



Delegation from Belarus took part in the 4th Eurasian Women's Forum, which brought together guests from over 125 countries worldwide

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Our project dedicated to people awarded the Hero of Belarus title recalls Aleksandr Dubko who worked for the benefit of Grodno Region all his life

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INTERNATIONAL

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Mass apple harvesting has begun in Belarus

## Ours are the best!

Belarusians can do everything, including growing apples that are a treat to watch — large and fragrant. Long rows of slender, well-groomed apple trees look amazing in the rays of the bright morning sun. It is difficult to resist the temptation and not to try ripe, juicy fruits... The main topic of the working trip of Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko last week was horticulture development. The Head of State visited the Spartan-Agro farm in Molodechno District and highly praised the intensive apple tree planting, the setup of drip irrigation in the farm orchards, the careful manual harvesting, and the excellent taste of apples, "Very good, well done! Our people can do everything!"

Incidentally, the import of apples to Belarus has decreased by 66 percent in three years, and, consequently, the sale of domestically produced apples has increased by 66 percent. This year, the expected production of apples in the republic will amount to 190,000 tonnes, with trade needs of 60,000 tonnes.

Therefore, apple exports can and should yield profits. Thus, Belarusian apples are in great demand in Russia.

The development of fruit growing in the country will be actively supported. The President emphasised the development of highly efficient horticulture and instructed to map out a specific programme in fruit growing for the needs and capabilities of producers. The priority areas include the annual planting of 500 hectares of apple trees, the expansion of pear orchards and the assortment of stone fruit and small fruit crops, the increase in nut crops as well as the improvement of mechanisms for the storage and supply of fruits and berries to retail chains.



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# Unity is the main condition for our development as a nation

**National Unity Day symbolises the aspiration of Belarusians to live in their own state, on their native land, as stressed by the President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, on September 17th at a solemn event marking this important national holiday**



*“Today, Belarus celebrates National Unity Day — a holiday that symbolises the unbreakable bond between generations, the strength of the Belarusian people’s spirit, and their unwavering desire to live in their own state, on their native land. It is especially significant for all those who — not only by birth but also in spirit and heart — feel themselves to be Belarusians,” emphasised Aleksandr Lukashenko. “Eighty-five years ago, a fateful event took place and the proud statement ‘we are Belarusians’ resounded all over the world from the very centre of Europe. It was the voice of people who became a united nation, forever!”*

The Head of State noted that for a long time, the modest abode of Belarusians at the crossroads of civilisations oftentimes became a firing ground for foreign wars and a place for the power players to fight against each other. “Our homes were burnt, our property was looted. Lands were divided among principalities, voivodships, and provinces, while people were divided by language, faith, and ideological beliefs. Our ancestors looked death in the eye more than once, yet each time they rose from their knees unbowed, and wiping away sweat and tears, moved forward. This is still relevant today,” stated the President.

Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded that the road to gaining their own statehood opened up for Belarusians at the beginning of the last century. “The previous interethnic disputes came to an end, territorial claims were aban-

doned, and the Belarusian national state was established on January 1st, 1919. We got a historic chance to build our own home, live, work, raise children in peace and harmony, and become full masters of our own fate. That was a chance back in 1919. However, the severe consequences of the First World War, the escalating Civil War, and the intervention of a coalition of Western countries prevented the dreams of our compatriots for a peaceful and happy life from coming true,” said the Belarusian leader. “The voice of the newly created Byelorussian Soviet Socialist Republic was barely heard against that backdrop — possibly because there was no unity within it. In contrast, there were those who thought only about personal gain and their own — rather than people’s — interests. Representatives of different national minorities were hastily appointing themselves as authorities. Everyone who was eager to govern the new state hid behind the name of the Belarusian people, while the people — impoverished and hungry, uneducated

and poorly dressed, exhausted by war and devastation — only thought about how to survive. Perhaps if we had had strong power and consent at the dawn of the last century, we would have endured and the tragedy due to the Riga Treaty, which instantly made 4.5 million sons and daughters of Belarus strangers to one another on their native land, would not have happened. All guarantees of national and cultural life as part of the Polish state remained merely on paper.” According to the President, Western Belarus had zero autonomy, and the Belarusian culture existed in conditions of constant struggle for survival as national schools, theatres, and newspapers began to disappear. “The nation was being destroyed. Over 3,000 people imprisoned due to political reasons became victims of inhuman repressions. Those who refused to become Polish, who spoke, prayed, and sang lullabies to their children in their mother tongue were subjected to torture and imprisonment in concentration camps and prisons.



*On September 17th, 1939, the Polish shackles fell under the onslaught of historical justice. The Red Army’s liberation campaign enabled the reunification of both families and forcibly annexed territories. However, Belarusians did not sit idle all that time and did not wait humbly for their liberation. Our ancestors held on to their roots and land, passing down the memory and history of their ancient lineage from generation to generation. Our language, faith, and spiritual unity did not allow us to forget who we truly are. This made people stronger, and nothing could stop Belarusians — neither the threats of Polish lords nor political borders,” the Head of State pointed out.*

According to the President, the heroic ancestors of Belarusians — hardened in the national liberation movement — became an insurmountable shield of resistance on the way of the Nazi fascist invasion during the 1941-1945 Great Patriotic War. They rebuilt the country from the ashes in the post-war years, overcame the chaos of the 1990s, and have built a sovereign and independent state. “For the first time in their history, they not only built it but also preserved it. We did

it together, including those sitting in this hall,” stated the Belarusian leader. “Through the harsh trials of time and serious losses, Belarus has been steadily moving forward along the path of peace and creation for 85 years while augmenting national wealth based on the experience of previous generations,” said Aleksandr Lukashenko. “Even now, when NATO guns are aimed at us from the territories of our western and southern neighbours, when kilometres of fences and minefields are multiplying along our borders, we respond simply and in the best traditions of the ‘last dictatorship of Europe’ by opening our borders and not asking for permits or visas to visit our country. People on the other side [of the border] hear us — they arrive, look and draw conclusions not in favour of those who forbid them to come here.”

The President drew special attention to the fact,

*“Belarus has been and remains a proponent of peace. Our large-scale peace initiatives are voiced from the rostrum of the United Nations and at international forums. We propose to discuss the Eurasian Charter of Diversity and Multipolarity in the 21st century. You know who does not want this multipolarity... Yet, it can no longer be avoided. Multipolarity is not just around the corner, it is already here. We will certainly find a way out of the global security crisis, since many countries of our planet are our closest allies.”*

According to the Head of State, isolating Belarus is impossible, “We are increasingly being heard and supported in the world. I am absolutely convinced that the Western elites will soon understand that the only way is to come to an agreement. This is what our peoples want. We, Belarusians, are a peaceful and hardworking nation, and we do not want war.



We believe that the day will come when peace will reign in the neighbouring countries and blood-related nations, close and distant friends will live in harmony and friendship. Belarus is ready to contribute to building peace and is doing everything for this. As I have already said, Belarusian peacefulness should not be misunderstood or mistaken for weakness. My statement is not bluff or exaggeration, either. Now more than ever, we have the means to respond. Therefore, be calm in this regard, live peacefully, do your work, raise your children.”

The Head of State reminded that it was with the Red Army’s liberation campaign 85 years ago that the revival of the lost internal integrity of the Fatherland began. “Since that time, the Belarusian people have endured many trials, creating a unique space for dreams and for life at the crossroads of civilisations and paving the way to happiness in a continuous struggle for freedom, a better fate, and a native home,” remarked the President. “Belarusians overcame each stage of this challenging journey with dignity, relying on love for peace and truth, justice and patriotism, mutual respect and good neighbourliness. Note — we did not rely on aggression, cruelty, or superiority in relation to other countries and nations.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko underscored that it is the unity of Belarusians that allowed the nation to withstand and overcome numerous difficulties.

**“We are united in our desire to live on our native land relying on our own mind and work. Unity is the main condition for our development as a nation,” declared the President. “Therefore, neither the brown plague nor the turbulent 1990s, or pandemics, attempts at colour revolutions, or predatory sanctions and military threats have defeated us. National Unity Day reminds us that no borders, no trials can break the spirit of the people as long as each of us keeps our Belarus in their heart.”**

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the need to stop being shy about being Belarusians and to stop constantly looking back into the depths of the centuries or sideways. “We have what unites us and makes us happy on our native land. This is the glorious legacy of our ancestors and the equally bright achievements of our contemporaries. Shaped by the talent and efforts of many outstanding sons and daughters of the Belarusian land, our unique culture has long been an integral part of the common heritage of all mankind,” stressed the Head of State. The President noted with concern that today there are increasingly frequent attempts to ban or exclude it from the agenda along with the symbols of the Motherland, its millennia-old history, and everything that Belarusians take pride in.

