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the Belarusian
production of
combine harvesters
has progressed
to a super vehicle

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the art gallery
of the famous
artist, Yuri Pen,
disappear
during the war?

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Aleksey Matyush

Shoulder to shoulder

Famous motor rallies 'For United Belarus!' have turned one year old and the patriots celebrated their birthday with another nationwide automobile event. In honour of the birthday of the rally, President Aleksandr Lukashenko handed over to its participants the state flag with his personal signature and a handwritten phrase, reading 'Patriots are for Belarus! You are already adults!' → 4



Not faltering, but standing firm



A behind-the-scenes war has been unleashed against Belarus, with the aggressor aiming to plunge the country into chaos. Changes have to be legal. What else did the President have to say when presenting state awards?

By Dmitry Kryat

The President bestowed state awards on representatives of the State Security Committee, the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the State Secretariat of the Security Council and the State Border Committee. Among the awardees are twenty-eight people, whose details must remain secret. They serve not for glory, but at the behest of duty. Therefore, the ceremony was held in a closed format at one of the facilities of the State Security Committee, with Aleksandr Lukashenko sincerely thanking the servicemen for what they have done for the country over the past year,

“Having displayed high professionalism, you didn’t falter in the face of danger. You stood proud, just like our grandfathers in the victorious year of 1945.”

Lessons to be learned

Perhaps not everyone has yet fully realised the scale of the security services’ merits to the Fatherland. The Head of State is confident that this understanding will surely come, “They say that the big picture is seen from a distance. Time will pass, and those of you who haven’t realised that yet will clearly understand what we did last year. I’m also speaking about what you have done after those events. This is sophisticated, careful and still very dangerous work.”

Mr. Lukashenko paid attention to the fact that over the years of independence we got used to living in a calm, beautiful and comfortable country, we know that Belarusians can work in peace. However, all this is happening in a rather toxic environment. The President drew attention to the following moment,

“The behind-the-scenes war against Belarus by the so-called collective West has never stopped and will never stop.”

You are aware of it because you are fully involved in the events which have been taking place after August-September 2020. It seemed to us that we had won and would live in peace. But it was not the case.”

The President pointed to the obvious motives of those who would like to plunge the country into chaos, “It’s as ancient as the world: a material interest in dividing and selling off the people’s, state property. They don’t care about the fact that many Belarusians’ living standards will drop significantly. They don’t think about it. Those who are the puppeteers of local collaborators are well aware that Belarus is the key to the entire post-Soviet space.”

We cannot be brought to our knees!

The President especially underlined that Belarus didn’t fall to its knees, that is why there remains the only option for the conquest of our country: its destruction. The invaders are far from blameless. Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about this without reserve, “Any means



are acceptable for them, up to terrorist attacks, murders, armed rebellion. This is exactly what you have opposed and are opposing. Our opponents, or to put it straight, enemies, stop at nothing. You know that better than I do.”

However, the aggressor — no matter what forces were gathered and whatever technologies of manipulating people were used — still miscalculated. The Head of State stressed,

“People in uniform remained loyal to the nation and their duty. And the overwhelming majority of Belarusians did not support this blitzkrieg. You, your colleagues, representatives of other power structures were the wall that stopped the stream of sham democratic values forced upon us.”

Each of you proved his loyalty to the country and showed true patriotism in combat conditions, being well aware that your Motherland is behind you.”

The President drew attention to the fact that, today, the socio-political situation has largely stabilised. At the same time, it remains difficult and there is no cause to relax, “There is an information war going on. Anything goes, so we need to resist this.”

Changes have to be legal

In his conversation with the military, the President also touched upon topical issues of the political transformations in the country, particularly constitutional reform and improving state institutions in the country. It’s clear that these processes cannot be

instantaneous. They are preceded by thorough preparation and public discussion, while the final decision will be made by the people. However, certain elements of the reform, its outline is being discussed already in expert and journalistic circles. The President also shared his point of view on some fundamental points. First of

all, he drew attention to the fact that sometimes there is bewilderment from military circles: ‘Well, why does the President need this referendum? Why this Constitution? There is no need to do this’. Aleksandr Lukashenko answered frankly, “First of all, we’ve made a promise. Second, you have to remember their slogans [the opposition’s]: ‘Changes, changes, changes’. And we said: yes, changes are necessary. They are truly necessary. We cannot freeze the situation in the country lest Brezhnev’s times will be repeated... This is why movement forward is necessary, changes are necessary. However, these changes have to be legal. If we have to move towards changes, we have to start with the Constitution.”

There is another particularly important aspect. The Head of State noted that the country had not stood still until that moment. The current transformations are aimed at the future. Aleksandr Lukashenko said, “Together with you we have created the first sovereign and independent state. What else do we need? We will go down in history. The key thing is what will come after us, who will come after us, who will be the president, and what government system will be used. If, God forbid, history repeats itself [an attempt to shatter the state], will the new generation hold the country together or not? Is it a topical question? Yes, it is crucial.”

Insurance against shocks

Mr. Lukashenko is convinced that the current generation didn’t make any gross, systemic mistakes during the formation and strengthening of modern

Belarusian statehood. There may have been drawbacks. Yet we felt our way, as they say. We were pioneers. Some things might not have been noticed, not taken into account, but fatal miscalculations were not allowed. The President said, “We did not break, did not destroy things, we have no dictatorship in our country. I have no nuclear weapons. There are no cyber hackers, so I press a button and the whole world turns upside down. What kind of dictatorship would this be? Yes, we have a very tightly governed state. Well, if we had not done this, we would not have created this state. You military men understand me.”

With this system of power, questions inevitably arise, which were formulated by the Head of State, “Tomorrow, if there are elections for the president. Can you guarantee that the new president will calmly move the country forward? Who can give guarantees in such a situation? When the West puts pressure on us, wants to tear up the country and split it between various countries or even merge Belarus with Poland entirely as they say. Ukraine is turning up the heat on us. You can see what is going on.”

The President pointed out the obvious fact: if the situation around Belarus develops unfavourably, something unpredictable could happen, “If, God forbid, NATO crosses the border from over there, Russia will not stand aside. Because we are talking about Russia’s security here, contact with the main adversary — NATO. As you can see, due to this surrounding threat we have to hustle and always be able to have solutions at our fingertips in order to avoid blunders. In order to preserve our statehood.”

The renewed All-Belarusian People’s Assembly can become one of such safety mechanisms. The President shared some thoughts on how he sees the possible evolution of this institution, adding that ‘the All-Belarusian People’s Assembly should be formed in such a way that it would represent the interests of the entire society’.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated, “If some suddenly falter, new people will come in uniform (if they lay down their shields there, and this was the case in the world, and not in one country) or if betrayal happens like in Ukraine, when the president betrayed his guys, left them and flew away, then the All-Belarusian People’s Assembly should meet and take all decisions. We will define together what functions and powers these will be.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that Belarus is a relatively small, average European country, but very intellectually advanced,

“We will cope with all the challenges, but everyone must do their job.”

CSTO: responding to challenges together



Aleksandr Lukashenko took part in an extraordinary session of the CSTO Collective Security Council



By Dmitry Kryat,
Dmitry Umpirovich

The event was convened at the initiative of the Russian side and was held online under the chairmanship of the President of the Republic of Tajikistan, Emomali Rahmon. In addition to the leaders of the CSTO member states, there was also the Head of Uzbekistan, Shavkat Mirziyoyev. The Belarusian President called on his colleagues to develop a common position on the Afghan issue. However, Aleksandr Lukashenko described the situation itself rather harshly,

“At first glance what’s happening is a huge failure of Western policy. This is true, this is a failure of the United States, above all. This is an unequivocal example of what the thoughtless imposition of their so-called principles of democracy by force may lead to.”

Acting jointly

The position of Aleksandr Lukashenko is as follows: by the

summit in Dushanbe — which is scheduled for mid-September — the CSTO member states need to work out a common agenda on Afghanistan.

“Let’s be sincere: for the time being this position is like this ‘let’s wait and see what happens next and then respond accordingly,’” said the Belarusian President, expressing his opinion. “This is wrong. We need to develop a common position rather than issue all kinds of demands and statements. Otherwise, it will be too late to do something to rectify the situation.”

