girl*, *Apple Trees in Blossom*, etc. He is the founder of The Champions of the New Art (UNOVIS) group of artists.



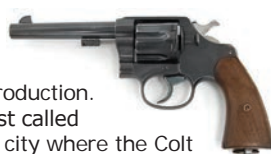
On February 23rd, 1893, Rudolf Diesel received a German patent 'on a principle of operation and construction for internal combustion engines'.

On February 24th, 1582, Pope Gregory XIII issued a papal bull on the transition to a new, astronomically correct calendar. The new calendar came to be known as the 'Gregorian' calendar, in contrast to the previous, 'Julian', introduced back in 45 BC by Julius Caesar.



On February 25th, 1836, Samuel Colt received the first US patent for a .45

automatic revolver. After 10 days, Colt opened his own production. The model was first called Paterson after the city where the Colt manufactory was deployed, but soon received the name Texas for its popularity among the inhabitants of this state.



On February 26th, 1918, Pyotr Masherov was born, a Belarusian party leader and statesman, one of the organisers and leaders of the anti-fascist underground and partisan movement in Belarus during the Great Patriotic War, Hero of the Soviet Union and Hero of Socialist Labour. Since 1965 he headed the Byelorussian SSR for 15 years. Many researchers believe that as a result of his work in a leading position, an 'economic miracle' occurred in the country. He died in a car accident in 1980.

February 26th is Day of Slowness. The idea of proclaiming such a holiday belongs to the Italians. It was they, a very active and emotional people, who first celebrated the Day of Slowness in 2007, with the aim of enjoying life in every unique moment. The slogan of the Day is: 'Take your time and enjoy the moment.'



On February 26th, 1878, a French philologist, author of the explanatory dictionary Emile Littré, introduced the word 'microbe' into scientific circulation. He did it after a written request of the scientist Charles Sedillo to choose a suitable name for microorganisms.



February 27th is International Polar Bear Day. It is organised by a non-profit organisation Polar Bears International, that fights to save the polar bear population. The main purpose of the Day is to disseminate information about the polar bear and draw public attention to the need to protect the largest land predator on the planet.

On February 28th, 1066, Westminster Abbey was opened — Gothic church in Westminster (London), to the west of the Palace of Westminster, the traditional coronation site of British monarchs. The burial places of monarchs are located here. Westminster is the centre and seat of the English Parliament. Here the confluence of the historical, cultural and artistic values of London is concentrated.



On February 28th, 1913, Danish physicist Niels Bohr proposed a planetary model of the structure of the atom. The Bohr model, which assumes that electrons move around the atomic nucleus like planets orbiting a star, made it possible to explain the chemical and optical properties of atoms. Niels Bohr was awarded the Nobel Prize for this work in 1922.



On March 1st, 1555, Nostradamus published his book of predictions. The prophecies were written in the form of rhyming quatrains — four-liners, which were grouped into centuries (that is, hundreds) 100 quatrains each. In addition, Nostradamus carefully encrypted all his predictions: the quatrains were written in a combination of 4 languages. Nostradamus turned to planetary schemes when making predictions. His centuries have been translated into dozens of world languages over the past hundreds of years.

March 1st is World Compliment Day. The idea of the holiday is the spontaneous desire of ordinary people to make one of the days of the year a little brighter, warmer, fondly remembered and bonding.