Aleksandr Lukashenko underlined that, despite the forces seeking to sow discord and hatred in Belarusian society, it is necessary to demonstrate unity and a shared spirit of traditions and the historical fate of the people.

**IT IS SYMBOLIC THAT ON NATIONAL UNITY DAY, THE PRESIDENT LAUNCHED THE BELARUSIAN CAMPAIGN — UNITY MARATHON**

“It will be a marathon of the trinity of traditions — national culture, which we cherish and develop, the talents of our people, for which the Belarusian land is renowned, and the beauty of the Slavic soul, which fills the world around us with harmony and mutual understanding,” announced the Head of State. According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, this will give everyone the opportunity to feel the full palette of talents from Belarus and to touch the rich heritage of our national culture. “May the bright colours and melodies of creativity in every corner of the country awaken love for their Homeland in the hearts of Belarusians,” the President added. “This is the key to a decent future for our people and the sacred duty of our contemporaries, upon which life in a united family of patriots and workers — named Belarus — should be built. Let’s love, make friends, dream, work, and relax together in the Belarusian way! Let’s cherish and protect Belarus! This is what our ancestors bequeathed to us, and this is what we tell our descendants. We say this because time has chosen us!”

**‘WE WILL DO EVERYTHING TO ENSURE THAT THERE IS NO MORE WAR ON THE BELARUSIAN LAND’**

Even during festive days, pressing and acute issues remain at the forefront of the President’s attention. The Head of State reminded that in his speech to the Belarusian people at the solemn gathering dedicated to Independence Day, he had already addressed working issues. This is becoming a tradition for significant, large-scale events.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that the self-exiled opposition and their Western curators are once again trying to stir up society and create a situation of unrest in Belarus ahead of the presidential elections, beginning to formulate action plans. “All kinds of things have happened, including attacks in the media. We are trying to respond to this with dignity. The launch of our *First News Channel* serves as a confirmation of this. It is a fitting response,” the Belarusian leader pointed out.

Our opponents also do not dismiss the possibility of armed attacks on Belarus. “As the Western intelligence services say, our people will fight for power here. We understand how it happens — the rabid ones from among Belarusians are in the lead followed by those who are not from here. We saw this in 2020, their plan failed then. However, they still consider this scenario today. They are preparing entire regiments. They used to be called Vlasov’s army. By the way, our Belarusians together with Russian Vlasov’s army penetrated into Kursk Region. There are no more than a hundred of them, but they all dream of coming here with weapons in hands,” the President recounted.

Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised that he was by no means trying to escalate the situation on that festive day.

**“I just want to quote one document to you. According to our intelligence services, during a closed part of negotiations with the participation of our self-exiled opposition in one of the countries —**



**I will not name it for specific reasons — representatives of the USA made the following statement: from mid-September to early November, the USA expects a significant escalation of the military situation both from Moscow and from Kiev. At the front,” revealed the Head of State.**

“Western intelligence services are talking about Belarus as a possible site of escalation. It seems quiet, so far. Yes, [Ukrainian military] have entered Kursk but they will not hold on. Yet, that is not what Americans want. They need the war to continue until the last Ukrainian, better yet — until the last Russian. They need a war, and this quiet at the front is not what they want. They seek escalation. That is why they are talking about Belarus as a possible site for escalating the situation.”

At the same time, regarding the escalation in the Belarusian direction, it is not about Belarus’ Armed Forces entering combat operations. “We will never do it unless a foreign boot steps on our land,” assured Aleksandr Lukashenko. According to the President, this refers to Kiev’s potential response to the flights of

Russian drones over the Belarusian territory — a response that could go as far as attacks on border infrastructure. “In other words, Americans have instructed Kiev to attack our infrastructure along the southern border if appropriate circumstances arise. The reason is that Russian drones fly over the territory and near the territory of Belarus,” clarified the Belarusian leader. “I will tell you publicly that we have agreed with Ukrainians through certain channels that we will not highlight in the media the facts of drones — both Russian and Ukrainian — entering our territory,” noted the President. “Why is this happening? This is because both sides are bad at controlling their drones. Firstly, it is a new thing to them. Secondly, radioelectronic warfare systems are in operation and disrupt the drones’ course. We have found one of them just outside Bobruisk — in the centre of Belarus. Those were Ukrainian drones, not Russian ones. The other kind also happens, though. Anyway, we have reached an agreement.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that puppeteers from Washington are nonetheless pushing Ukraine towards confrontation with Belarus. “I want to ask Americans: do you want peace, peace talks, or an escalation of the situation? I am asking it for a reason. The thing is that recently, they have been giving us frequent hints about negotiations. They have even put forward conditions for the negotiations. We have agreed. Then, how should we understand that?” the Belarusian leader posed the question. “This is their policy. It was like this before. After about 100 years, the same scenario is repeating itself. We

have been through all of that because we live in the epicentre, at the crossroads of all paths.”

The President also recalled the war with Napoleon’s army, the First World War, and other large-scale conflicts — all of them swept through Belarus, bringing a lot of grief and destruction.

**“History repeats itself. In this regard, I want to warn our opponents, our rivals, and those who still do not understand. Do not do that. It will benefit neither the European region nor the entire planet. Remember: an attack on Belarus would mean a third world war,” emphasised the President. “Therefore, under no circumstances must Ukrainians or Russians — they understand this perfectly well — or Americans, who want to sit it out across the ocean, do this.”**

In his speech during the high-profile patriotic forum, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about the West’s plans to ‘remove him from the political agenda’. “This initiative comes from our fugitives. They cannot wait to take the President of Belarus out of the political stage. They have agreed that Lithuania — as it was on the eve or in the early days of Russia’s special military operation in Ukraine — will initiate the consideration of the Belarusian issue at the International Criminal Court in The Hague. The goal is to hold Belarus’ President accountable and to remove him from the political agenda. As they write, so that in case peace talks begin in Ukraine, the President of Belarus would not be able to participate in them. They know that we demand that Belarus’ interests be taken into account when concluding a peace treaty in Ukraine. They do not see our representation there,” recounted the Head of State. “I want them to hear today, from this high rostrum, that we are aware of all their plots, and they will not succeed. They will not be able to repeat what happened in 2020. We are people who know how to learn from the past. The issues are serious, but this does not mean that you need to be anxious or worried. We will do everything to ensure that there is no more war on our land — neither in our generation nor in yours. We, the older generation, are eager to pass on to you a peaceful, beautiful, and dignified land where you can live and raise your children.”

The statement from the Belarusian leader was met with applause in the hall.

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

**CONGRATULATIONS, BELARUS RESOUNDED IN DOZENS OF LANGUAGES ON NATIONAL UNITY DAY**

Greetings and wishes of prosperity and well-being on National Unity Day came to the Belarusian people from nearly all continents. As reported by Belarus’ Ministry of Foreign Affairs, video postcards were received from more than 35 countries, including Austria, Argentina, Armenia, Bangladesh, Belgium, Bulgaria, Brazil, Venezuela, Hungary, Vietnam, Germany, Georgia, Egypt, Israel, India, Indonesia, Italy, Qatar, Kazakhstan, China, Colombia, Republic of Korea, Kyrgyzstan, Mongolia, the United Arab Emirates, Pakistan, Poland, Russia, Serbia, Syria, the United States, Tajikistan, Turkmenistan, Türkiye, Uzbekistan, Finland, France, Japan, Azerbaijan, and Luxembourg. Foreign friends wished the Belarusian state and people prosperity and a bright future, as well as ‘unshakable national unity, eternal peace, and stability’.





# Agenda for peace and trust

St. Petersburg has hosted the 4th Eurasian Women's Forum, which brought together a record number of guests from over 125 countries worldwide. Among the speakers were representatives from China and India, Türkiye and Serbia, Cyprus and Mexico. The official delegation from Belarus headed by the Speaker of the Council of the Republic, Natalya Kochanova, participated in the forum's events. The main topic for discussion was the role of women in strengthening trust and global co-operation.

