



The country celebrated the main holiday of Belarusian statehood: Independence Day of the Republic of Belarus

2



8th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia was held in Minsk, Moscow and the Moscow Region

4

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 26 (888) ● THURSDAY, JULY 8, 2021 ● WWW.SB.BY



Anton Stepanishchev

At 'The Native Land' memorial sign in the centre of Senno in honour of Matrena Markevich — the author of the pattern taken as the basis for the decoration on the Belarusian flag

National treasure

Sovereign Belarus is a young country on the political map, yet boasting its own rich history, culture and folk traditions dating back to ancient times. These have largely determined our mentality and the spiritual code of the nation. The striving for happiness, freedom and a better life through hard work, for which our ancestors have always stood out, is reflected in the main symbols of the country. The Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic became one of the first countries in the world to use the national ornament as an element of the state flag. → 6



Our main holiday



On July 2nd, the Palace of the Republic hosted a traditional official meeting. The Head of State spoke not only of festive issues but also voiced some sensational facts. As it turned out, a large-scale anti-terrorist campaign was completed in Belarus on that day.

Noting the significance of Independence Day, the President stressed that this sacred day symbolises primarily people's unity, which helped Belarusians survive the strongest blow of fate, survive as a nation during the Great Patriotic War and win. "I will say one thing to those who dream about revenge, those who thirst to take away and divide Belarus. I thank you for encouraging us to do what we were supposed to do a long time ago in the name of justice and in the name of the memory of the war victims. We will close the chapter in the matter of historical truth and responsibility for crimes against humanity," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

According to the President, facts are already available about the involvement of some people — living in the western countries — into the genocide of Belarusians.

The Head of State recalled that many Belarusian heroes died during the Great Patriotic War in exchange for freedom and life — including of those of the European countries. Over 600,000 Soviet soldiers fell in Poland alone back then.

"It seems everything has been forgotten. As if we and our neighbours had been talking different languages for a long time — not only from the linguistic point of view. Well, we'll have to switch to the common language of international law that everyone understands. The criminal case into the genocide of the Belarusian people will remove all the masks and will reveal new facts to the world — with names, archival photo and video documents."

"We've requested their extradition to the land where they committed their crimes. You can guess that nobody is going to extradite them. This is also a fact," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

According to the President, terrorist sleeper cells — so-called self-defence formations — have been detected in Belarus.

"These cells intended to overthrow the government at a specified date. They don't know what date yet: our nation

needs to be led up to it," Aleksandr Lukashenko added.

Lithuania, Poland, the USA, Ukraine and Germany acted as co-ordinators. A Telegram channel — 'Belarus' Self-Defence Formations' — was created, with 2,500 subscribers.

As the President said, those 'self-defence formations' also tried to blow up a communications node of the Russian Navy in the Belarusian town of Vileika. An incident in this area was reported by mass media recently but it was unclear what had happened. Aleksandr Lukashenko discussed the event during the latest phone conversation with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin. "We also discussed this problem most seriously. You understand the result of this discussion," Aleksandr Lukashenko added. "All the participants of the terrorist attack, including those who did it and those who organised it, were found and arrested within 48 hours."

The President also publicly spoke about an attempted murder of the famous Belarusian journalist, Grigory Azaryonok.



"It happened on the night of July 1st. The goal was — I'm citing — to immobilise, capture, throw him into a car trunk and take him deep into the woods where they planned to cut off his tongue. They wanted him to do it himself with scissors. If he didn't do it, there was someone who had been hired to do it in exchange for \$10,000 (the money had been transferred). That person had to film it on camera and upload it to the Internet," Aleksandr Lukashenko noted.

Belarus celebrated its main holiday — Independence Day — with many commemorative events held countrywide

According to the President, this crime was a warning: look, we will cut up all of you, we will at least cut off your tongues to silence you. "If that failed, they intended to kill the reporter. A pistol had been brought from Ukraine and stashed in the Gomel Region just like other devices (thermal cameras and the rest), which were used in an attempt to blow up the Vileika station used by Russia to communicate with the fleet in the Atlantic," the Head of State noted. "All the perpetrators have been detected, the stashes have been found. The operation continued for a long time."

Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned Grigory Azaryonok's courage. "They tried to capture or kill him three times. The security agencies decided to involve the reporter in the operation in order to catch the criminals in the act."

The President of Belarus also announced that he had ordered the State Border Committee to completely close off the border with Ukraine.

"I am astounded by the amount of

there to honour the memory of the soldier-liberators and ordinary people who gave us life, freedom and independence. Aleksandr Lukashenko laid a wreath at the foot of the famous memorial and stressed,

"This is a sacred place for all Belarusians. Here, in the middle of the last century, the fate of Belarus was decided as battles were raging for the capital of our Motherland... The 'Bagration' liberation operation showed that, in the art of winning, the Soviet army surpassed their enemy. The day when Minsk was liberated became a harbinger of our Victory — our whole Victory — in 1945."

Aleksandr Lukashenko had a warm conversation with students, cadets of the Military Academy and the Academy of the Ministry of Internal Affairs, young managers and representatives of public organisations who were present at the event.

Belarusian mountaineers were also among the guests. On that day, the



BELTA

participants of the Everest expedition presented the President of Belarus with the State Flag and a copy of the Victory Banner which they flew atop the world. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that he is proud of the team of mountaineers and they should be nominated for state awards.