The Head of State touched on the topic of refugees and related threats. In particular, terrorism, which, according to his words, is directly connected with the risks of cross-border crime, drug and arms trafficking, which will, apparently, increase.

The President especially noted the cynicism with which the United States and the entire Western coalition act, “The United States and its allies — as they often do — completely disregard the historical, ethnocultural and

religious peculiarities of the state and, most importantly, the interests of the people. Confirmation of this is what is happening at the airport in Kabul.”

Mr. Lukashenko expressed his opinion that it could be said that the coalition led by Washington failed after twenty years of occupation and investing enormous resources. The President suggested that this is not entirely true, “We cannot ignore the possibility of strategic calculation in a completely conscious move by the United States to create instability in the region, and partly in the CSTO area of responsibility. They have created problems. Now they are passing the buck to others and are trying to get away with it. Americans love acting like this.”

The Belarusian President called possible plans to deploy armed contingents of the US army in the neighbouring countries, including the CSTO members, as another sensitive issue related to the US withdrawal from Afghanistan. “Here the position of Belarus coincided with that of Russia. I believe that this topic also deserves careful study from the point of view of security in the area of responsibility of our organisation. I would like to stress once again: I support President Putin in his view that this is unacceptable,” asserted Mr. Lukashenko.

Minsk and Moscow have an identical view on one more problem, “Flights of US military aircraft, primarily over the CSTO

member states, are unacceptable. And not only for Russia — for all of us as CSTO members. Moreover, I absolutely agree with his statement that NATO’s movement (they have gone too far, it is understandable they are moving to Russia via Belarus), an attempt to settle down in Central Asia are also unacceptable for the Russian Federation and for us.”

Interaction between the CSTO and the SCO

The President drew attention to the fact that against the background of diplomatic efforts of the Taliban to establish relations with key world and regional players, a number of countries are already inclined to recognise the movement.

Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that the potential of the Shanghai Co-operation Organisation — as one of the most influential structures in Asia — should be used in the search for a solution to the Afghan issue, “The SCO members are prac-

tically all concentrated around Afghanistan, and there are their global interests. Interaction between the CSTO and the SCO should be strengthened, using for this the summits of the two organisations, scheduled for September 16th-17th in Dushanbe. Perhaps, having worked through this issue, we will come to a joint meeting on the problems of Afghan settlement. If the SCO members want to follow the course of the issue under discussion today, that’s good. If they do not want to, we will indicate and propose our position. And it’s up to them to decide. I think that here we can make very serious progress, and this will be a good, positive (and maybe even negative for some) step from the point of view of the future authorities of Afghanistan. It will be impossible not to reckon with the CSTO-SCO position. The SCO-CSTO position will be even more important than the position of the Western coalition.”

The CSTO Heads of State spoke in favour of an inclusive peace dialogue in Afghanistan. This is stated in the message posted at the end of the summit on the CSTO website: ‘During the session, the states noted with concern the sharp deterioration of the situation in Afghanistan. They stressed the importance of the responsible restoration of state power in Afghanistan through inclusive peaceful dialogue, taking into account the interests of all social, political, ethnic and religious groups in the country. It was noted that the political regime in Afghanistan should rely on the free expression of the will of the entire Afghan people. Strict consideration, guarantee and protection of the socio-political interests of all sectors of society is vital to the sustainability of any government in Afghanistan.’

Green light for honest business

Improving tax legislation, fighting for fair wages in pay-packets, green light for businesses operating under the law — these issues were discussed at the Palace of Independence, where the President met with Taxes and Duties Minister Sergei Nalivaiko and Chairman of the State Control Committee Vasily Gerasimov

On budget and taxes

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that this year ‘the budget is coming together even better than we thought, and better than it could have been’.

“But this doesn’t mean that we should get away from the fundamental issues that we talked about. Paying taxes is a must,” added the Head of State.

Mr. Lukashenko cited the example of other countries where liability for violations of tax legislation is the most severe. “Maybe this is why these countries are rich. In fact, people over there don’t even think of evading taxes or bypassing tax laws. They would rather pay in advance to avoid any questions,” emphasised the President.

At the same time, the Head of State stressed that citi-

zens should understand what and how much they have to pay, and therefore everything should be as simple as possible. “One should not need to have a degree in further mathematics to be able to calculate taxes. Therefore, it is necessary to keep streamlining tax legislation,” he added.

On politics and business

“Any businessman, who wants to pursue politics, should rigorously observe the law. Politicians and businessmen should observe laws. But if someone steals things as often happens (and we know examples) and then goes into politics to cover it all up and blame the government if something happens by claiming he is an honest businessman and faces accusations only because of his political

career... Some current prisoners have behaved like that. Such things will be definitely stopped. And you shouldn’t take offense with the authorities,” said the President.

At the same time, the President noted that not a single hair should fall from entrepreneurs and businessmen who respect the law. Aleksandr Lukashenko also warned against taking action against businesses on far-fetched grounds, “I want businessmen to hear me, that no one will settle scores with them. If someone made a mistake or misunderstood something, we need to explain to them. I am ready to do this even at my level if you find the appropriate form. However, we must accept as our people (who create good for the people and for the state) those who worked honestly with us,

those who want to come to us to work. Excesses should not be allowed in any case. I don’t see such excesses now, but I don’t want them to appear in the future.”

On China’s salaries and experience

The President especially emphasised that businessmen should adequately pay wages for the people who work for them, “You can’t line your own pockets while people working for you struggle financially. Ahead of the election, I suggested setting the minimum average salary and formalising it for business and private entities. They can pay more but never below the average salary. Business strongly opposed the idea being unwilling to give the money. But these are the people

who work for you, who bring you money. Roughly speaking, you cannot pay 10 percent to your workers and pocket the remaining 90 percent. No one needs such a business.”

In this regard, the Head of State urged people to pay attention to the PRC’s policy, “The Chinese Communist Party, Xi Jinping declared that the rich should help the poor. It’s about sharing: you have earned a lot, then help the poor. The goal is a middle-class society. They announced this idea recently. The Chinese are a wise nation, a rich country. However, we have always pursued this policy: if you make good money, you should pay people who work for you well and pay taxes.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Shoulder to shoulder

Famous motor rallies ‘For United Belarus!’ have turned one year old and the patriots celebrated their birthday with another nationwide automobile event. The Head of State handed over a gift to the activists: a flag with his personal signature.



COMPETENTLY

Igor Lutsky, Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration:

Last year was very important for us. We were able to defend the country and preserve its sovereignty. All this is thanks to such people who care for their country with their heart and soul. It's good that there are people who are not passive, who actively express their civic position. Today nobody needs to explain what a motor rally is. Everyone knows. In my opinion, it's necessary to develop and support civil initiatives. I'm sure that all constructive principles that come from the heart and soul will always be supported by the state and the President.

yazhy water park and repeated the route of the motor rally that started it all. Motorists drove through the very centre of Minsk: Pobediteley Avenue, Nezavisimosti Avenue and finished at the Mound of Glory.

In honour of the birthday of the ‘For United Belarus!’ rally, President Aleksandr Lukashenko handed over to its participants the state flag with his personal signature and a handwritten phrase, reading ‘Patriots are for Belarus! You are already adults!’

The flag was presented by the Press Secretary of the President Natalia Eismont. Addressing the participants of the rally, she quoted one of the active participants of the event, who admitted to her that a year ago she went to the rally for the first time with tears in her eyes, because it was scary and it wasn't clear what would happen next.

“The main achievement for us all is that today everyone goes to such an event with a smile,” emphasised Ms. Eismont.

Handing over a gift from the Head of State, the Press Secretary of the President recalled that Aleksandr Lukashenko is always close to the activists of this movement, “We will do our best to help our patriotic movement.”

Before the start of the motor rally — significant for the movement — Sergei Rachkovsky, who heads the Patriots of Belarus public association, said that the peculiarity of the first such event was the song, entitled *Sanya Will Stay with Us*, which was played on the radio throughout the rally. This gave strength to its participants and lifted their spirits. Motorists turned the sound to the maximum and opened the windows.