## WHAT NATALYA KOCHANOVA TALKED ABOUT AT THE 4TH EURASIAN WOMEN'S FORUM

By Yulia Demeshko

### ON THE ACHIEVEMENTS OF BELARUSIAN PEOPLE

In 2024, Belarus has held its first unified day of voting, during which deputies at all levels were elected. The 7th Belarusian People's Congress under its new constitutional status has successfully taken place. This year, we have celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus and the institution of presidency, as well as the 80th anniversary of Belarus' liberation from Nazi German invaders. The greatest achievement of the Belarusian people is that, in a historically brief period, under the wise and far-sighted leadership of Belarus' President, we have managed to build our sovereign independent republic — a country that consistently reaffirms its status as a strong, peaceful, and friendly state with a responsible and predictable foreign policy.

### ON THE ESCALATION OF THE SITUATION AROUND BELARUS

There are systematic attempts of external interference in the internal affairs of our country, economic pressure, militarisation of the border area, military provocations, as well as the construction of iron curtains. Belarus condemns the illegitimate sanctions policy of Western countries, the creation of artificial barriers to the movement of goods and commodities, the freedom of movement of citizens, as well as numerous discriminatory decisions in the so-called developed democracies, which are based on gross violations of human rights. We call on international organisations to effectively fulfil their mandates, ensure compliance with the principle of sovereign equality of states, and seek an end to the arbitrary sanctions that exacerbate the global problems of mankind.

### ON GLOBAL THREATS

The 'red lines' are becoming increasingly blurred, posing a threat of a real war on a planetary scale — one in which there will be no winners. We must collectively counteract the destructive policies that divide and distance states from one another. We should consolidate our efforts to prevent and combat terrorism and extremism, and resolve current conflicts peacefully. Belarus embodies and preserves fundamental family and traditional values, diligently protecting and cultivating them.

### FROM THE SPEECH OF NATALYA KOCHANOVA

- Belarus is successfully developing and can rightfully serve as an example to many other countries in the world. This is evidenced by our country's high positions in international rankings.
- **34th among 166 states in the Sustainable Development Goals Index;**
  - **61st among 169 states in the Social Development Index;**
- **69th among 193 states in the Global Human Development Index;**
- **35th among 175 states with the highest childhood life satisfaction;**
- **25th in the ranking of the most comfortable countries for motherhood.**



Natalya Kochanova and Valentina Matviyenko

### In a constructive and mutually beneficial manner

During a meeting between Chairperson of the Council of the Republic Natalya Kochanova and Vice President of the Republic of Uganda Jessica Alupo, the parties discussed promising areas of bilateral co-operation, including the exchange of technologies and experience in agriculture, as well as in machine engineering and municipal services. "Belarus is building the kindest relations with the countries that live and develop according to their own laws," emphasised Natalya Kochanova. "Uganda and Belarus are united by their aspiration for sovereignty and independence."

direction, it will be mutually beneficial for our countries."

During the conversation, the speaker invited the Ugandan leadership headed by the president to Belarus.

### Our strength lies in unity

Another equally important meeting was with Chairperson of the Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko. At the beginning of the dialogue, Natalya Kochanova highlighted the significance of the fact that in such a challenging historical moment in the lives of Belarus and Russia, the peoples and authorities of both countries remain united, "It is impossible to divide us, because these are our roots, history, mentality, and attitude to each other. We are fortunate to have great leaders — presidents who think about their peoples, about the future of their countries, and live by this. We certainly must provide all possible support in addressing the challenges that our countries are facing."

"Amidst an assault on our national interests, provocations, opposition, and attempts to hinder our development, the unification of efforts between Russia and Belarus within the framework of the Union State is the main response to our adversaries that strengthens our capabilities in combating threats," underlined Valentina Matviyenko.

Following the meetings and discussions with journalists, Natalya Kochanova noted that the Eurasian Women's Forum is a platform where each country can convey the truth about its state, "Despite the fact that we come from different countries, we have complete unanimity on the issues we have discussed. During the meetings, we talked a lot about our country and saw that Belarus is known and the policies pursued in our state are shared. It is a peaceful policy of good neighbourliness towards all countries, a desire to help and support each other in defending the sovereignty and independence of each state."

Within the framework of the 4th Eurasian Women's Forum in Saint Petersburg, members of the Belarusian delegation not only participated in workshops but also held a number of bilateral meetings.

Thus, Chairperson of the Council of the Republic Natalya Kochanova met with Chairperson of the Federation Council Valentina Matviyenko, Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda Jessica Alupo, and General Director of the Russian Export Centre Veronika Nikishina. The Belarusian delegation also took part in the open session of the Women's Twenty (W20) and in a parity discussion *Looking at a Changing World*.



## WATCH AND LISTEN

### On September 17th — National Unity Day — Belarus' First News TV Channel began broadcasting

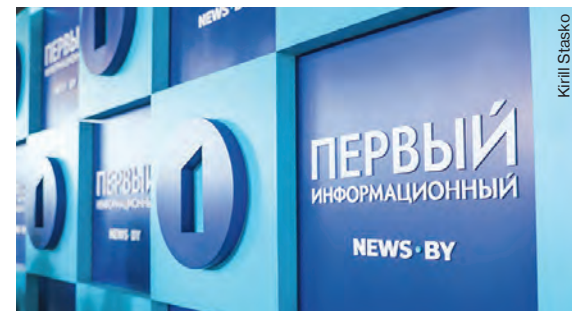
This is now the only round-the-clock information TV channel in the country, part of the Belteleradiocompany. There has been nothing like it in terms of level and concept in the national media space. *First News Channel* is listed as the fifth following *Belarus 1*, *Second National TV Channel (ONT)*, *Stolichnoye Televideniye (STV)*, and *MIR*.

Ivan Eismont, Chairman of the Belteleradiocompany, has unveiled that the broadcast schedule of the new channel envisages news broadcasts once an hour, "This is where its value lies — the finest hour of *First News Channel* comes when important events

happen in the country and around the world. With this channel, we have the freedom to act because there is no need to wait until the next newscast. Now we can go on air immediately. The main mission of the channel is to provide as much complete and reliable information as possible to people who watch television."

According to Ivan Eismont, Internet wars and fake news have become a feature of the modern world. ***First News Channel is designed to provide Belarusians with verified, truthful, and relevant content.***

In parallel with the new 'button', the Belteleradiocompany has presented an updated



website news.by, which is made to visually match the style of *First News Channel*. It is a full-fledged independent information resource, where around a hundred news reports of various formats will appear daily in three languages: Russian, Belarusian and English.

Based on materials of sb.by



# Moving in the rhythm of the capital city

Nearly 80 percent localisation — new trams and electric buses are coming to Minsk roads soon



By Vladislav Sychevich

## Turquoise is in fashion

Comfort, safety, and environmental friendliness — these are the three pillars underpinning the new passenger vehicles produced by BKM HOLDING for the needs of the Belarusian capital. In 2023, the enterprise developed and approved technical documentation to manufacture novelties — modern trams and electric buses — at the request of Minsktrans. Every detail has been taken into account: from the colour scheme to the driver's seat.

The work in the tram assembly shop is in full swing, with the assembly of the first two prototypes of the new vehicles nearing completion. The body is carefully covered in film to prevent damage to the paintwork. Electricians are finalising the wiring, and specialists will begin installing passenger seats soon.

“This is a fully low-floor, single-section T811 model tram with two motor bogies,” explained Aleksandr Kazakevich, Deputy General Director for Marketing and Sales. “The new model can operate autonomously for up to 1,000 metres and is designed for compatibility with an unmanned control system.”

It is worth noting that the T811 model is already familiar to Minsk residents, yet aside from its colour — turquoise — it bears little resemblance to its predecessor. The design matches the style of trolleybuses, electric buses, and trucks from the Vitovt series. “The bodywork load-bearing structure is a seamless, welded metallic frame made from high-strength steel profiles with ventilation openings,” Aleksandr Kazakevich shared the details. “The anti-corrosion coating guarantees protection for five years without the need for additional body treatment during operation. The outer lining, including the roof, is made of fibreglass and aluminium corrosion-resistant panels, enabling the tram to be operated for at least 30 years.”

The body design is innovative, prioritising maximum comfort for passengers. Gone are the days when one had to climb high steps to get on the tram. To facilitate easy boarding and alighting for people with limited mobility, an access ramp is installed next to the second door, along with a but-



ton to call the driver. There is also a spacious standing area, capable of simultaneously accommodating a passenger with limited mobility or a passenger with a child in a pushchair, and a person with a dog or bicycle.