Steps of memory

The Mound of Glory was laid on September 30th, 1966, with the soil coming from the hero-cities of the Soviet Union and other places that were glorified by labour and military feats. At that time, everyone considered it an honour to bring a handful of soil to create a monument. The memorial was opened in 1969.

The height of the mound is 35 metres. Four titanium-covered obelisk-bayonets with a height of 35.6 metres are placed on the top — in honour of the feat of the soldiers of the 1st, 2nd, 3rd Belarusian and 1st Baltic fronts who participated in the 'Bagration' operation. Two staircases of 241 steps each lead to the observation platform on top of the mound.

weapons being smuggled from Ukraine to Belarus. I mentioned it last year. Many didn't believe me. This is why I've instructed the border guard to fully close off the border with Ukraine," Aleksandr Lukashenko said, adding that only civilians will be able to enter Belarus.

On July 3rd, the Mound of Glory Memorial Complex became the centre of the main celebrations. On Saturday morning, the President went

CONGRATULATIONS

On behalf of Belarusian people and himself, Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko has sent greetings to the American people as the country celebrates Independence Day

"Our nations know very well the real price of their sovereignty, they fought for it together during the world wars of the last century and are ready to defend their independence in the name of peace, stability and a bright future for their children," the message reads.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, "Today Belarus and the United States are running a number of landmark projects — from economic to humanitarian ones — that can benefit and enrich both countries. I am convinced that multifaceted ties between businesses and ordinary citizens can hold out against political fluctuations and will become a guarantee of trust-based and respectful relations."

Based on Presidential press service

On the evening of July 3rd, the President visited the National Academic Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre. This theatre is considered one of the best in the world in terms of stage quality and sound. Its interiors impress everyone, even the most capricious theatre-lovers.

Representatives of the artistic intelligentsia and patriots of the country gathered in the theatre. *The Bolshoi!* [Big!] gala concert — which the Head of State watched from the theatre's box — was a bright and impressive divertissement performance uniting the best fragments from the most famous classical works. It was a wonderful gift to the audience on the occasion of the holiday.

The festive programme was based on the works without which any, even the

most extensive cultural luggage, remains incomplete. Pieces of Verdi, Puccini, Bizet, Gounod, Tchaikovsky, Prokofiev, Khachaturian were performed.

The second part of the festive evening — the speech of the President — was no less expressive. The Head of State recalled the events of last year when some artistic people were confused and could not understand what was really happening in the country.

The Head of State stressed, "We've approached the red line. If we cross it, we will lose the country... I'll be the first, and you'll be next — as the intelligentsia which should lead the people — guilty of wasting our country away. Therefore, we must unite and keep the country for those who will come after you in art and after

me in politics. We must pass something to our children. At least let's not destroy what we have created for the past quarter of a century... If you think that if we destroy the country and it makes part of, for example, Poland and you will have big roles and be recognised there, you are mistaken. Talk to those who went there and came back. This is your land and you must save it. This is your stage, your theatre."

The President also spoke about one of the fugitive politicians: the former head of the Yanka Kupala National Academic Theatre, "He was on his knees in front of me asking me to appoint him. However, I knew all his flaws. I felt sorry for him, appointed him director — and he violated all our agreements. He is now messing up there, outside the country. We will survive this. But it is wrong!"

Aleksandr Lukashenko also asked the Bolshoi Theatre artistes to be 'real people', "We have our state. This state has its own symbols. They were adopted by the overwhelming majority of the people at a referendum — not by me. It took place in a referendum back when I did not have such power, when the Supreme Council was ruling in the country. You can't say that it was undemocratic. So we must respect the will of the people, if we are part of these people."

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



With pride for our country

Minsk has hosted a national ball for university graduates and Aleksandr Lukashenko offered his good wishes to the youth

Young people are preparing for this graduation ball with trepidation. Young men put strict formal costumes on, while girls wear beautiful floor-length dresses. Following a good tradition, the Head of State personally congratulated the graduates of Belarusian universities, addressing them with warm words, "I wish you to reach the next level as soon as possible — to reach professional excellence in your jobs. I wish you to reach a new stage of life where your real status will be determined not by the number of subscribers and likes but by the respect of people, including your future colleagues."

**By Yevgeny Kononovich,
Dmitry Umpirovich**

Generation of the future

It is a great honour to receive an invitation to this ball and only the best of the best are invited — those who, thanks to their hard work and dedication, have achieved outstanding results in their studies. Of course, young people's emotions were off the scale, many were excited but, despite this, the night was breath-taking.

This year, the national ball for university graduates brought together about 230 of the most successful graduates from all over the country. Among its guests were also the university rectors and best lecturers.

In his address to the youth, Aleksandr Lukashenko said, "Looking today at you — beautiful, young and already successful — I feel proud for Belarus. I feel proud for those who have created the independent country where our children get a decent education, and the best of the best mark their first successes at such a high level. There are no 'come-and-go' people in this hall today. I'm proud of your parents who've brought up wonderful children, of teachers and lecturers who've helped you find yourselves. And, of course, I

am proud of every one of you."

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that there are thoughts that he, as President, should convey to young people right now,

"We do not choose the time. It is the time that chooses us. Every generation has its own challenges. They shape the character of every



single person and of the whole nation. There are some things you can rely on. You are a new generation of the spiritually strong nation which has preserved its national identity not having its own state for centuries. Just think about what I have just said."