The participants of the motor rally became a big friendly family. The movement has grown into a whole public association, which already unites about 1,000 people. Sergei Rachkovsky announced next week the start of a global public association project,

***“We are faced with a difficult task: in three weeks to go around all the regional centres of the country. It will be a kind of unity relay.*”**

Its route will finish near the Minsk-Arena. I will not disclose details, but it will be symbolic and interesting.”

Activists from all over the country gathered for the festive motor rally, e.g., blogger Anton Shabashov came from Grodno. “I try to be at all trips. I remember one of the most emotional ones when the rally arrived in Grodno. It was indescribable. Grodno residents were standing near the road, crying with happiness, as if the liberators had arrived,” recalls the blogger.

As always, alongside the Belarusians, there are also foreigners at such rallies, for whom our country has become a second home. For instance, Hussein Najem came to Belarus from Lebanon several years ago,

***“I have the flag of Belarus in my hands, because I am worried about this country.*”**

I came here from Lebanon and I saw what happened there. Some people in Belarus today say that they want to try something new. But we tried it in Lebanon, thinking it would be good. However, it turned out that all this is deception. Everything is bad there now. Even once a week there is no electricity or water in the houses. Everything is bad because it was a game, and it was all done on purpose. I don't want it to be the same in my native Belarus. Therefore, I come to this rally.”

By Svetlana Isaenok

A year has passed since the very moment when columns of cars with state flags drove onto the streets of the country. The movement of patriotic car enthusiasts advocating the idea of a united Belarus — having travelled thousands of kilometres of Belarusian roads — has grown into the Patriots of Belarus public movement during this time. Last Saturday, just like a year ago, a column of motorists left the parking lot of the Leb-

On August 24th, a quarter of a century passed since a fundamental decision: to develop the domestic combine-building industry in Belarus. “25 years ago, we were making a decision about the field — to develop a Belarusian combine harvester or not,” Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled during his recent working trip to the Rogachev District. On meeting Sergei Fedorovich, the general designer of the Sci-Tech Centre of Combine Engineering at Gomselmash JSC, he added, “There was nothing to harvest fields with then.” The President noted that many people spoke out against the decision at that time — proposing we buy the necessary machinery abroad. At present, Belarus boasts a range of domestic world-class combine harvesters. How was the industry born, what path has it passed through and what vehicles are currently offered to grain growers?

Vehicle for native fields

Over 25 years, the Belarusian production of combine harvesters has progressed from the KZR-10 Polesie-Rotor to a super harvesting vehicle



Ready!

In 1996, little time had passed since the collapse of the USSR. There was a clear specialisation, including in agricultural machinery, in the large country then: Rostselmash produced grain harvesters, while Gomselmash made forage harvesters. But the USSR broke them up.

The CIS countries sharply reduced the number of livestock, and Gomselmash's capacity utilisation decreased significantly. At the same time, due to depreciation and disposition, the fleet of combine harvesters was cut. In the early 1990s, due to the crisis, Rostselmash failed to produce a batch of machines for Belarusian farms.

Mr. Fedorovich recalls,

“The President's visit to Gomselmash in March 1996 was an epoch-making event that decided the fate of the first Belarusian combine harvester and contributed to the birth of a new direction in agricultural engineering.”

It was then decided to use Gomselmash's universal energy tool: UES-250. The goal was to develop not a mono-combine exclusively for grain harvesting grain but replacement equipment for the existing self-propelled chassis.

Steady!

Two-shift work was organised in an experimental workshop, without days

off. Designers worked alongside workers and any issues were resolved promptly. On August 24th, 1996, the Head of State visited the Vetka District to attend the testing of the first Belarusian KZR-10 Polesie-Rotor grain-harvesting complex.

In the future, having received the support of the President and ‘the green light’ from the state, new models of grain harvesting complexes began to be launched. Development of the KZS-7 mono-combine with a throughput of 7-8kg of grain mass per second became the second stage. In terms of productivity, quality of the technological process and working conditions for a machine operator, the vehicle was not inferior to its foreign analogues. Moreover, in terms of reducing the cost of harvesting, it was as much as 2 times better. Later, as the yield was increasing, combines with a higher throughput were in demand and, as a result, the KZS-10K vehicle was developed. Both models were single-drum.

Another model — KZS-1218 — had two drums which accelerated the movement of the grain mass. The throughput and productivity for grinding increased. At the moment, it's the most popular model — appreciated both domestically and abroad. The vehicle works well with a grain yield of up to 60 quintals per hectare.

If it's higher — for example, 70-100, then the harvesting rate decreases due to insufficient throughput.

Meanwhile, the number of farms with high yields is constantly growing and designers have met them halfway to develop the KZS-1624 model. As a result, the throughput capacity of the grain mass increased by 4kg per second and it's now easier to harvest high-yielding fields.

Quite soon, the President announced the need to create a super-combine that will surpass imported analogues.

Go!

Gomselmash actively took up the implementation of the Head of State's instructions and, in early June 2018, the first KZS-2124 combine harvester — which was marked as ‘super’ — was produced.

“A precision farming system has been introduced,” explains Aleksandr Novikov, the General Director of Gomselmash Holding. “Monoblock control panels for the combine harvester and lighting, a modern ergonomic joystick, video surveillance of working areas, an audio system, a refrigerator with a heating function, an automatic air conditioning system, a steering column and an air suspension seat with adjustments help set a comfortable working position. An on-board computer with a 10-inch monitor

with touch control, the function of selecting the optimal settings of the combine depending on the current conditions provides simplicity and convenience in operation.” This year, dozens of new super-combines have been delivered to the country's farms.

Later, the KZS-3219 model — with an increased engine power — was put into operation. It was followed by the KZS-3321 combine harvester, which was demonstrated to the President in operation this month in the Rogachev District. The vehicle can be equipped additionally with automatic driving systems, crop mapping and video surveillance. Everything has been done to ensure high performance and make a combine driver feel comfortable.

Gomselmash's range is constantly expanding. Due to the commissioning of our nuclear power plant and excess electricity, a combine harvester with an electric motor and a battery capable of providing continuous operation during the day will be needed. The day will come when unmanned harvesters, with a single operator controlling all vehicles, will be seen in the fields. Gomselmash's employees are convinced that such results wouldn't have been possible without the support of the state and the President personally.

Based on materials of sb.by

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ministry of Economy predicts GDP growth of 3.3 percent by the end of the year



“The target set by the Head of State is 103.3 percent. We are guided by this figure to the end of the year,” Economy Minister Aleksandr Chervyakov told reporters before the meeting of the Council of Ministers. The efficiency of business processes and investments are among the significant issues that need to be paid special attention to in order to ensure economic growth.

According to the results of the first seven months of this year, the GDP of Belarus has already demonstrated an increase of 3.3 percent. The main contribution to GDP growth was made by industry. In addition, 80 percent of service industries are already in the positive zone. The largest contribution is made by catering and transport while the IT sector also continues to grow steadily. Thus, the sphere of services is becoming one of the drivers of economic growth.

Foreigners go to be vaccinated in Belarus

For example, more than a hundred citizens of other states have already received the first dose of the anti-COVID vaccination in the Gomel Region. Among them is the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Ukraine,



Petro Symonenko, who made a choice in favour of the ‘Sputnik V’ vaccine. He said that he came to be vaccinated in Belarus because of the high level of local medical support and urged Ukrainians to follow his example. Petro Symonenko stressed that he turned to our doctors because of the difficult epidemiological situation in his homeland, “My insistent demands in Ukraine to provide its citizens with the use of the ‘Sputnik V’ vaccine remained without a positive answer though this vaccine was developed at the Soviet school of immunology and virology. Therefore, there is more confidence in it than in western models.”

Children from Syria and Uzbekistan to recuperate in Belarus

Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko signed an order to allocate funds from the reserve fund of the President of Belarus to finance the costs of organising recreation and health improvement for 81 children from Syria and 23 children from Uzbekistan at the Zubrenok National Children's Educational and Health Centre.

The programme of the children's stay



includes sanatorium and health services at the camp, as well as excursion and cultural events in Minsk and the regions.

Inviting children from Syria and Uzbekistan will contribute to the further development of bilateral co-operation in humanitarian and educational sphere with these countries, the popularisation of the history and culture of Belarus, as well as strengthening the positive image of our country abroad.