The door system is equipped with audio and visual signals indicating the movement status of the door leaves. Additionally, it features a system of anti-jamming and blocking mechanisms. The shape of front and rear ends is designed to deflect a pedestrian who might come into contact with the tram, ensuring they are pushed aside rather than thrown under the wheels. Moreover, the rear-view mirror configuration ensures 100 percent visibility of the passenger boarding and alighting zones along the vehicle sides on straight sections of the track, as well as covering the blind spots in front of the tram. “The ergonomics of the passenger compartment have been developed in line with contemporary trends, featuring an expanded area for priority passengers. There is an optimal number of seats in the low-floor zone. In addition, the tram is equipped with an air conditioning system, automatic fire extinguishing system, USB ports for phone charging, Wi-Fi, GPS, a multimedia system, and,

of course, a fare payment system,” revealed the Deputy General Director for Marketing and Sales.

The tram is fitted with a video surveillance system: one camera records the traffic situation in front of the vehicle, another monitors the driver, while a network of cameras inside the compartment eliminates blind spots. If required, the footage is transmitted in real-time to the dispatch centre. This approach enhances passenger safety during transportation.

The ergonomics of the driver's cabin in the T811 model have been improved. All control devices are arranged according to their operational efficiency during movement. The driver's seat allows for optimal adjustment to achieve the most comfortable position for vehicle operation, with height, recline, and horizontal seat cushion adjustment.

According to Aleksandr Kazakevich, the driver's cabin is separated from the passenger compartment by a glazed partition with a door fitted with a lock. The door features a small window for ticket sales. Within the driver's compartment are the control devices, signalling, and monitoring systems, as well as space for a first aid kit, a fire extinguisher, and storage for the

**This year, the renewal of Minsk's transport fleet is planned. It is expected that 10 new electric buses and 20 trams equipped with climate control system will operate within the city. BKM HOLDING — a leading manufacturer of modern urban electric transport — is in charge of the production. The first prototypes are already nearing the final assembly stage, with running tests set to begin shortly.**



Alisa Drugakova

driver's personal items, a bag of small accessories, and valuables.

## Harmonious solution

It is expected that by the end of the year, it will be possible to see modern electric buses from the Vitovt series on Minsk roads. BKM HOLDING is currently in the final stage of assembling these vehicles. The transport is equipped with an air conditioning system, climate control, and USB ports, as well as boasts redesigned interior layout. “The E433 Vitovt electric bus for delivery in 2024 differs from the 2018 model not only in its lighting. This vehicle is of particularly large capacity, known as an accordion bus. It now features a separate door to enter the driver's cabin, and air conditioning in the passenger compartment,” recounted the Deputy General Director. The electric bus is equipped with energy storage systems based on supercapacitors. The charging time from 30 percent takes up to ten minutes, providing a drive range of up to 15 kilometres. Its passenger capacity is 140 people, with 36 seats. There are also standing areas with space to accommodate passengers with reduced mobility in wheelchairs.

The transport is further equipped with a climate control system, video surveillance, and USB ports. The maximum steady-state speed is 60 km/h. The pneumatic suspension has a body tilt system. Additionally, an anti-lock braking system and traction control system

are included. “The electric bus is fitted with a system for accumulating electrical energy generated during braking. The service life of the drive axle, the supercapacitor system, and the warranty on the vehicle body frames is ten years,” added Aleksandr Kazakevich.

## Technologically advanced response

An interesting fact is that the new tram contains over 10,000 various parts, while the electric bus has around 12,000. Most importantly, the level of localisation has reached 80 percent. “Next year, we plan to manufacture and supply Minsk with just over 40 large-capacity electric buses. These will be equipped with a hybrid charging system — charging from a socket overnight and charging from a pantograph while on route — to increase the range on a single charge on the one hand, and to enhance passenger capacity compared to vehicles having only night charging on the other hand. Additionally, we envisage to supply more than ten low-floor trams.

*Russian customers have also shown interest in the novelties. It is expected that Belarusian articulated electric buses will operate in Saint Petersburg and cities in the Southern Federal District of the Russian Federation,” pointed out Aleksandr Kazakevich.*

### LOW-FLOOR SINGLE-SECTION T811 TRAM MODEL:

- Body length — 16.5m
- Width — 2.5m
- Height — 3.7m
- Number of passenger doors — 4;
- Maximum passenger capacity / number of seats — 160 people / 33 seats (four in the low-floor zone)
- Speed — up to 75 km/h
- Electric motor power (kW) — 288 (72x4)

### E433 VITOVT ELECTRIC BUS:

- Charging time from 30 percent — up to 10 minutes
- Drive range — up to 15km
- Passenger capacity / number of seats — 140 people / 36 seats (eight in the low-floor zone)
- Maximum steady-state speed — 60 km/h.



Alisa Drugakova



The Minsk Times project is dedicated to people awarded the highest Hero of Belarus title

On September 20th, 2024, Grodno Region celebrated its 80th anniversary. In honour of the region's jubilee, we remember one of its leaders. Aleksandr Dubko — Hero of Belarus, Hero of Socialist Labour, bearer of two Orders of Lenin, the Order of the Red Banner of Labour, and the Badge of Honour, an outstanding agrarian, patriot, far-sighted politician, and statesman — devoted his life to the benefit of Grodno.

# Bright legacy

**Emma Dubko, the Hero of Belarus' spouse,**

*"We lived in harmony, did everything together, and jointly resolved all important matters. He did not hide either his problems or his successes. When he was awarded the Golden Star of the Hero of Socialist Labour, he said: 'The Star has five rays. Three of them are yours, my wife!' Unfortunately, I received the Hero of Belarus Star in his place after his passing."* Looking at the portrait of her beloved husband and touching his Stars, Emma Dubko said, *"The Star has five rays. All of them are yours!"*

Many well-known leaders of various ranks regard Aleksandr Dubko as their mentor. The secrets of his economic talent are still sought after by students and colleagues today. Aleksandr Dubko rightly belongs to the elite of Belarus' chairmen. As a head of the Progress collective farm in Grodno District, he took it to the highest level. Later, he effectively managed the region. Dubko's expertise, charisma, wisdom, and foresight allowed the region to become a leader in many indicators. Thanks to his initiative, the Ice Palace was built in Grodno, the Festival of National Cultures was born, a prize for gifted schoolchildren and students was established, and much more. He was known, loved, and respected not only in Grodno Region but also throughout the country.



Prepared by Irina Sergeyeva

## Young and promising

Aleksandr Dubko was born on January 14th, 1938 in the village of Ilovo in Shumilino District of Vitebsk Region. He had a thirst for knowledge, was passionate about history and geography, was keen on languages, and excelled in team sports. He chose his profession without hesitation as he dreamt of working on the land and developing agriculture. His studies at the Grodno Agricultural Institute provided him not only with solid knowledge but also with a vibrant social life, sporting achievements in basketball, and the chance to meet an astonishing girl, Emma, who became the love of his life, a devoted wife, and mother of his sons.

After university, the agrarian specialist gained experience in various positions at the Stanislavovo farm in Grodno District, the Berestovitsa district agricultural administration, and the specialised complex of dairy and vegetable state farms in Grodno Region. In 1972, he received an offer to become the head of the leading collective farm Progress in Vertelishki, replacing the legendary Hero of Socialist Labour, Fiodor Senko.

## High aim — high result

At that time, the collective farm Progress was the best agricultural enterprise in Grodno Region by all indicators, and one of the best in the country. However, ambitious and talented Aleksandr Dubko aimed to elevate it to a new level. He looked far ahead and came up with his own development strategy. The farm expanded twice by incorporating the lands of neighbouring collective farms, and

## AWARDS

- For the exceptional service to the state and society, the Hero of Belarus title was posthumously conferred upon Aleksandr Dubko in June 2001 by Presidential Decree No. 361
- Hero of Socialist Labour
- Order of the Fatherland 3rd class
- Two Orders of Lenin
- Order of the Red Banner of Labour
- Badge of Honour Order



over the 23 years that Dubko was at the helm of the agricultural enterprise, it grew fivefold!

Aleksandr Dubko insisted on programming the harvest and fostering a close connection between agriculture and research institutes and universities of the country, supported variety renewal, and looked far into the future. The most successful developments and proposals of scientists were implemented on the Progress fields and farms.