Strong motivation

The President wished the young people to be more careful with their judgments in this difficult period for the country, "So that — years later — you don't feel shame for the statements and reposts. You will forget them but the Internet remembers everything. You won't have time to delete everything like some are doing now. This is why you shouldn't be hasty so as not to feel pain and shame for meaningless years as the classic put it. May the virtual portrait you've created always demonstrate that even at a young age you thought the right way, the statesmanlike way. As befits true citizens of their country.

Everything will work out!

The President advised young people not to rush to leave their country and flee to the land of milk and honey which are supposedly the happiest places. "It is easier to go there than to come back," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

Before the ball began, the Head of State completed a pleasant mission — presenting letters of commendation from the Belarusian President to the best teachers and graduates.

After the awards ceremony, young men and girls joined the President to perform another symbolic action. Together, as a sign of the unity of generations, with the help of a special keyboard instrument, they composed a chord of the song that opened the national ball. The hall of solemn ceremonies of the Palace of Independence was filled with the melody of Vasily Rainchik's *Flourish, Belarus*.



Minsk—Moscow: points of common growth

New partnership agreements, large-scale contracts, work on mutually beneficial ways and forms of bilateral co-operation were in focus at last week's three-day 8th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia. Video-conferencing channels united its participants in Minsk, Moscow and the Moscow Region, while thousands of points of interregional interaction embraced all corners of Belarus and Russia. The online format for this Union State event was chosen exclusively due to the epidemiological situation, but such form of interaction seemed natural on this occasion since the forum's topic was the *Sci-Tech Co-operation of Russia and Belarus in the Era of Digitalisation*.



Youth Online: Digital Environment of the Future section at work

The fourth section — *Law and Digitalisation in the Union State: Promising Avenues* — focused on the future and technologies that have already gained a strong foothold in our life. Meanwhile, the fifth section — *Youth Online: Digital Environment of the Future* — centred round the opportunities that are opening up for the modern generation in the era of digitalisation. Its experts shared their expe-



Mutually beneficial contracts signed as part of the forum

Business environment

The forum opened with the work of specialised sections and the first of them brought together the experts who discussed how to develop bilateral co-operation in the field of science and education in times of 'big challenges' and digital technologies.

The second section — *The Role of Digitalisation in the Formation of a Single Sci-Tech Space of the Union State* — was preceded by an exhibition of innovative developments, while the third focused on the interaction of states in the Union State programmes and sci-tech projects under the conditions of digitalisation.

Anton Stepanishchev



The National Library of Belarus welcomes participants of the forum

rience of using new technologies in educational activities.

The second day of the forum had two major events: Minsk's President-Hotel hosted a meeting of the Interparliamentary Commission of the Federation Council and the Council of the Republic, while the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry welcomed the Council of Business Co-operation of the chambers of commerce and industry of Belarus and Russia, where the topic of discussion was *The Economy of the Union State. Lessons of the Pandemic and Prospects of Integration Development*.

Plenary session

The plenary session was the culmination of the 8th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia — as is traditional. This session and the telephone conversation between the two states' presidents that preceded it are closely interrelated, since the agenda of the dialogue both at the highest level and at the executive level is identical, including industrial co-operation, restoration of transport links, joint humanitarian programmes and others. Logically, the burning topic of countering external pressure is the focus of attention. Sanctions are an unpleasant thing but are not so effective when being opposed by the joint efforts of the allies. Aleksandr Lukashenko summed up the telephone conversation with Vladimir Putin,

"The conclusion we arrived at is the following: we will not just withstand the attacks undertaken against our states. We will use this situation (the way the Russian Federation did when sanctions were introduced against it) to strengthen economic co-operation and make our states absolutely independent, and not only from an economic point of view."

A mutually beneficial dialogue

The Head of State noted that Belarus maintains close contacts with more than 70 regions of Russia,

"This and the very work of the forums of regions show that there is no other large-scale integration platform in the Eurasian space where Belarus-Russia co-operation would develop so successfully."

The fruits of many years of joint work are quite real and are confirmed by concrete figures: over 7 years, more than 370 co-operation agreements and contracts worth almost \$3bn have been signed.

Disturbing external background

Unfortunately, Belarusian-Russian co-operation takes place against the background of growing tension in the international arena. Clearly, destructive tendencies are still prevailing here. Aleksandr Lukashenko called the pandemic a serious test of strength and the number one problem. Among the most dangerous geopolitical challenges, he noted that the leading states of the West have relied on force.

The President emphasised that the West is aimed at curbing development, disrupting integration projects and changing the course of the Belarusian state. Therefore, strengthening unity and expanding co-operation are of particular importance.

Digital union

The recent Forum of Regions was dedicated to the issues of sci-

tech co-operation in the context of digitalisation. The President is convinced that all future changes should be focused on the development of real industries and improving people's lives. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted,

"The time has come to work out a practice-oriented joint digital agenda. Our interaction in this sphere is lagging behind. We have learned many things in Russia and Belarus, but the time has come to prepare a joint agenda."

The Union State programmes should be a good help for the implementation of such an agenda. Most of them make it possible to create and replicate high-tech materials and production.