Estonian Narva has hosted Our Motherland — Belarus Song Festival

The organiser of the festival is the Narva Belarusian society Syabry. According to the Belarusian Embassy in Estonia, ensembles of Belarusian songs by the Narva Belarusian society Syabry, the Belarusian society Les (Tallinn), the Belarusian-Estonian society BEZ (the city of Jykhvi), as well as the Russian *Gorlitsa* dance group performed at the musical meeting.

The event was attended by Belarusian diplomats, leadership and deputies of the city assembly, alongside representatives of the national cultural communities of Narva. The Belarusian Song Festival is aimed at



popularising the culture of Belarus, as well as its rich heritage while strengthening Belarusian-Estonian cultural ties.

The consular officer of the embassy hosted a reception of Belarusian citizens living in the cities of Narva and Jykhvi.

Meeting about packaging

Up to 160 tonnes of kraft paper per year: what are the prospects for a new large-scale investment project for the Svetlogorsk Pulp and Board Mill on the eve of its launch

Most countries are beginning to abandon plastic, whose dominance is becoming overwhelming. The lion's share of waste is made up of containers and packaging made of plastic, as well as its polymers. The whole world is involved in solving the problem, and Belarus is no exception. The next step in this direction was made at Svetlogorsk Pulp and Board Mill JSC, where they intend to launch the production of kraft paper.



By Ruslan Proleskovsky

First there was cellulose

The prologue was the largest modernisation in the history of the enterprise, which resulted in the construction of a bleached sulphate pulp mill. Before that, it wasn't produced in Belarus, but was imported from abroad for the country's needs. The analysis showed that import substitution will save currency while also making it possible to earn foreign currency.

The construction of the facility turned out to be difficult. Frankly speaking, foreign contractors didn't meet the challenge and failed more than once. Due to their miscalculations, deadlines were delayed, and Belarus had to complete the long-term construction on its own. Despite the complexity of the task, the specialists coped with it.

The first batch of Belarusian bleached sulphate pulp was received in 2017, yet the plant operated in a trial production mode for several more years. All this time, the equipment was refined and re-adjusted, capacities were increased and technical problems were solved.

In early 2020, the facility was commissioned, with Aleksandr Lukashenko taking part in the symbolic launch of the production line. Speaking about the prospects for the development of the industry, he outlined a strategy: to achieve the deepest possible processing of wood while gradually

Over the past year, exports of the Svetlogorsk Pulp and Board Mill JSC reached \$108m, with cellulose accounting for the largest share — almost 218,000 tonnes were shipped. For the second year in a row, the company has been recognised as the country's best exporter in its industry. More than 75 percent of the manufactured products are delivered to the CIS and non-CIS states: China, Russia, Ukraine, Turkey, Germany, Poland and elsewhere.

reducing the export of raw materials and semi-finished products. It is much more profitable to produce finished products ourselves. Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko spoke about this during a recent visit to the enterprise. "The task is to ensure that we receive products with a higher added value on our territory and gain the competitive advantage ourselves, without giving the earnings to someone else. We also need to move towards the creation of a cluster: production cells that will be formed around the enterprise and will produce various products in small and medium batches."

Achieving the full capacity

Today, the result of colossal investments and labour of thousands of people is obvious. The modern site delights the eye with buildings' bright red roofs and the

brilliance of stainless steel structures. The top view resembles a scene from a film about the future, which has already arrived. The greatest similarity is in the control centre, with indicators and pictures from CCTV cameras being displayed on many monitors. Almost all the processes are automated, so the job of a person at the control panel is to sit and watch.

Stacks with thousands of huge logs stand out on the site. It may seem to some that they

have accumulated there over a long time. In reality, the open-air warehouse is constantly being updated and raw materials are not stale. It is turned into chips, which is then sent to sulphate cooking, where it is treated with an aqueous solution containing sodium hydroxide and sulphide. This is the most common and most cost-effective method nowadays. In this case, local coniferous wood is used, meaning that there will be no problems with supplies. Moreover, there are no high requirements for condition and quality. Even those trees that have been destroyed by the bark beetle are suitable (unfortunately, in recent years, this problem has been relevant). After all, the ability to turn waste into income is the golden principle of any business.

Today, the production volumes continue to grow. By 2023, the plant will reach its full design capacity, enabling it to produce up to 400,000 tonnes of pulp per year (currently 270,000 tonnes).

ical trend that is observed today all over the world," notes Deputy Director General Yuri Berdovich while giving an example from life to support this axiom. "Five years ago, I was on a business trip in China. At Shanghai airport, I walked over to the cooler and pressed the button. First, the machine dispensed a folded paper cup. You open it, pour the water and there's no plastic at all."

You don't have to go far for other examples. The closest are in numerous fast food cafes. Takeout orders are put in kraft paper bags. As visitors have probably already noticed, plastic dishes have been replaced by paper plates, glasses and even straws for drinks. An indicator of the strength of kraft paper is its use in the manufacture of bags for cement and other building mixtures.

In many respects, the project's profitability will be ensured by the availability of our own pulp. This lowers costs while also simplifying production, which finally has a positive effect on price and competitiveness.

Nevertheless, we shouldn't miscalculate, since 126m Euros is at stake. At the request of Svetlogorsk Pulp and Board Mill, one of the international consulting companies conducted a market research. According to analysts' forecasts, the demand for kraft paper will continue to grow.

In the near future, preparation of the site for the construction of a new workshop will begin. By December 2023, it's planned to receive a trial batch of products. The design capacity provides for the ability to produce up to 160,000 tonnes of paper per year. At the same time, demand within the country is less than 10,000 tonnes. The rest will be exported.

The project being launched is an example of a rational approach and striving to fully use existing potential. For everything to work out, we have all that we need: resources, technology, qualifications and experience. It is necessary just to work.



Youth advocate development

At the 44th Congress of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union (BRSM) — held in Minsk recently, the organisation's development strategy until 2025 was adopted by its delegates. The main areas of work had been determined at the previous Congress but it was necessary to co-ordinate the plans, set new tasks and goals, and determine the ways to achieve them. Eight areas will become a priority for the BRSM activity in the coming five years.

By Diana Shestakevich

1 Civil and patriotic education

Education of patriots, preservation of the historical memory of the victory of the Soviet people in the Great Patriotic War, formation of the national consciousness among young Belarusians have been and will always remain a priority for the Union's work. The sacred duty of the younger generation is to preserve the historical memory and prevent the glorification of Nazism, noted Aleksandr Lukyanov who was elected First Secretary of the BRSM Central Committee at the recent Congress. He said, "*The Flowers of the Great*

Victory, the Belarus Remembers, Memory of the Heart, Sisters of Khatyn, Feat of the Young memorial relay races, as well as many other patriotic projects of the Belarusian Republican Youth Union help pass on the memory of the war to descendants and warn future generations against repeating the mistakes of the past."

Among other tasks of the Union in this area are formation of a respectful attitude to state symbols, involvement of young people in decision-making at state and local levels, promotion of the Belarusian culture and language and enhancement of the prestige of army service.



Aleksandr Lukyanov

Vitaly Pivovarchik

The BRSM will be more actively engaged in promoting the organisation in social networks, teaching safe surfing on the Internet and countering cyberbullying, building a system for training specialised SMM specialists and creating a school for training these experts.

2 Employment of youth (student squad movement)

Every year, the Belarusian Republican Youth Union employs thousands of boys and girls. Young people work in construction, agricultural, service, environmental, pedagogical, medical, production teams — confirming that they can perform any task. They are actively involved in the labour movement — as

proven by the interim results of the current labour semester.

The Second Secretary of the BRSM Central Committee, Aleksandr Prokhorov, commented, "Despite a difficult epidemiological situation, we are observing an increase in the number of people who want to work as part of student squads. This year, more than 30,000 young people have applied for participation."

MT FIGURE

The BRSM now unites every fifth young citizen of the Republic of Belarus. As of August 1st, 2021, 21.9 percent of all young people in our country were involved in its activities.