The far-sighted chairman placed a premium on a multi-sector economy to avoid seasonality in the influx of financial resources. His ideas for processing agricultural raw materials resulted in the construction of modern broiler complexes and enterprise for processing milk, fruits, and animal feed, a sausage workshop, and fur farming. He initiated the establishment of facilities for the production of building materials, a carpentry and furniture enterprise, an asphalt plant, and a greenhouse farm. In addition, orchards were planted in the open fields.

*In the tenth year of Aleksandr Dubko's chairmanship, Progress celebrated the highest grain harvest in Belarus. More than 46 centners were harvested per hectare. By decree of the Presidium of the Supreme Soviet of the USSR, Aleksandr Dubko was awarded the Hero of Socialist Labour title and received the Order of Lenin.*

Aleksandr Dubko not only cared about economic indicators but also paid considerable attention to the living conditions of rural workers, their leisure, and comfort. Long before agrotowns appeared in Belarus, he created the village of the future — Vertelishki,

which had everything necessary for the residents' well-being and therefore attracted the best specialists. He took them under his wing and successfully nurtured them.

## Caring for people

In 1994, Aleksandr Dubko was appointed as Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee. It is on this position that his economic and managerial talents, as well as his exceptional abilities as a leader and statesman, were particularly evident.

He accomplished a great deal for the development of the region, leaving behind a galaxy of strong personnel who later achieved prominence in politics, economics, and public administration.

*During his leadership of Grodno, Aleksandr Dubko and his team managed to halt the decline in production across all major sectors of the economy, which had been brought about by the years of restructuring and market economy. The high standards in agriculture and the hard work of rural workers, along with the development of industry and the socio-cultural sphere gradually elevated Grodno Region to the ranks of the leading regions in the country. Dubko's expertise was often cited as an example by the Head of State, Aleksandr Lukashenko.*

The governor understood that the future of the country begins in the family, kindergarten, and school. Therefore, he aimed to nurture the younger generation focusing on their moral and spiritual development, as well as health promotion. Significant progress was made in healthcare, including the construction of a psycho-neurological dispensary and the establishment of a three-tier system for providing perinatal care to women and children. Dubko was genuinely committed to the development of sports facilities and supported both sports and culture. He was convinced that man does not live by bread alone.

In 1996, at the initiative of Aleksandr Dubko, the Festival of National Cultures was born in Grodno. As a visionary leader, he supported talented young people. It was in Grodno Region that an award for talented schoolchildren and students from the regional executive committee — today it bears the name of Aleksandr Dubko — as well as an award for figures in culture and arts were established for the first time in the country.

It was also at his behest that the Ice Palace in Grodno was built, a number of sports halls were opened, including one at the Olympic Reserve school, and a hall for team sports was renovated. According to Dubko's associates, his cherished dream was the construction of a multi-purpose sports palace in the regional centre and the establishment of a university campus. Unfortunately, many of his plans were not destined to come to fruition — the fate allotted him a rather brief life journey. Aleksandr Dubko passed away suddenly on February 4th, 2001, at the age of 63.

## EARNED TRUST

Throughout his career, Aleksandr Dubko combined his main duties with his work as a deputy. People trusted him, and he represented their interests in councils at various levels. He successfully led Belarus' Agrarian Union, and participated in the presidential elections in 1994. He supported Aleksandr Lukashenko and began building independent Belarus alongside him and the entire country.

## MEMORY

- One of the streets in Grodno is named after Aleksandr Dubko.
- A bust of the Hero has been erected near the administration building of the Progress-Vertelishki Agricultural Production Co-operative.
- On May 31st, 2022, the Grodno City Gymnasium was named after the Hero of Belarus, Aleksandr Dubko.
- An annual scholarship named after Aleksandr Dubko is awarded to gifted schoolchildren and students, as well as the Dubko Prize from the regional executive committee is granted for creative achievements in culture and arts to cultural and artistic figures.
- Since 2002, an International Ice Hockey Tournament and since 2014, an International Basketball Tournament in memory of Aleksandr Dubko have been held in the regional centre.



Grodno Region has become a second homeland for Aleksandr Dubko



# Secrets of ancient painting

Over 40 Old Believer icons and the first-ever portrait of Jesus Christ — we have attended the exhibition at the National Art Museum



**The exhibition *Vetka Icons: The Saviour Not-Made-By-Hands*, showcasing works from the Vetka Museum of Old Belief and Belarusian Traditions named after Fyodor Shklyarov, has opened at the National Art Museum in Minsk. As noted by the organisers, Minsk residents are showing increasing interest in works from Vetka. A few years ago, the National Art Museum exhibited the ‘fire-like’ Vetka icons.**

By Yelena Basikirskaya

## First portrait of Jesus Christ

The Vetka icons are vibrant, ornate, and almost all covered with gold leaf. The theme is complemented not only with metal and bead-embroidered covers but also with copper artistic casting, handwritten books, rooshniks [Belarusian traditional embroidered towels], homespun linen, chests, and traditional headscarves — wimples — worn by women in Old Believers communities. The patterns on these headscarves are reflected in the iconographic tradition of the Vetka school.

Svetlana Kashlova, an exhibition visitor, candidly shared that she saw similarities between the exhibits and household items preserved from her ancestors who lived in Polesie [Gomel Region], such as homespun linen, headscarves, blankets, spinning wheels, and wooden crafts. “I am considering donating those items to the Vetka Museum and partially to the National Art Museum,” Svetlana Kashlova remarked.

“The thing is, we are not just a museum but a whole research centre,” stated Yury Kotlyarov, the director of the institution. “We have been meticulously studying the southeastern region of Belarus for many years, focusing mainly on Old Belief and Belarusian traditions.”

The beauty and mystery of *The Saviour Not-Made-By-Hands* — the first portrait of Jesus Christ — have captivated artists for centuries. The artistic embodiment holds the secret of ancient painting. A highlight of the exhibition space is the painting *The Path of Ananias Artist*, whose brush created the first image of Christ. The history of the miraculous image not-made-by-hands traces back to its establishment above the gate of the city of Edessa, following the order of a healed king, and its role as the icon of the Saviour in the temple.

## King, painter, and the divine image

*The Saviour Not-Made-By-Hands* is essentially an artistic reinterpretation of a mysterious image that few have seen. The emergence of this iconography is quite fascinating. The Saviour is especially revered by the Orthodox Church — believers pray before the icon for healing or help in difficult life situations. The history of the image is connected to King Abgarus of Edessa, who suffered from leprosy, which disfigured his entire face.

*At the centre of attention is the image of The Saviour Not-Made-By-Hands. Staff at the Vetka Museum have been researching this topic for over 40 years, making new discoveries along the way.*

The ruler had endured for many years unable to find a means of healing, until he learnt about Jesus. Having heard stories of His miracles, the king sent a letter via a messenger, painter Ananias, who was commanded to capture the divine image of the Son of God — although the king wished to see Jesus in Edessa, his faith was so great that he agreed to pray even to His image. However, such a bright light emanated from Christ’s face that the artist could not bear to look at it. Jesus then asked for water, washed His face and wiped it with a cloth, thus imprinting His image upon it. This is how the icon received the name ‘Not-Made-By-Hands’. With the help of the cloth, King Abgarus was healed, though not completely. One of the 70 apostles — Thaddeus — cured him of that horrible affliction. He baptised the king, and subsequently the entire city. In gratitude, King Abgarus placed the cloth in a niche of the city gates instead of pagan idols.

The image of the Saviour on the cloth was further developed significantly in Vetka and was placed on home iconostases in local Old Believer churches. The exhibition’s concept was devised by Galina Nechayeva, Deputy Director at the Vetka Museum, an art historian, and Honoured Worker of Arts of Belarus, who explained the various versions behind the image’s origins,

*“According to one version, as Christ was walking to Golgotha, a woman approached Him and used her cloth to wipe the bloody sweat which left an imprint. This ancient patterned cloth is tacitly present in the depiction of all Saviours Not-Made-By-Hands created in Vetka. In general, through the sacred works of the museum, one can trace the rich heritage of Novgorod, Pskov, Yaroslavl, and Moscow traditions within the Vetka school of icon painting.”*

The exhibition will run until October 27th. Make sure to see it!



Israel launched a series of strikes on Hezbollah targets as the war against the Lebanon-based group widened in the wake of two consecutive days of deadly explosions triggered in wireless devices last week

According to the Lebanese Health Ministry, more than 100 people have been killed and 400 wounded, 'including women, children and paramedics', from ongoing Israeli airstrikes in the south of the country on Monday. This is the single highest daily death toll since fighting between Israel and Hezbollah started in October.