Development strategy

Strategically, the President of Belarus proposes to stipulate the prospects of the Union of Belarus and Russia in a separate document, "The implementation of priority areas and top-priority tasks concerning the development of the Union State of Belarus and Russia — which we traditionally approve for a period of four years — will be finished in 2022. I suggest considering the possibility of preparing a long-term strategy of integration of the Union State of Belarus and Russia, for instance, till 2030. The strategy should be filled with concrete projects taking into account key priorities and vectors of development."

The Head of State touched

upon the topic of creating and using artificial intelligence, "In the last two or three years, dozens of companies working in this field have been rapidly developing in the Belarusian Hi-Tech Park. Many IT products of theirs could be used in Russia, including in the regions."

However, there is another side to the problem of artificial intelligence, as Aleksandr Lukashenko pointed out,

"There are fears that artificial intelligence can become an instrument of manipulation and the key weapon of hybrid wars. The universal nature of digital technologies, the lack of a geographical anchor and a broad accessibility raise the matter of the digital sovereignty of countries and their information independence. As a result, we have another broad field for co-operation where we should step up joint efforts — cyber security."

Friends, allies, brothers

Vladimir Putin's speech was also in tune with the speech of Aleksandr Lukashenko. It is no coincidence that the two heads of state have met quite often lately, communicating by phone or video. It is obvious that the presidents are conducting a continuous dialogue on a variety of important topics and their views on them are not just similar but, in most cases, completely identical.

The heads of state also look at the most pressing issue — se-

curity — from a common position. Vladimir Putin spoke of the relations between our countries and peoples, "Belarus is not just a good neighbour for us but primarily our closest ally. Our relations are based on the principles of mutual respect, support and consideration of each other's interests... We will continue providing our fraternal Belarusian people with comprehensive support in the current rather challenging domestic political situation in Belarus, amid the ongoing political and sanctions pressure and persistent attempts to rock the boat from overseas."

Results

- The total amount of contracts signed in the real sector of the economy reached approximately \$800m.
- Agreements were signed between the chambers of commerce and industry of the two countries.
- The Business Co-operation Council has been established.
- A co-operation agreement was signed by the Youth Council of the National Assembly of the Republic of Belarus and the Chamber of Young Legislators of the Federation Council of Russia.
- About 50 agreements were signed between the governments of Belarus and Russia on co-operation, as well agreements on co-operation of the regions.

Based on materials of belta.by and sb.by

Collection of projects

It's simply enough to look around to see how many new and useful things have emerged thanks to the friendship of Belarus and Russia — not only in the capitals but also in remote corners

By Valentina Stepanova

No rust in agriculture

Belarusian producers have firmly established themselves in the Bryansk Region: Bryanskselemash makes equipment for harvesting grain and feed, while Amkodor-Bryansk manufactures municipal, road, construction, agricultural and special machinery.

Bryanskselemash produces ultra-modern vehicles under the 'Desna Polesie' brand. These are equipped with remote online monitoring systems and parametric control. As if by magic, it's possible to determine where the combine is located, at what speed and where it is moving. The vehicles' 'filling' provides information on the fuel level, operating time, engine speed and temperature, as well as the cleaned area.

Gardens to bloom in Primorye

Farmers of the Primorsky Krai always support experimentation. This time, they decided to grow Belarusian potatoes — despite the monsoon climate. Six varieties of seeds, with original names — 'Manifest', 'Pershatsvet', 'Ovation', 'Skarb', 'Nara', 'Breeze' and 'Lel' — were sent there by Belarus.

The tests are being conducted at the Scientific Centre of Agrobiotechnologies of the Far East, in the village of Timiryazevsky. The most promising samples



Through forests, fields and rivers

Karelia's impenetrable forests are a challenge for a new Amkodor harvester. Recently, field tests were conducted there to confirm: the AMKODOR FH308 vehicle — developed specially for Russia's logging industry — is ready for operation.

The Russian authorities decided that there's never too much good equipment and have issued a preferential loan to the company for its development.

Amkodor-Onega has many plans. A large-scale production facility has been launched in Karelia. There will be a new plant for the production of logging machinery and local residents will have more new jobs.



will later be grown by local farmers.

This is not the only example. Last year, Belarusian 'Volma' soy was planted on an area of 1,500 hectares and further plans envisage planting an orchard using the Belarusian technology.

Water balance

It is not for nothing that they say that Belarusians are strong in solving everyday issues. Thanks to our know-how, residents of several Russian regions drink

clean water. Two Belarusian companies — Polymerconstruction and PAK Plant — supply drainage and water supply systems and build clarification stations. They have already realised more than 2,000 projects in Russia and are now being invited to the Kurgan Region and Kalmykia to solve drinking water related problems there.

Another Belarusian company, Teplosila, helps save on housing and communal



services. It equips Russian schools and kindergartens with energy-saving thermal equipment, enabling them to save money and enhancing the quality of services. As a result, all sides are happy: communal service workers, builders and consumers.

BELAZ helps crush granite

If there are not enough qualified personnel, then it's better to train them domestically — believes the largest Belarusian manufacturer of dump trucks. It is not for nothing that the company has launched the training of personnel in Russia.

The BELAZ Training Centre will be opened at the St. Petersburg Mining University to teach students the most advanced technologies. Moreover, they will study the machinery in practice. To train brains, a dynamic simulator, training stands and laboratories will be available. Moreover, robotic complexes could be managed in real time and virtual reality technologies will also be used.