Vitaly Pivovarchik

3 Support for talented and gifted youth

Belarusian youth is a creative, modern-thinking part of our society and directing its energy towards creativity is among the key tasks of the Union. The Youth Day at the *Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk* International Festival of Arts, the *Lord of the Village*, *The Student of the Year*, *The Queen of Students* competitions have become a calling card of the BRSM in this field. The Republican 100

Ideas for Belarus is now a key project to consolidate the initiatives of young scientists, innovators, start-up entrepreneurs and production workers.

The strategy outlines ways to achieve tasks in this field. Among them are the creation of conditions for the development of youth initiatives, improving the system of informing young people about the possibilities of their self-realisation in the field of culture and art and support for youth subcultures.

Fresh analysis and view on problems

The BRSM Congress became a platform for discussing conceptual approaches to the development of the Union, summing up the results of its work over the last three years. Its participants talked about the results and successes, and the Head of the President Administration, Igor Sergeyenko, also gave his assessment of the organisation's activities. He noted that everything is being done in the country so

that all young people can realise themselves in their professions, social work and family as citizens and patriots. The official also praised them for a brave manifestation of their civic position.

Mr. Sergeyenko drew attention to the shortcomings in the content of some projects and the need to increase work in the field of the student movement. He also focused on the issue of forming primary organisations and outlined the tasks for the upcoming period.

4 Legal education of young people

It's a new area outlined in the strategy which has been included in the document due to the current issues and the situation in which we live. Yekaterina Petrashkevich, the Chair of the BRSM Central Control Commission, commented, "The Internet is not only a platform for communication and content exchange but also a zone

of responsibility. This implies a new task for the BRSM: the legal education of young people. This idea has been included in the strategy."

To achieve the set goals, the BRSM plans to conduct training and information events aimed at improving the level of legal education and legal culture of young people and to involve children in public discussions of draft regulatory legal acts.

5 International co-operation

It's more effective to face new challenges and threats concerning young people in a team. Therefore, development of international youth co-operation, partnership relations with foreign constructive public associations and consolidation of international friendship are among the priorities of the

organisation. Throughout its activities, the BRSM closely co-operates with youth organisations of Armenia, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Latvia, the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela, the People's Republic of China, the Socialist Republic of Vietnam and the Islamic Republic of Iran. Special attention is paid to building partnerships with youth structures of the Union State.

6 Development of the volunteer movement

Charity, mutual assistance, compassion, kindness, selfless solution of problems of society and the state as a whole are natural for the participants of the BRSM's *Good Heart* volunteer movement. Its friendly team of volunteers now unite more than 37,000 young people, announced the movement's co-ordinator and the Secretary

of the BRSM Central Committee, Aleksandra Goncharova, "Pleasingly, volunteering is becoming a trend. Our colleagues have outlined three key areas of work: social, event and labour volunteering. In the near future, we'll start preparing our coaches. Another task deals with the creation of a unified electronic register of volunteers and the launch of the *Volunteer's Electronic Book* project."

7 Promotion of healthy lifestyles

The BRSM pays great attention to the formation of healthy lifestyles and attracting young people to physical culture and sports. This area became particularly relevant during COVID-19.

The BRSM is not limited to holding sports events and tournaments. It plans to develop programmes for youth tourism and excursion work, to promote street games and sports and create programmes for psychological assistance to young people taking into account their age.

8 Working with young people in the information space

The Internet is the main platform from which young people get information. Therefore, the Union will actively use this in its work: to promote the organisation in social

networks, to teach safe surfing on the Internet and countering cyberbullying, to build a system of training specialised SMM specialists, to create a school of trainers. Special attention will be paid to the quality of the content.

"We say that young people are the future of the country, but this is not quite true. Young people are the real state. You are already making a real, significant contribution to the development of production, scientific laboratories, art, sports and other

areas of the country's life. Active and creative work in the youth environment for the benefit of our society is the main task of the BRSM. The country needs your initiative, the aspiration to new heights, fresh analysis and view on the problems," he said.



The flip side of sanctions

Latvia's transit industry is concerned about the imposed sanctions against Belarus, which further reduce the flow of goods through the ports of the Baltic state

This was stated by the Executive Director of the Baltic Association — Transport and Logistics (BATL), Ivars Landmanis, TASS reports with reference to the Latvian News Agency LETA.

According to him, Latvian companies are allowed to work with Belarusian companies only within the framework of existing contracts, but new ones cannot be concluded. "For example, oil products — several Latvian terminals have no other alternative. We know that Russia has already reduced flows to Latvia several years ago, and now Belarusian

oil products have come under sanctions, and that's all," he said.

Ivars Landmanis stressed that in the past, the port transit industry of Latvia had high hopes for Belarusian cargo. "Previously we used to travel, trying to strengthen relations, but now all this is paused. There is no support either in how we could change this," he noted, adding that the throughput capacity of the terminals is high, yet there is no such quantity of energy cargoes at present, as before.

The Executive Director of the association also pointed out that en-

trepreneurs do not have funding to change their type of activity, and the industry is trying to co-operate and think about common development strategies. According to him, an agreement was reached with the Latvian Ministry of Transport that the enterprises will present their own concepts for further development, and these plans will later be jointly discussed.

In the first seven months of this year, Latvian ports handled 23.327 million tonnes of cargo, which is 10.6 percent less than in the corresponding period last year.

New island

Undersea volcanic eruption creates new island. Crescent-shaped landmass 50km south of Minami Ioto could disappear due to erosion.

The 6,000-plus islands that make up the Japanese archipelago have a new addition, after scientists said an undersea volcanic eruption 1,200km south of Tokyo had created a new landmass. The island was formed in the Pacific Ocean about 50km south of Minami Ioto, the southernmost island of the Ogasawara group.

Japan's coastguard said the new island is crescent-shaped with a diameter of about 1km. But if history is any precedent its presence could prove ephemeral.

Much will depend on what it is formed from: ash and other fragments are unlikely to resist a constant battering from waves but continued volcanic activity could produce lava flows that eventually form a more durable hard shell.



Islands formed in a similar way in the area in 1904, 1914 and 1986 all disappeared due to erosion.

In 2013, weeks of volcanic activity gave rise to an island that merged with an existing island, Nishinoshima, to create a new landmass that, for a while, bore a resemblance to the cartoon dog Snoopy.

Japan's meteorological agency believes the latest eruption could continue and has issued warnings about smoke and large ash deposits in nearby waters.

Terrible earthquake in Haiti

Survivors of the earthquake that killed at least 2,207 people in Haiti clamoured for food, shelter and medical care as search and rescue efforts resumed after a tropical storm lashed the Caribbean nation with rain, causing dangerous flooding

Haitian government officials have confirmed that at least 2,207 people have died after a 7.2-magnitude earthquake struck Haiti, collapsing buildings and causing heavy damage in the western region of the country's southern peninsula. More than 12,200 have been injured, as rescue efforts continue and a state of emergency has been declared in four of Haiti's 10 departments, the nation's administrative districts.

The quake epicentre was near the town of Petit-Trou-de-Nippes, along the same fault line as the devastating 2010

7.0-magnitude quake that killed somewhere between 220,000 and 300,000 people, and from which the country still hasn't finished recovering.

Haitian Prime Minister Ariel Henry said that some towns had been almost completely destroyed by the quake, and that hospitals in the port city of Les Cayes had been overwhelmed with injured. Quake damage to several major hospitals hampered humanitarian efforts, and doctors in makeshift tents outside battled to save the lives of the many injured.



Against COVID health pass

Thousands of people, from families to far-right sympathisers, marched in cities across France to denounce a COVID-19 health pass that is now needed for their daily activities

They rallied through the streets of Paris, Marseille, Nice, Montpellier and other towns waving placards reading 'Pass=Apartheid' and chanting 'Freedom, freedom'.

Since recently, citizens have been required to show the pass in public places, proving that they have been vaccinated or have recently been tested negative for the coronavirus.

After a week of leniency from the police, the government has vowed to get tougher on health pass checks. And testing, unless prescribed by a doctor, will no longer be free from October.

The protests have united a disparate group against President Emmanuel Macron's legislation, which is meant to help contain a fourth wave of COVID-19 infections spreading across France and help safeguard the country's economic recovery. Among the protesters are remnants of the Yellow Vest anti-government movement that shook Macron's leadership during 2018-2019, and also other citizens who are anti-vaccine or consider the health pass to be discriminatory.