In the latest round of blasts on September 18th, exploding walkie-talkies killed 20 and injured at least 450 people, according to the country's health department.



REUTERS

## Israel and Hezbollah vow to escalate attacks

The explosions deepened unease in Lebanese society, coming a day after the apparently similar, and highly sophisticated attack targeting thousands of pagers used by Hezbollah members.

The second wave also deepens concern over the potentially

indiscriminate casualties caused in the attacks, in which hundreds of blasts went off wherever the holder of the pager happened to be — in homes, cars, at grocery stores and in cafes, often with family or bystanders nearby. While the pagers were used by Hezbollah members, there was

no guarantee who was holding the device at the time it was detonated.

Lebanon's Communications Ministry said the walkie-talkie devices that exploded were a discontinued model made by the Japanese firm ICOM. The IC-V82 radios were not supplied by

a recognised agent, were not officially licensed and had not been vetted by the security services, the ministry said.

The firm said that the model was discontinued a decade ago, and it could not determine whether they were counterfeit or shipped from its company.

Hezbollah blamed Israel for the incident. According to CNN, Israel warned US Defence Secretary Lloyd Austin in a call that a military operation was going to take place in Lebanon but gave no details, US officials said. Israel has been for a long time preparing a complex operation to blow up pagers in Lebanon and has in advance established a bogus company to produce communication devices with explosives, the New York Times reported citing its sources. According to them, Israelis stand behind the pager explosions. The newspaper also noted that Israel created a fake company that was pretending to be an international pager manufacturer. Budapest-based BAC Consulting 'was part of an Israeli front'. The newspaper also noted that at least two other front companies were set up to conceal the identities of Israeli intelligence officers involved in the operation.

People close to Hezbollah promised a stunning response after such staggering attacks.



REUTERS

## Germany tightens border controls

Germany has begun new controls at all of its land borders as part of a crackdown on migration, placing restrictions on a wide area of free movement known as the Schengen Zone and stirring anger among its European neighbours

Alongside existing border controls with Austria, Switzerland, the Czech Republic and Poland, Germany will now also have internal border controls with France, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, Belgium and Denmark.

Berlin will have the power to reject people at all land borders, a statement from the Interior Ministry said. The new rules will last for six months initially. The move marks how far Germany has shifted in recent years on the flashpoint issue of migration.

The German government under Angela Merkel welcomed more than one million new arrivals during the migrant crisis of 2015-2016 but is now following other European countries in toughening up rules as it faces a surging far-right opposition.

Announcing the changes, Interior Minister Nancy Faeser said that Germany was 'strengthening internal security through

concrete action' and continuing its 'tough stance against irregular migration'.

She signalled the move was aimed at protecting German citizens from the dangers posed by Islamist terrorism as well as serious cross-border crime.

The move has put the unity of the European bloc to the test and attracted criticism from Germany's neighbours.

Poland's Prime Minister Donald Tusk said that the introduction of tighter controls at land borders was unacceptable for Poland, adding that Warsaw would request urgent talks with all countries affected. Both Greece and Austria have warned that they would not accept migrants rejected by Germany.

Germany's government, led by Chancellor Olaf Scholz, has been spurred into action to tackle uncontrolled immigration after receiving criticism for not doing enough to tackle the issue.

## Europe hit by 'historic flooding'

Central Europe is experiencing its biggest floods in decades, which is expected to cost billions in economic losses

Poland has joined Austria, the Czech Republic and Romania in being hard hit by floods following record rains in the region. Authorities have reported at least 23 deaths. Economic losses due to the latest flooding in central Europe are significant.

This time, the flooding has swamped parts of Austria, the Czech Republic, Poland and Romania and it is expected to affect Slovakia and Hungary too.

Hundreds of millions of Euros' worth of emergency funds have been freed by the Polish, Romanian and Austrian governments and the Czech government is considering altering its 2024 budget due to the flood-related damages.

Polish publicist Arkadiusz Miksa in his author's column for the *Myśl Polska* magazine wrote that the Polish authorities 'did not have funds for water collectors, there is no [money] for dams, but they have found money for the war, as, in fact, for Ukrainians'. The author expressed the hope that 'thousands of Ukrainians, who have been enjoying life for our money for two years, will mas-

sively come to the aid of Poles to clean up as a gesture of solidarity and gratitude'.

Overall the damage to infrastructure, buildings and property and the increase in rescue and relief expenditure, can also trigger a decrease in production and economic activity, according to Grzegorz Drozd, a market analyst at Conotoxia Invest. "These factors usually lead to a negative impact on budgets and trade, manifested as an increase in the deficit and a worsening of the trade balance, due to a decrease in exports and a rise in imports," he noted.

"The flooding that Poland, the Czech Republic and Austria are currently facing will certainly now be very painful and costly for the population and will negatively affect already burdened budgets," Mr. Drózd said.

The floods in Central Europe combined with deadly wildfires in Portugal are joint proof of a 'climate breakdown' that will become the norm unless drastic action is taken, the European Union's head office said.



REUTERS



The fairy tale of a beautiful life in the West is eagerly promoted by cinema showing the audience a polished image of towering skyscrapers, cosy private homes, and luxurious cars. However, if you look at the truthful reviews, you will see vast armies of homeless people in almost every city.

By Yulia Demeshko

### Dreaming of home

Poland's daily newspaper *Gazeta Wyborcza* has recently reported that the number of homeless individuals in Warsaw has significantly increased. In just a few months, the number of people in the Polish capital seeking free hot meals has risen by 100 percent. Thus, queues for food distributed at the central train station are getting longer. Recently, a fight broke out there, resulting in a death. The authors of the newspaper's article have noted that the homeless occupy benches in the centre of Warsaw and at bus stops, and can be seen lying in the metro, and sleeping in parks on the lawns. "There is always a homeless person almost at every stop. I have not seen this in the centre for a long time," commented a Warsaw resident to the publication.

The Polish authorities intend to replace benches in the metro to make them impossible to sleep on — this is how our neighbour tackles the problem of the growing number of homeless people.

*The Guardian notes that nearly one million Europeans are forced to sleep on the streets every night.*

According to Eurostat — the official statistical office of the European Union — 22 percent of EU residents are at risk of poverty. The majority of them are victims of the economic crisis who have lost their income and housing in recent years. Moreover, the number of homeless individuals has increased even in countries like Germany and France, as energy and food have become unaffordable for many citizens in light of recent inflation.

### Street nomads

According to a news portal, the number of homeless people in European countries has significantly increased over the last 10 years, reaching critical levels in some capitals.

*France tops the list, with the total number of rough sleepers estimated at around 333,000 people, followed by the United Kingdom with 309,000 and Germany with 263,000 street persons.*

Instead of addressing the plight of these people in a civilised fashion — providing social housing, assisting with employment, social rehabilitation, or even placing children in nurseries and schools — the Paris authorities cleared the city of homeless people ahead of the Olympic Games. As reported by *The New York Times*, thousands of vagrants were simply removed to other areas, where they found themselves on the streets again — no hot meals, no tents, and no work.

Paris authorities cleared the city of homeless people ahead of the Olympic Games. As reported by *The New York Times*, thousands of vagrants were simply removed to other areas, where they found themselves on the streets again — no hot meals, no tents, and no work.

*Bild* labelled this situation 'the shame of the Olympics', yet, more accurately, it is the shame on those



# The 'golden billion' countries are clearing their cities of the homeless Survival mode



### NUMBER

Poverty is the fourth leading cause of death in the USA. Approximately 30 percent of all homeless individuals in the USA are children and teenagers, 40 percent are women and girls, and 38 percent are disabled people. About 16,000 street people live in Washington, while Los Angeles has more than 88,000 rough sleepers. These numbers account only for those homeless individuals who have sought help from shelters.

EU bureaucrats who flaunt democratic principles at every turn while sacrificing their own citizens.

Despite the fact that homeless individuals constitute a significant portion of European society, they are barred from voting in elections.