Two classrooms — 'Hydraulics. Hydromechanics' and 'Car Operation' — are already successfully operating at the MISIS National University in Moscow. All the newest trends are used there.

An amazing electric bus

Blue vehicles with the inscription 'This is an electric bus' have serviced Moscow roads for several years already. In fact, the difference from a usual bus is clearly visible: such electric versions do not shake, produce no noise and do not harm the environment. Moreover, unlike trolleybuses, they are not tied to wire lines.

In turn, Kazan streets are now home to the bright yellow 'brothers' of the capital's electric buses — also produced by MAZ. Recently, the manufacture of Russian-Belarusian trolleybuses was launched in Ufa. They are designed in Minsk and produced in Bashkiria. It's planned that hundreds of new vehicles will come off an assembly line every year.

The northern capital is also serviced by environmentally friendly transport: St. Petersburg has bought more than fifty Minsk trolleybuses. They are distinguished by a large capacity and a European level of comfort, with the most modern devices installed inside.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Citizens of 73 countries have the opportunity to come to Belarus without a visa for vaccination against COVID-19



The possibility of a visa-free visit to Belarus is provided from July 15th, 2021, to citizens of 73 countries for up to five days for vaccination against COVID-19. This is provided for by Decree № 251, which was signed by President Aleksandr Lukashenko. The vaccination of foreign citizens from COVID-19 is planned to be carried out on a paid basis in medical organisations determined by the Healthcare Ministry. The Council of Ministers will establish the procedure for the functioning of the information system for collecting, processing and recording applications of foreigners for vaccination and the procedure for their visit to Belarus. The established procedure for the vaccination of foreigners will be applied to all foreign citizens, including those who have the right to visa-free entry to Belarus on other grounds.

Belarus suspends participation in EU's Eastern Partnership initiative

"Belarus is launching the procedure to suspend the readmission agreement with the EU. We cannot fulfil our obligations under this agreement under the conditions of the sanctions and restric-



tions imposed by the European Union. It is with deep regret that we announce that the forced suspension of the agreement will have a negative impact on co-operation with the European Union in the fight against illegal migration and organised crime," said the Foreign Ministry.

The Ministry added that the Permanent Representative of Belarus to the EU has been recalled to Minsk for consultations. The Head of the EU Delegation to the Republic of Belarus, Dirk Schuebel, was also invited to leave for Brussels for consultations in order to convey to his leadership the position of the Belarusian side on the unacceptability of pressure and sanctions.

Belarus hosts IAEA mission

The International Physical Protection Advisory Service (IPPAS) mission of the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) is working in Belarus. The mission focuses on the national regime for ensuring the physical security of nuclear material and nuclear installations, the physical protection system of the nuclear installation, the system for ensuring the physical protection of nuclear material during its transportation, as well as information and computer security.



The IPPAS mission — as well as other assessment missions and partnership reviews — is carried out on a voluntary basis and at the invitation of Belarus. The Head of the IPPAS mission in Belarus is the US representative, Joseph Sandoval. The team also includes experts from the IAEA, the UK, France, Switzerland, Russia, Bulgaria and Ukraine.

The IPPAS mission will end on July 9th, 2021.

Nationwide prayer 'For Belarus' held on Independence Day

Thousands of people across the country came to Orthodox and Catholic churches, as well as mosques and synagogues to join the united all-Belarusian prayer 'For Belarus'.

The prayer 'For Belarus' is already a tradition. It has been taking place since the beginning of the century in many Belarusian churches, and the events of the last year prompted all believers to pray more intensely.

Before the service in the Holy Spirit Cathedral, Metropolitan of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus Veniamin, noted, "Today we remember with gratitude



the day of the liberation of the capital of Belarus in 1944 and pray for those who gave their lives for the liberation of our Fatherland — not only Belarus, but also in other countries of the former Soviet Union."

Catholics, Muslims and Jews joined the nationwide prayer 'For Belarus'.



The fate of the nation in one pattern

How an ornament — embroidered by a Belarusian peasant woman — became a national treasure

Sovereign Belarus is a young country on the political map, yet boasting its own rich history, culture and folk traditions dating back to ancient times. These have largely determined our mentality and the spiritual code of the nation. The striving for happiness, freedom and a better life through hard work, for which our ancestors have always stood out, is reflected in the main symbols of the country. The Belarusian Soviet Socialist Republic became one of the first countries in the world to use the national ornament as an element of the state flag.

By Andrei Zakharov

Sacred meaning

In 1951, an authoritative art historian, Professor Mikhail Katser, was tasked by the President of the Academy of Sciences to find a symbolic detail for the new flag of the BSSR that could underline the identity and mentality of the Belarusian people. At that time, Mikhail Katser headed the Ethnography and Folklore Faculty of the Academy of Sciences. In the archives he found a rushnik belonging to his sister Matrena, obtained during one of their ethnographic expeditions. The scientific community decided that the pattern on it — like no other — is close to the worldview of the Belarusians. The artist Mikhail Gusev adapted the ornament to the image on the main symbol of the Republic.

The flag had its second birth in the days of independent Belarus. It was the choice of the people: after the referendum on May 14th, 1995, the country returned to its former symbols with minor changes. The sickle, hammer and five-pointed star were abolished while the decoration became red on a white background (on the flag of the BSSR it was white on a red background).