Almost 70 percent of all French people have now received one dose and 57.5 percent are fully vaccinated.

Cultural genocide

Where did the art gallery of the famous artist, Yuri Pen, disappear during the war?



Self-portrait

According to an archive document regarding the harm caused by German occupiers to the BSSR State Art Gallery, about 1,700 pictures of the Russian and Western European schools, a huge collection of artistic porcelain of Russian, Chinese and Western European factories such as vases, figurines, dishes, 30 icons of the 16th-17th centuries, letters of Belarusian masters, a large collection of bronze and porcelain clocks of various eras, a collection of 48 Slutsk sashes, about a hundred different carpets and tapestries, a large collection of Russian, Chinese and Western European plants, a large collection of bronze and porcelain clocks of various eras, a collection of Slutsk belts to the amount of 48 pieces, about a hundred different carpets and tapestries, a large collection of books on art and other values were taken to Germany. An expert commission of the Committee for Arts Affairs under the USSR Council of People's Commissars calculated that the harm equalled 12m golden Roubles. This is the real cultural genocide of the Belarusian nation.

By Olga Davydova

— What is known about the Yuri Pen Art Gallery?

— During his life, Yuri (Yudel) Pen (1854-1937) painted more than a thousand works. He lived in the city located on the Dvina River for forty years and it was here where he created his most famous works, including the famous portrait of one of his students — Marc Chagall.

Two years after the master's death, in June 1939, an art gallery named after him was opened in Vitebsk. According to the act preserved in the State Archive of the Vitebsk Region, 793 works of art were transferred from the local historical museum to the gallery. The exhibition was located in the artist's former apartment in Gogolevskaya Street. It is known from several reliable sources that, on the eve of the war, thanks to new arrivals, there were 830 works by Yuri Pen in the gallery. In the pre-war years, more than 35,000 people visited it.

On June 10th, 1941, a travelling exhibition opened in the gallery, where, in addition to the artistic works of Yuri Pen, the works of Lev Alperovich and Yakov Kruger were presented. However, the war marked the beginning of a new chapter in the fate of the gallery.

In the first days of July 1941, director Lyubov Estrina and researcher Yevgenia Sumnik, together with other employees, dismantled the exposition. The paintings were packed in wooden boxes and taken to Saratov on an open platform of a railway train. There they were handed over for temporary storage to the administration of the Saratov State Art Museum named after Aleksandr Radishchev, where they were kept in a bomb shelter



The Matchmaker

The history of ancient Vitebsk hides many unsolved mysteries and the fate of the Yuri Pen Art Gallery is one of them. What happened to the numerous works of the patriarch of the Vitebsk Art School during the Great Patriotic War and where are they now? For a long time, well-known Vitebsk lawyer, former deputy prosecutor of the region and retired senior adviser of justice — Igor Bogachev — has been trying to find an answer to these questions. The *SB. Belarus Segodnya* reporter talked with him to learn more.



Belarus' Culture Ministry will perhaps be interested in this problem and consider the creation of a special interdepartmental working group for the purpose of discovering and returning the artistic heritage of Yudel Pen to his homeland.



Divorce



The House Where I Was Born

until the end of the war. Then the collection was re-evacuated back to Vitebsk.

It is unlikely that this story would have attracted the special attention of researchers of the Vitebsk artist's work, if there were no significant circumstances. The fact is that only about 200 works returned from Saratov. That is, more than 600 paintings, sketches, graphic works of Pen have disappeared. We have lost a huge historical, artistic and cultural heritage.

— Has no one been interested in this problem since then?

— Some attempts were made to clarify the situation after the war, but they did not lead to anything. Only many years later was the fate of the art gallery once again of interest. Vitebsk historians Mikhail Ryvkin and Aleksandr Lisov studied the topic thoroughly. It turned out that, during the Great Patriotic War, more than 600 works of art by Yuri Pen really did disappear, but at what stage, it wasn't possible to establish. No written reports or other documents about the evacuation were found.

— Why did no one report a shortfall after the collection was re-evacuated?

— In summer of 1948, the Director of the State Art Gallery of the BSSR, Yelena Aladova, who certainly had information about all the exhibits of the Yuri Pen Gallery, went to Saratov 'for archival materials of the Pen Museum, which were not received by the employees of the Vitebsk Regional Art Department who evacuated the museum's exhibits'. Apparently, Yelena knew that, in the Radishchev Museum, in addition to paintings, there were archival documents and photographs of Yuri Pen,

and returned them to Belarus. Given the character of Ms. Aladova, it's safe to say that she would never have put up with leaving more than 600 works by Pen in Saratov. Real museum workers do not make such gifts. I think she 'scraped out' of the Saratov Art Museum everything that was there from Vitebsk. According to the General Director of the Saratov Radishchev Art Museum, Lyudmila Kalinina, currently there are no paintings or documents belonging to Yuri Pen in the museum's archives.

It can be concluded that, in the difficult conditions of the urgent mass evacuation of enterprises and organisations of Vitebsk in July 1941, the employees of the Yuri Pen Art Gallery were able to get out only the most valuable, in their opinion, works by this master. The rest of the canvases remained in Vitebsk.

— What happened to them then?

— Many assumptions have been made in this regard. The most serious attention should be paid to the version about the seizure of paintings by the German occupation forces and their transportation to

Germany or to one of the neighbouring countries occupied by the Nazis. It seems that the same thing happened to the canvases of Yuri Pen as with other collections of paintings stored in museums of the countries occupied by the Nazis during WWII: they were stolen and sent to the Reich. At least by 1941, the fascists had accumulated considerable experience in this area.

Today, the museum archive of the Republic of Belarus, taking into account new arrivals, boasts 224 works of art by Yuri Pen, including 183 works in the Vitebsk Regional Local Lore Museum. However, none of the missing paintings by the Vitebsk master was detected either during the occupation or in the post-war period.

Over the past years, not a single witness has been identified, not a single document that at least indirectly clarified the fate of the remaining part of the collection in Vitebsk occupied by the Germans. This suggests that the stolen works of Yuri Pen were secretly taken out of the city and are now safe and sound in a place outside the Republic.

POSTSCRIPT

Yudel Pen — a graduate of the Imperial Academy of Arts and one of the last 'Mohicans' of classical realism — was very reluctant to part with his works. It is known that the artist dreamed of creating an art gallery, so he kept all the main works at home, and at the end of his life he decided to transfer them to the state. It is a good thing that he will never find out about the hundreds of his works that have disappeared. But this is not only a tragedy for Pen, it is a major loss for the entire multinational art of the Belarusian people, each of us and our children. Apparently, the time has come for a deep investigation at the state level of the circumstances of the disappearance of the collection of the Vitebsk master and the organisation of an official subject search within the established interstate procedures.