Information web portals have pointed out that the European Parliament has been urged to reconsider the necessity of confirming one's residence address as a condition for voting. After all, this issue affects not only 'street citizens' but also those who have fallen into difficult life situations — for instance, if an individual has been evicted for non-payment and is forced to live with friends or relatives. This is a common situation across Europe. Former Belgian Prime Minister Yves Leterme highlighted,

*"At the moment where Europe is putting hundreds of billions of euros on the table to reboot the economy, we think that a tiny little bit of that money should also be used to address homelessness, to make our societies more inclusive."*

Furthermore, the West is spending staggering amounts of money on further fuelling the conflict in Ukraine. Sure enough, if used to deal with the problem of homelessness, all the beggars could have become billionaires!

### What Hollywood won't tell you

In recent years, the number of people experiencing homelessness in the USA has risen dramatically.

*The Wall Street Journal revealed that in 2023, the number of such individuals in the USA reached a record level of 577,000. The recent Annual Homelessness Assessment Report (AHAR) released by the US Housing and Urban Development Office (HUD) listed over 650,000 individuals having no permanent shelter. These are only the official figures!*

According to unofficial estimates, there are around four million rough sleepers in the US today. The authors have emphasised that people are not only fighting for survival but are also facing an increased risk of criminal prosecution.

Total number of homeless people in the country, thousand



It is clear that homelessness is not a new issue for America. The current surge has been driven by the coronavirus pandemic, rising inflation, and drug addiction. The US authorities have decided to solve this problem in a radical way.

*The New York Times has reported that at the end of July this year, the US Supreme Court allowed states to intensify their efforts against homeless people. Following this, a massive campaign to clear the streets was launched in San Francisco and throughout California.*

The plan is simple and focuses on forcibly removing large homeless encampments from urban areas and relocating them further away. In case unfortunate individuals resist, law enforcement officials have the right to arrest them and place in detention facilities.

### Victims of democracy

In Los Angeles, the homeless have set up encampments along the beach while in San Francisco, they simply move from neighbourhood to neighbourhood in fear of police raids. The city mayor commented on the aggressive crackdown on encampments to a local news outlet, "The homeless have only one choice left: accept help or get out."

Speaking of help, authorities in other states have already outlined plans to build shelters for the homeless. However, not all Americans are fond of this idea.

*Thus, in Brooklyn, around 200 protesters gathered outside the construction site of a proposed shelter to voice their concerns. The signs they were holding read: 'Homeless shelters can't really help the homeless. New York City spends billions with no results.'*

"We got thousands of signatures that we gave to the city to stop the homeless shelter from being built, but it had no effect," 19-year-old Tony Yang told *The New York Post*. Clearly, the city's residents fear that the shelter will become not a cosy home for those in need, but merely a large den for drug addicts and alcoholics.

Crime among the homeless is indeed thriving. At the same time, it is worth thinking about the reasons why the people ended up being homeless, why they are forced to live on the streets, and if the government and society are doing enough to address this issue.



By Sofia Arsenyeva

**Near Stolbtsy**

The national poet of Belarus, Yakub Kolas, was known as an avid mushroom picker. He even jokingly referred to himself as a ‘minister of mushroom farming’. There was good reason for this: the writer’s personal record was five hundred porcini mushrooms picked in a single day! Yakub Kolas was captivated not only by the gathering process but by everything else involved — from sorting to cooking. Memoirs remain of how he would, upon returning from the forest, separate young mushrooms from old ones, suitable for drying. By the way, many of the poet’s friends and colleagues received a bag of dried mushrooms as a gift by post. He was a generous soul!

Where did Kolas gather his record forest bounties? It was in the vicinity of Talki in Pukhovichi District, and at the Naroch, where his friends invited him to relax. Furthermore, the poet’s homeland — Stolbtsy District — is regarded as one of the most mushroom-rich areas in the country. Strolling through the forest there, one has a great chance not only to fill a basket with porcini mushrooms, brown birch bolete mushrooms, and butter mushrooms but also to visit all four branches of the Yakub Kolas Museum.



**The best way to relax in September is definitely in the forest — your basket will not remain empty as there are plenty of mushrooms and berries there. Here are a few suggestions on where in Belarus you can enjoy the quiet hunt.**

**In Logoisk District**

A bucket of porcini mushrooms, two orange-cap boletus mushrooms, chanterelles — these are the forest bounties that Belarusians eagerly showed off on social media back in June. There are plenty of mushroom spots across the country. However, according to mycologists, the massif between Logoisk, Zembin, and

Pleshchenitsy is considered to be one of the best areas abundant in mushrooms.

They say you can find all mushrooms at the same time there. In addition to common mushrooms, there are also chanterelles, butter mushrooms, honey mushrooms, russules, and more. Moreover, the place is conveniently accessible — just a dozen kilometres away from the capital.



Going on a quiet hunt with the whole family

**By Osipovichi reservoir**

In mid-September, fans of eco-friendly recreation and author songs gather in the vicinity of the *Berezka* recreation centre. This year, it has already been the third time that the themed festival *Quiet Hunt* has taken place. The organisers provided not only plenty of music but also a large mushroom competition, where mushroom enthusiasts competed in their skills and luck. The judge was a mycologist and author of books on mushrooms, Aleksandr Moroz. After the championship, a masterclass delivered by the professional took place. For the bravest participants, an active entertainment option was prepared — a forest extreme trail with crossings over swamps, a river crossing via a suspension bridge, as well as mushroom picking.



Autumn harvests are delightful

**At Olmany swamps**

The largest complex of raised, transitional, and lowland bogs in Europe has been preserved in its pristine form to this day in the south of Belarus near the village of Olmany. Cranberries for the locals are not just a tasty and healthy berry, but also a means of good income. The ‘red gold’ is always in demand, especially the wild-growing variety. There are no restrictions on the quantity or weight of the berries picked: they are all yours.

However, people come to Olmany not only to work but also for entertainment. The marshes are home to 687 species of plants, 151 species of birds, and 26 species of mammals. The eco-trail, stretching 1.5 kilometres, invites visitors to take a stroll, at the end of which travellers are greeted by a stunning surprise — Lake Bolshoye Zasominoye. There, one can see the fresh-water turtle, the lesser spotted eagle, the black stork, and other rare species included in the Red Data Book. When heading to the marshes, it is important to remember to have your passport with you.



Cranberries can be picked even in winter

**In Yelnya marshes**

One hundred and eighteen picturesque lakes, thousands of cranes, and endless marshes carpeted with a red blanket of cranberries — this is something everyone should see. The largest raised bog is located in Vitebsk Region. The peak tourist season is September. Visitors come to enjoy the magnificent views, wander around the soft springy ground, capture incredible shots of cranes flying south, and stock up on berries for the winter. Cranberries in Yelnya are usually large and juicy, tempting to taste.

By the way, it is these berries that are used for the production of one of the most popular gastronomic souvenirs in Belarus — cranberries in powdered sugar.



Dishes made of forest gifts are a particular pride of Belarusian national cuisine



Yelnya Landscape Reserve is more than nine thousand years old

**IMPORTANT**

Wild fruits can be collected almost everywhere, except in forest areas where there are restrictions on such activities — it is forbidden in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Berries can be picked by hand or with the help of special tools, with the prongs at least fifty millimetres apart. As for mushroom picking, the main rule is not to disturb the forest floor.



What a rush! What is happening now around Dinamo Minsk matches in the KHL Championship cannot be called anything but an incredible boom. With the commissioning of Minsk Arena, full houses are not uncommon here and the 'Bisons' have never complained about the lack of attention from fans. However, the beginning of this season is breaking all imaginable records — it is a real hockey fever!

# Hockey fever



**Dmitri Baskov, member of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus,**

*"People and their interest are the main indicator of how our hockey is developing today. It is not humble, but we need to talk about it — the interest in our hockey is only increasing. Every year we discuss new series of sold-out events in the playoffs of the President's Cup, the Ruslan Salei Cup final in Vitebsk with its crazy atmosphere. The hockey audience on social networks is growing faster than that of other sports, let alone Dinamo Minsk, which has long been an example for all sports. It is necessary to learn how Dinamo organises and holds matches today. The fact that 15,000 tickets for the first match of the KHL season were sold in 12 hours is a visible result of how the club works and how our fans treat it."*



By Sergei Kanashits

Getting to Minsk Arena is becoming a problem — tickets for Dinamo HC matches are selling like hot cakes

Tickets for the Dinamo Minsk's first home match against Amur in the KHL Championship, which ended with a 3:0 victory for the Minsk players, were snapped up in less than a day, which is the best indicator of the public love and popularity. During the second home match of the 'Bisons' with Severstal Cherepovets, which ended 3:1 in favour of the 'Bisons', Minsk Arena was filled to capacity again, with all tickets sold out a week ago.