The basis of the ornament on the flag of Belarus is the ancient 'rising Sun' pattern. In its centre there is a rhombus with 'hooks' extending from it — which are also called 'oars' or 'horns' and symbolise movement and eternity. The rhombus itself is a symbol of the goddess of fertility. This is a kind of image of a sown field. Around it there are signs for good luck and a rich harvest, as well as contribute to the fulfilment of righteous and good desires. Small rhombuses represent bread — food that is important for both the spirit and the body. Through such symbols, the ornament reflects the culture and history of the nation.

Matrena's life

It is known that Matrena Katser (married Markevich) wove the fateful rushnik in 1917. True, she never got to know about her role in the creation of state symbols. Only in 2015, in the small homeland of the craftswoman, in the centre of Senno, did



Matrena Markevich

a memorial sign appear in her honour: 'The Native Land'. Details of the difficult fate of Matrena Markevich, who fell under the ruthless wheel of history, can be learnt in the District Museum of History and Local Lore.

The modest exposition, of course, includes the image of the national flag with the deciphering of the symbols created by the needlewoman, her pension certificate, family photographs and the text of a letter from her daughter Zinaida Pashkevich. From it we learn that the craftswoman was born into the family of a wealthy peasant. Her parents raised seven children. The farm was large, and the children were taught hard peasant work from their early years. As a child, Matrena adopted her mother's talent for needlework and she spun, weaved, knitted and embroidered. Moreover, she also learnt writing and reading. The clever and beautiful young girl was married to Aleksei

She baked bread for the partisans, and the children carried it into the forest. After the war she continued to work on the collective farm. Needlework was a way of escaping from hard work and sad thoughts about her difficult life. Matrena Sergeevna died in 1957 at the age of 71.

The Director of the Senno Museum of History and Local Lore, Iva Shubko, said that she managed to learn a lot from the relatives themselves. During her visit to the Senno District in 2014, Matrena's daughter gave the museum a rushnik embroidered by her mother, but not the one that was used for the image on the flag. In fact, there are not many family heirlooms left. Most of them were kept at the summer cottage of Mikhail Katser, where a fire broke out, in which the man died tragically. Perhaps the original rushnik was also kept in the same place.

"The pattern woven by Matrena Sergeevna is ancient," confirms Iva Shubko. "Such patterns were widespread in the handicrafts of Belarusian peasant women, who reverently kept the traditions of their ancestors. At the same time, each hostess,



A branded souvenir of the Senno District: 'Matrena'

historian in Senno. For a long time, even in her small homeland, only a narrow circle of history lovers knew about the involvement of the craftswoman in state symbols.

Vasily Bondarevich studied this topic for several years, found relatives, corresponded with them, and also proposed a sketch of 'The Native Land' monument, which was supplemented and brought to life by the famous sculptor, Ivan Kazak. It's symbolic that the opening of the landmark, which has become a cult for the area, took place during the celebration of Independence Day in 2015. Relatives of Matrena Markevich came to the event. They are frequent guests in the Senno District, they always visit the grave of Matrena Sergeevna. For example, the granddaughter of the craftswoman, Dina Katser, willingly communicates with journalists, collecting materials about



At 'The Native Land' memorial sign, in Senno

Markevich, also from a family of wealthy peasants. The marriage was happy.

"There has never been any strife in the family," the daughter writes. "We lived in abundance, but we worked a lot for it. Two of the six brothers and sisters died when they were young from typhus. In 1933, a black time came: we were dispossessed. The father was taken away to an unknown place. We didn't see him again..."

During the war, Matrena Markevich lost her son Mikhail, but for the sake of the other children she tried to hold on.

of course, could introduce elements of improvisation, something from herself or from the embroidery customs of her small homeland."

New memory page

Matrena Markevich rests in a civil cemetery in the village of Kostelishche, which was burned down during the war and has not been reborn. It was possible to find the grave and perpetuate the memory of this woman largely thanks to the persistence of Vasily Bondarevich — a local

her famous grandmother. She believes that history is the foundation on which modern life is built. Dina Prokopovna is sure that, "Our ornament is our life. These are our grass, land, fields. It's all ours. And do you want someone to take what's ours? This cannot be! We are independent people and must remain so. And we will always be like that!"

Photos by Anton Stepanishchev and Senno Museum of History and Local Lore



Reconstruction of Novogrudok Castle continues

By Katerina Charovskaya

The restoration work — which was ceased for a while during the winter — has begun again on the site of Novogrudok Castle. This year, it will cover three areas: strengthening the slope from Kostelnaya (Church) Tower to the Vkhodnaya (Entrance) Tower, the development of drainage from the top of the Zamkovaya (Castle) Hill — the so-called ‘detinets’, and conservation of three ‘underground’ towers. For these purposes, thanks to investment programmes, more than \$420,000 has been allocated: over \$240,000 from the Republican budget and

almost \$180,000 — from the regional.

This year, it’s planned to complete the work on strengthening the slope which began last year. In addition, a drainage system will be installed — to divert water from six underground sources that wash away the foundations of ancient buildings.