Looking at the blue-eyed Land from the water

Aleksandr Gorbash

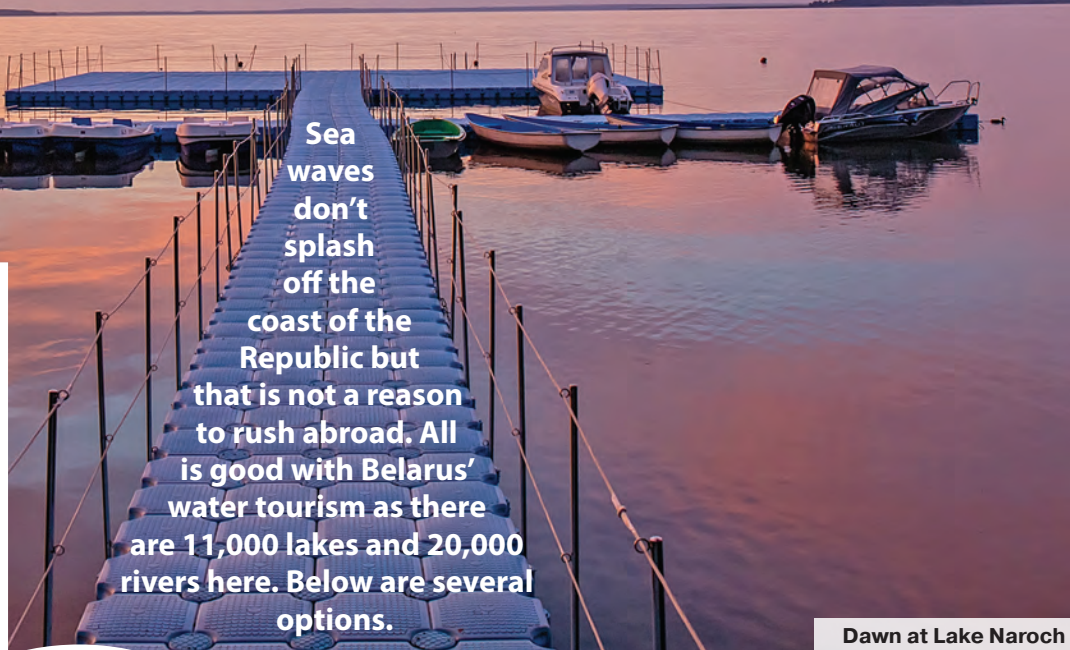
static.turcom.com



SUP surfing was a hit this summer



Kayaking is an unforgettable experience



Sea waves don't splash off the coast of the Republic but that is not a reason to rush abroad. All is good with Belarus' water tourism as there are 11,000 lakes and 20,000 rivers here. Below are several options.

Dawn at Lake Naroch



Augustovsky Canal during the 'swim on anything'

By Sofia Arsenieva

Getting a view of the earth from a porthole

Those seeking extensive relaxation should go to Turov — being attracted by the Polesie floating hotel, moored in the centre of the town. It has cabins instead of rooms, and not windows but portholes. The place is rather comfortable — with natural wood interiors and a hearty breakfast included in the price.

There's no need to go on foot to Turov's main attractions since it's possible to approach them by water: i.e. the famous Turov meadow where hundreds of thousands of birds stop and nest in spring and autumn. Birdwatchers from all over the world specially come here to enjoy them. Among the Red Book birds are pintail, sandpiper-magpie, small gull and ring plover. The feathered crowd is ruled by the sandpiper which has the largest settlement in Turov.

Attend a carnival

The Augustovsky Canal appeared in the 19th century thanks to... sanctions. Prussia unilaterally imposed prohibitive customs duties on the transit of goods through its territory and practically blocked traders' access to the sea. Emperor Alexander I then decided to connect the Baltic and Black seas along the Visla and Nieman

basins, bypassing them. It took fifteen years and 7,000 workers were involved to ensure the first loads go along the grandiose engineering structure.

In our modern times, the canal is no less impressive than it was two hundred years ago. It's possible to tour by kayaks and boats along its emerald water — through virgin coniferous forests. The highlight of such travel is the floodgates that open like drawbridges over the Neva River.

Festival life boils over every summer, with carnival competitions in 'swimming on anything' and picnics of folk cuisine organised. In August, as usual, Belarusians organise a sea festival on the canal — which is apt as the local water comes from the Black Sea and heads to the Baltic Sea.

Collect a Polesie necklace

The single river cruise in the country impresses with a luxurious programme and, in eight days, it's possible to see virtually all the pearls of Polesie and enjoy absolutely everything around the area.

A motor ship cruises along the Dnieper-Bug Canal and the Bug, Mukhavets, Pina, Pripyat rivers, while its passengers are offered

an all-inclusive vacation. Tourists start their travel in Brest — to visit the Brest Fortress, the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, the Dostoevsky family estate and Suvorov's house where personal belongings of several generations of Russian emperors are stored. The ancient cities of Turov and Pinsk — where passions were raised no less than in Kiev a thousand years ago — are other destination points.

Locals treat travellers with homemade honey, sausages and cheeses but the main attraction here is the wonderful nature of Polesie: rare birds, wild animals and remains of the relict forest.

Sail along 'from the Varangians to the Greeks' route

No one is required to drag ships loaded with overseas goods since there's a much more tempting alternative. The currently fashionable format of recreation

is unhurried movement on wooden boards: you row standing up, and the current carries you not just through forests and fields but along the historical path 'from the Varangians to the Greeks'.

The route along the Zapadnaya Dvina and the Dnieper rivers has already been tested more than once by the famous traveller Stas Vulkanov. It's possible to travel by water here but it's better to be well prepared and do not forget to go ashore in ancient cities — i.e. Polotsk, Vitebsk and Rogachev where the local museums house true treasures of archaeological finds. Among the latter are boxwood combs, camelian beads, and even cowrie shells which were used as money on the islands of Oceania.

It is in Belarus today that it's possible to plunge into the life of Scandinavia and Byzantium. Archaeologists regularly bring to the surface unique artefacts:

early Christian crosses, jewellery scales, blanks for jewellery and, of course, money. This is no wonder: the route was for trade.

Conquer the Amazon

A classic water trip is kayaking since it's ideal for small and wayward Belarusian rivers. A fine paddle, a guitar and good company seem to be enough for a successful trip. The most popular route is along the Isloch, 40km from the capital. The river only at first glance seems calm and shallow. However, after breaking away from the shore, its character becomes obvious: the current is fast, the obstacles are unexpected and shaggy paws of old fir trees hang directly over the water. Watch out!

For family rafting, the Zapadnaya Berezina is the best choice. It's wide, deep and slow and it's a true pleasure to stop on the shores for swimming, fishing and overnight in picturesque corners.



The first and only cruise ship in our country — 'Belaya Rus' — was launched in April 2017

The way to Beijing starts in Raubichi

Men's national team biathletes continue to prepare for the Olympic season

By Tatiana Pastushenko

It's summer, but work is in full swing in the national biathlon squad which began preparations for the new season back in May, so a lot has already been done. Our women's team is currently training in Austria, while the men's squad is training in Raubichi. We attended a session with the biathletes and found out what they expect from the season, the main event of which will be the Olympic Games in Beijing.

At one of the training sessions, the biathletes of the men's team 'stormed' the Raubichi slopes on roller skis. After running another lap at the pace set by the coaches, they drove up to a car parked by the side of the road, where the doctors of the national team were waiting for them: it was time to measure lactate and record indicators at different loads.

"At this session we're working to increase the maximum oxygen level. We conduct high-intensity training, making the focus on speed endurance," explained the senior coach of the men's team, Andrei Padin. "The Olympics will be held in the mountains, and in such conditions, we don't have an advantage over our competitors, so we want to increase the aerobic potential of our athletes due to the work done last year and intensive training in this off-season."

In general, Andrei Padin continues, preparations are going according to plan. "The epidemiological situation around the world has become a little easier, enabling biathletes to travel to training camps in the highlands. During the last off-season, the team was deprived of this opportunity, managing to get to the highlands only at the final stage of preparation. The easing of quarantine measures also affected the mood of both athletes and coaches: now they are not in a confined space and, for example, can go to the city on weekends to solve some everyday issues. Compared to last year, when they spent almost all their time in Raubichi from May to October, the atmosphere is much less tense," he tells us.

Six biathletes are preparing for the Olympic season as part of the national team: Anton Smolsky, Sergei Bocharnikov, Maksim Vorobei, Nikita Lobastov, Dmitry Lazovsky and Roman Yeletnov. Yegor Kazarinov, who was trying to change qualifications and move from skiers to biathletes, returned to cross-country skiing, as he would not have had enough time to master the rifle to prepare for the Olympic Games. The rest of the guys continue to improve their skills on the firing line.

"I can't say that our athletes shot badly last season, but, of course, we would like to see a better result. We need perfect



Andrei Padin

shooting, but I have said more than once that it won't be enough to occupy very high places in the races. No matter how accurate the guys are, nothing will work without high speed at a distance. Therefore, we try to work in two directions simultaneously, combining them. If we compare with last year's indicators, during the summer training, the shooting accuracy has increased. I wouldn't say that it has improved substantially, but there are obviously grounds to be positive. Biathletes have become more confident and bolder at the shooting range. They monitor the situation more closely, having gained more experience and, consequently, more control," notes Mr. Padin.