Everyone praises the incredible atmosphere of Minsk matches, as well as of the city and the country as a whole. Word of mouth has widely spread the information that such festive entourage in the KHL cannot be found anywhere else. Hockey players from the USA or Canada, who played at least one season in Minsk, remain completely delighted and the legionnaires do not skimp on kind, sincere words. Today, the matches of Dinamo Minsk are not only a sporting competition but also a



Match with Amur Khabarovsk ended with a score of 3:0 in favour of the capital club

colourful show of the highest level and intensity, marked as '0+'. Indeed, people come with families, noisy companies, arrange romantic dates and business meetings — the arena welcomes everyone into its wide and warm embrace with equal cordiality. The spectacular pre-match show in the opening game of the season still gives you goosebumps, it was prepared in a first-rate manner and with heart! The upcoming match will also have a flair — retro style with the 1990s disco theme. Dinamo invites the audience to the matches and offers to put on the brightest outfits and rock out to the groovy hits of those times. By the way, these rules also apply to hockey players — everyone is in the same boat.

The Dinamo marketing department does not get tired of generating fresh ideas and fueling interest in the team. A lot of surprises and vibrant newsworthy events are in store for the fans. Right now, the KHL is



Two hockey players from Belarus — goaltender Konstantin Shostak and forward Aleksandr Skorenov — play for Severstal

working on holding a winter classic with the participation of Dinamo Minsk in Tashkent, while the 'Bisons' are actively working on organising a match dedicated to Ruslan Salei. On November 2nd, the legend of Belarusian hockey could turn 50 years old, and on November 4th, the match against Vityaz will be dedicated to the memory of the outstanding hockey player. They also plan to celebrate significant club records

on a grand scale, a great many of which are expected this season. The 1000th match of Dinamo in the KHL, for example. The date is already known — November 22nd. On this day, Minsk players will fight with their Moscow teammates and become the 12th KHL team to reach this grandmaster mark. One can only imagine what a bright and unforgettable performance they will deliver on this occasion.

There will also be personal holidays. Dmitry Kvartalnov will play his 100th match at the helm of Dinamo on November 15th. Soon he can beat Marek Šýkora with 119 games and take second place in the number of matches as the Dinamo head coach. Dmitry Vyacheslavovich [Kvartalnov] also has every chance to become the first in terms of winning percentage in club history. In addition, we are waiting for Kvartalnov's 900th match in the KHL — he has been leading in this nomination for a long time and by a wide margin. The Belarusian coach is also the most winning coach in the league! According to the results of the current championship, Andrei Stas can beat Ilya Shynkevich in terms of the number of matches for Dinamo, while Vadim Shipachyov is on the verge of two historical achievements. The home match against Severstal will bring the striker one step closer to the absolute record for the number of matches in the KHL. At the moment, Shipachyov has 992 games, which is 10 less than Sergei Mozyakin, who finished his career. Also, the Dinamo striker has another historical achievement well under way — he has 922 effective points scored in those matches, against Mozyakin's 929.

## ARENA

### Shoulder to shoulder

A joint meeting of the boards of Belarus' and Russia's Ministries of Sports has been held at the National Olympic Committee headquarters in Minsk. At the opening ceremony, Belarus' Sports Minister Sergei Kovalchuk thanked the Russian side for organising two major events this year — the BRICS Games in Kazan and the *Children of Asia* Games in Yakutsk. Kovalchuk also spoke about the need to jointly organise a multisport tournament with the participation of representatives of friendly countries. Russia's Minister of Sports Mikhail Degtyarev noted that Minsk is the centre of attraction for major sporting events, including the 2nd CIS Games that took place with great success last year. He highlighted

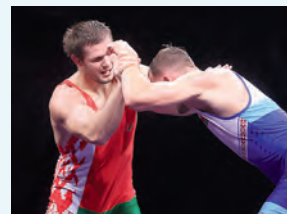


an unprecedented level of trust between our countries in all spheres, and that the number of competitions held in an open format will expand.

### In memory of the legend

The 53rd International Freestyle Wrestling Tournament in memory of three-time Olympic champion Aleksandr Medved has been held in Minsk's Sports Palace. Freestyle wrestlers from Belarus, Russia, Azerbaijan, Uzbekistan, Bahrain, Kyrgyzstan, Tajikistan, Kazakh-

stan, Moldova, Greece and Bulgaria took part in traditional competitions. The participants of the competition contended for medals in ten weight categories, where Belarus' athletes won ten awards — two gold, one silver and seven bronze medals. The winners of the Medved memorial tournament were Aryan Tsiutryn (up to 61 kg) and Aliaksandr Hushtyn (up to 97 kg), while Uladzislau Kazlou climbed onto the second step of the podium in the weight up to 97 kg.





## Photo of the week



**Polina Lugovtsova — a student of the Vitebsk State Olympic Reserve School — at the opening of the roller ski track in Vitebsk**

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**September 26th** is World Maritime Day. About 70 percent of our planet is covered with water. The purpose of this day is to draw the attention of the

international community to the irreparable damage to the seas and oceans caused by overfishing, pollution of reservoirs and global warming, as well as to the urgent problems of preserving biological, natural and recreational resources of the seas for future generations.

**On September 27th, 1801**, the world's first bicycle was presented to Tsar Alexander I. A two-wheeled bicycle was invented by Yefim Artamonov, a native of Prikamyje Region. The bike was made of iron, it looked like a two-wheeled trolley with a pedal drive and a steering wheel, and the front wheel was almost three times larger than the rear wheel. The robust design of the bike enabled the master to make a journey on it from the Urals to St. Petersburg for the coronation of Alexander I.



**September 27th** is World Tourism Day. The holiday is aimed at promoting tourism, highlighting its contribution to the economy of the world community, and

developing ties between the peoples of different countries. International tourism fosters better understanding between nations, increases awareness of the rich heritage of various civilisations and values of different cultures, thereby contributing to the consolidation of peace on the planet.



**On September 28th, 2009**, the Belarusian ritual and festive event — *Kalyady Tsars (Christmas Kings)* — was included in the UNESCO's List of

Intangible Cultural Heritage in Need of Urgent Safeguarding. During the celebration, the procession of 'kings' visits peasants' houses and plays out the drama *Tsar Maximilian* on the Generous Evening, on January 13th-14th.

**September 28th** marks International Day for Universal Access to Information. Universal access to information is a cornerstone of healthy and inclusive knowledge-based societies. In this case, only the law acts as an unconditional limiter.



**On September 29th, 1529**, the First Statute of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — a code of feudal law, a monument to Belarusian writing, language and legal thought — was approved and put into effect. It is believed

that Francysk Skaryna took part in the creation and editing of the Statute. It is written in Belarusian. It was first printed in the Belarusian language in Latin alphabet in 1841 in Poznan, and in Cyrillic in 1854 in Moscow.



**September 29th** is Machine Builders Day in the Republic of Belarus. Machine building has been the leading sector of the country's

economy for several decades. Belarus today is one of the main suppliers of tractors, machine tools and other special equipment not only to the post-Soviet countries, but also to a number of other states. Products by MAZ, BELAZ, Atlant, Gomselmash, Minsk Tractor Works and Minsk Motor Plant, Mogilev Elevator Engineering Plant and other industry enterprises are known far beyond the borders of our republic.

**On September 29th, 1650**, the world's first marriage agency was opened in London. Its founder was an Englishman, Henry Robinson. Over the next 350 years, millions of single people became successful clients of marriage agencies around the world.



**September 30th** is International Translation Day. Professional translation as a craft and art plays a significant role in bringing nations



together, facilitating dialogue, mutual understanding and co-operation, contributing to development and strengthening world peace and security. Saint Jerome of Stridon — one of the four fathers of the Latin Church, a writer, historian, and translator — is considered the patron saint of translators. He settled down in Bethlehem, where he for many years worked on the translation of the Bible, the Old and New Testaments, into Latin.



**September 30th, 1941** marks the beginning of the Battle of Moscow during the Great Patriotic War. The capture of Moscow

and its complete destruction along with the population was the main strategic goal for German Nazi troops in the autumn of 1941. As a result of the stubborn resistance of the Soviet troops in November 1941, the German attack was stopped. On December 5th, Soviet troops went over to the offensive and defeated the Germany's Army Group Centre troops. That was the first major defeat of the Nazi German army in the Second World War, which dispelled the myth of its invincibility.