The task is assigned to specialists of the Subsidiary Unitary Novogrudok Reclamation Work. “We started working on the site on June 1st,” comments the chief engineer, Yuri Romanyuk. “A storm water drain is being laid to remove surface water



Time of revival



Yuri Romanyuk

from the lower part of the terrain at the top of the hill, to prevent water saturation of the bulk soils that make up the upper layer of the castle site. According to the contract, we should complete the work in three months, but we plan to finish earlier.”

Specialists emphasise: before the start of excavation works, the site of ‘detinets’ was carefully studied by archaeologists. The cultural layer related to the history

of the castle is located here at a depth of 2-5 metres and will not be disturbed even when using bulldozers. The fact is that, for more than a hundred years, until the 1930s, this place was... a city landfill.

A contractor is also being chosen now for the conservation of the Posadskaya, Dozornaya and Vkhodnaya towers located below the ground level.

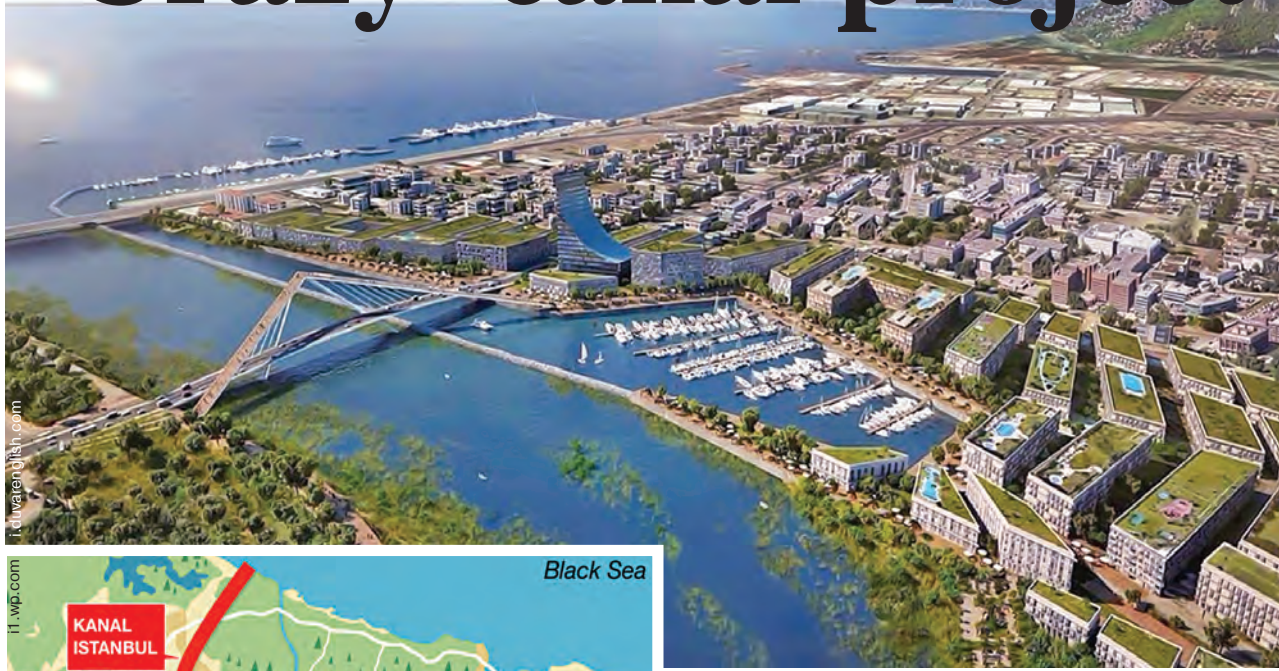
They were opened during the preparation of project documentation for earlier launch complexes.

Partial restoration of the fortification walls of ‘detinets’ is expected. “There is already a construction project for this launch complex, it has passed examination, the tender documentation is being prepared to determine the contractor,” explains the Head of the Culture Department of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Yelena Klimovich. “The estimate provides for spending more than \$1.15m for this purpose. The work will start this year and its further schedule will be considered and provided by the contractor. Then it will be possible to talk about specific deadlines for the end.”

In the future, it is planned to start conservation with the restoration and reconstruction of the Shchitovaya (Shield) Tower. It will house a museum exhibition. The design for this stage has been started. The final stage envisages the landscaping of the site.



‘Crazy’ canal project



Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdogan took the first step in the construction of a ship canal skirting Istanbul that the government says will ease marine traffic in the Bosphorus Strait

“Today we are opening a new page in the history of Turkey’s development,” Mr. Erdogan said in a bridge ground-breaking ceremony in Sazlidere, west of Istanbul. “We see Canal Istanbul as a project to save the future of Istanbul ... to ensure the safety of life and property of Istanbul’s Bosphorus and the citizens around it.”

The idea of a canal linking the Sea of Marmara and the Black Sea

— dubbed his ‘crazy project’ by Erdogan — was first suggested in 2011 and revived three years ago.

The government says the 45-kilometre canal will relieve pressure on the Bosphorus, one of the world’s busiest shipping lanes, and reduce the risk of accidents.

Opponents claim it will serve little purpose and will cause widespread ecological damage to the region, increase the dangers posed by earthquakes and

saddle Turkey with further debt.

Mr. Erdogan said the \$15 billion project would be completed within six years. “Today we are laying the foundations of one of the exemplary canals in the world,” he noted.