The overall successful performance last season also added confidence to our biathletes. Roman Yeletnov, Sergei Bocharnikov, Maksim Vorobei updated their best achievements at the World Cup stages, with Dmitry Lazovsky and Nikita Lobastov being close to this. Biathletes have retained the quota, enabling them



to enter individual and sprint races for five people. However, according to Mr. Padin, this isn't all, "Of course, they have gained experience. Last season, our biathletes became more stable. They regularly got into the number of participants in pursuit races, that is, there were more events. The guys have become more competitive, understanding that they can fight for high positions."

The coaching staff of the national team decided to postpone the 'battle testing'. The IBU Summer Biathlon World Championships starts today in Czech Nove Mesto, but there are no Belarusians among its participants; they were not planning to participate in this tournament.

"These are good competitions for gaining emotions, experience and stress, but this year they don't fit into our training plan," explains Andrei Padin. "Any tournament is quite intense, after which athletes need a recovery micro-cycle, while our emphasised work at altitude does not provide for it. Therefore, in order not to disrupt the mountain training, we decided to refuse to compete at the IBU Summer Biathlon World Championships. Now this event won't

give the effect that we want."

In late September, athletes will take part in Belarus Open Summer Biathlon Championships. As Andrei Padin notes, biathletes from leading countries don't always take part in the summer biathlon world championships. As a rule, they get the opportunity to compare their level of readiness at the first stages of the World Cup. Therefore, our team continues to work according to its plan. It will complete its training camp in Raubichi, then rest for a week and go to the next high-altitude training camp in Antholz.

"What do I expect from the new season? Positive emotions and good performances from our athletes. I want them to achieve success, because the main reward for any of them is a place on the podium," stresses the senior coach.

Preparing the ski track

The International Biathlon Union has published the preliminary World Cup calendar for the new season. It is planned that the first and second stages will take place in the Swedish Östersund on November 26th-28th and on November 29th-December 5th. After this, the World Cup competitions will be held in Austrian Hochfilzen, French Annecy, German Oberhof and Ruhpolding, as well as Italian Antholz. After the Olympic Games, held in Beijing on February 4th-20th, biathletes will continue to fight for leadership in the Cup: the final stages are planned to take place in Finnish Kontiolahti, Estonian Otepää and Norwegian Holmenkollen.



Maksim Vorobei is on the rise



Anton Smolsky is sure that intensive training in summer will definitely lead to excellent results in winter

Denis Kostyuchenko

ARENA

Arina Sobolenko ranked world number two for the first time in her career

The Women's Tennis Association has published an updated world ranking. Arina Sobolenko has overtaken Japanese Naomi Osaka to occupy second place globally.

Sobolenko didn't perform her best at a major tournament from the WTA 1000 category in American Cincinnati, losing to Spain's Paula Badosa Gibert (32nd in WTA) in the second round (7:5, 2:6, 6:7).



However, Naomi Osaka didn't stay long in the tournament (until the quarter finals); and since she didn't defend points for last year's final, the Japanese player lost her place in the ranking.

In turn, Australian Ashleigh Barty performed almost perfectly — winning a title and, accordingly, strengthening her position at the top of the rating.

Belarusian hockey players win the World Cup in the second division

In the decisive match of the tournament, the Belarusians defeated the French: the winning goal was scored in the 53rd minute of the match. After receiving a

penalty, Yevgeniya Filipovich scored.

Thanks to this result, the women's national field hockey team gained the right to play in the qualification for the World Cup, which will be held from July 1st-17th, 2022, in Spain and the Netherlands.

The qualification will be held on October 21st-24th in Rome (Italy), featuring the teams of Ireland, Italy and Scotland from the top division of the European Championship and the five best teams of the continental forum in the second division.

Accordingly, the Belarusian women's

national team will benefit from direct qualification for the World Cup for the first time.

SKA Minsk handball players placed second at the international tournament in Moscow

In the match for the main prize, the vice-champions of Belarus lost to the best club from Poland — Kielce — for which the former SKA players, Artem Korolek and Vladislav Kulesh, play — 33:35. Before that, at the tournament in the Russian capital, Igor Papruga's trainees won twice with the same result of 32:31. They initially defeated CSKA Moscow and then another Russian club: Permskie Medvedi.





Alexsey Stolyarov

Reconstruction of the Radziwills' ball as part of the *Nesvizh Fortecia* festival of military-historical reconstruction, held on the site of the Nesvizh Castle

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On August 27th, 1906, Sergei Novik-Pyayun was born — a Belarusian writer, organiser and leader of the Belarusian folk choir, theatre, circle of the Association of the Belarusian School, and library in the village of Leonovich. He is the author of poetry collections, entitled *Always with a Song*, *Clear Stars*, memories of Yanka Kupala, Iosif Stabrovsky, Yevfimy Karsky. He wrote over 100 songs. He is also the author of the Esperanto international anthem. He starred in the film *My Pain — Khatyn*. He died in 1994.



On August 28th, 1916, Yevsey Moiseenko was born — People's Artist of the USSR, full member of the USSR Academy of Arts. He worked mainly in battle, landscape and portrait genres. His most significant works are devoted to the civil war and the Great Patriotic War. His paintings *From Childhood*, *Belarusian Landscape*, *Woman in Black* and others are dedicated to Belarus. He is the winner of the State Prize of Russia named after Repin, the Lenin Prize, and the State Prize of the USSR. He died in 1988.



August 29 is Miner's Day in the Republic of Belarus. Industrial production of oil, gas and potash salt began in the Republic in the 1960s. Today, the country extracts oil, brown coal, peat, agrochemical raw materials, potash and rock salts, sapropels, dolomite for the production of limestone fertilisers, raw materials for the production of cement and lime, sand and clay, fresh and mineral underground waters.



comprise collections of archaeological findings, paintings, graphics, numismatics, ethnography, weaving and clothing, documents, military paraphernalia, taxidermy figures. The most interesting exhibits include the collection of icons of the Belarusian icon-painting school of the late 19th century and modern items made of straw by folk craftsman T.P. Zhurun.

On August 27th, 1951, Nina Lomanovich was born — a choral conductor, Honoured Art Worker of Belarus, People's Artist of Belarus. From 1993, she worked as the chief choirmaster of the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of Belarus while now she is an Associate Professor of the Conducting Department at the Belarusian Academy of Music. Her productions include *The New Land* by Yuri Semenyako, *The Wild Hunt of King Stakh* by Vladimir Soltan, *The Master and Margarita* by Yevgeny Glebov and others. She is one of the organisers of the Children's Musical Theatre-Studio at the Bolshoi Theatre. Moreover, she is also a laureate of the State Prize of the Republic of Belarus.



On August 28th, 1936, Gennady Buravkin was born — a Belarusian poet, statesman, author of the books *Breathing*, *Harvest*, *Flap of the Wing*, as well as *Three Pages from the Legend* documentary story and scripts for documentaries. Many of the poet's works have been set to music by Belarusian composers. In 1990-1994, he served as the Permanent Representative of the Republic of Belarus to the UN, in 1994-1995 — the Deputy Minister of Culture and Press of Belarus. In 1995-2001, he worked at the *Vozhyk* (hedgehog) magazine. Moreover, he is also a laureate of the State Prize of Belarus and the Lenin Komsomol Prize of Belarus. He died in 2014.



August 29th is International Day against Nuclear Tests, approved by the resolution of the UN General Assembly on December 2nd, 2009. The date is intended to intensify the efforts of the UN, states of the world, intergovernmental and non-governmental organisations in ending nuclear tests. This is a prerequisite for creating a secure world.



On August 31st, 1916, Zinaida Brovarskaya was born — actress, director, teacher, and People's Artist of Belarus. She began her stage activity at the Theatre of the Young Spectator in Belarus. From 1938, she worked at the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre. She performed lyric-dramatic and character roles. The latter include: *Mother* (*The Intimidated Apostle* by Andrei Makayenok), *Yulenska* (*A Profitable Position* by Aleksandr Ostrovsky), *Nora* (*Nora* by Henrik Ibsen), etc. She starred in the movies *The Clock Stopped at Midnight*, *Who Laughs Last*, *Our Neighbours* and *Collapse* television play. She died in 2005.



On August 30, 1996, the Khotimsk Museum of History and Local Lore was founded. The archives of the museum



September 1st is Knowledge Day. It is a holiday of the beginning of a new academic year, primarily for pupils, schoolchildren, students, teachers and lecturers.