The project’s first structure, an eight-lane, 840-metre road bridge, will link to the North Marmara highway that also connects other recent infrastructure projects — a new airport and a third Bosphorus crossing.

Marking 100th anniversary

Since its origins in Shanghai in 1921, the Chinese Communist Party has grown to be one of the world’s most powerful political parties. It celebrated its 100th birthday on July 1st.

China will not allow itself to be bullied and anyone who tries will face ‘broken heads and bloodshed in front of the iron Great Wall of the 1.4 billion Chinese people’, President Xi Jinping said at a mass gathering to mark the centenary of the ruling Communist Party.

Wearing a grey buttoned-up suit of the type worn by Mao Zedong, Xi spoke from the balcony of Tiananmen Gate, emphasising the party’s role in bringing China to global prominence and saying it would never be divided from the people.

Xi Jinping announced that China has realised the first centenary goal — building a moderately prosperous society in all respects.



“The Chinese people are a people with a strong sense of pride and self-confidence,” Xi said. “We have never bullied, oppressed or enslaved the people of another nation, not in the past, during the present or in the future.”



Many EU citizens face uncertainty

Millions of Europeans have freely lived, worked and studied in the UK for decades, but Brexit means that those rights are no longer automatically granted

Britain’s government introduced a ‘settlement’ plan for the country’s large European migrant community in 2019, and the deadline for applications was June 30th.

From July 1st, any European migrant who hasn’t applied loses their legal right to work, rent housing and access some hospital treatments or welfare benefits in the UK. They may even be subject to deportation.

June 30th was also the deadline for British nationals living in three EU countries — France, Latvia and Malta — to apply for residency. British in Europe, a coalition group campaigning for Britons living in the EU, has renewed a warning that people risk losing their rights if they do not do so.

The British government has warned EU nationals living in the country that

they’ll be handed a formal 28-day notice if they’ve failed to apply for ‘settled status’ by June 30th.

Campaigners are worried that tens or even hundreds of thousands of Europeans may not have applied by the deadline. Many older people who have lived in the UK for decades are not aware they have to apply, and official figures show that only 2 percent of applicants were 65 years old or older. Many parents also don’t realise they have to apply for their children, migrants’ groups say. Other vulnerable people, such as children in social care, also risk falling through the cracks and ending up with no legal status.

Britain’s government says well over five million people — the majority from Poland and Romania — have applied, far more than initial estimates.

Oaks for Notre Dame

French oaks that have been standing for hundreds of years in a once-royal forest now have a sacred destiny: they have been selected to reconstruct Notre Dame Cathedral’s fallen spire

The 93-metre spire, made of wood and clad in lead, became the most potent symbol of the April 2019 blaze when it was seen engulfed in flames, collapsing dramatically into the inferno.

Last July amid a public outcry, the French President, Emmanuel Macron, ended speculation that the 19th century peak designed by Eugène Viollet-le-Duc could be rebuilt in a modern style. He announced it would be rebuilt exactly as it was before. And that began a nationwide tree hunt, culminating in a painstaking selection in January and February of this year.

About 1,000 oaks in more than 200 French forests, both private and public, were chosen to make the frame of the cathedral transept and spire — destined

to be admired on the Paris skyline for potentially hundreds of years.

“Given the place occupied by the cathedral in the hearts of the French, in the history of France and the world ... we are happy [that] the entire industry — from foresters to sawyers — is mobilised to meet this challenge,” said Michel Druilhe, President of France Bois Forêt, a national interprofessional forestry network.

Reconstruction of a 12th-century cathedral such as Notre Dame in wood is a daunting prospect. The inside was such a lattice of beams and supports that it was affectionately called the ‘forest’. Calls to reinforce it with fireproof concrete were dismissed, even after such material helped limit the fallout from a blaze in Nantes Cathedral last year.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Architects of underground masterpieces



Each station has its unique construction features

By Ilya Vladimirov

First pile driven in

After the war, Minsk developed rapidly. In 1972, the city's population exceeded one million and it became difficult for ground public transport to transport passengers. The city needed its metro. On June 30th, 1984, the Minsk metro welcomed its first passengers. The section of eight stations from 'Institut Kultury' to 'Moskovskaya' took seven years to build.

The decree of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus defined the construction of the metro in Minsk as the most important construction site in the country. Specialists from Tashkent arrived in Minsk, as well as designers from Kiev. It was one of the most experienced metro construction divisions in the Soviet Union.

"The construction of the metro was personally supervised by the First Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party of Belarus, Piotr Masherov," explains Valentina Kubashova, now the guide of the exposition of the Minsk metro. She previously worked as the head of the stations at 'Moskovskaya' and 'Vostok' for ten years. "On June 16th, 1977, the first pile was driven under the foundation pit of the future 'Park Chelyuskintsev' station. The development of construction sites proceeded gradually. The first to be built were 'Park Chelyuskintsev', 'Moskovskaya' and 'Institut Kultury' stations."

A distinctive feature of the construction of the Minsk metro was the shallow depth of the stations. Due to the high level of groundwater rise, the stations had to be placed literally just below the earth's surface, at a depth of only 10-17 metres. Station complexes were built in open pits, dead ends were behind them, alongside the crossing section of the River Svisloch. The ferry tunnels were made in a closed, shield-like way.

It was hard physical labour, as builders dug out the soil with ordinary shovels and poured it into trolleys.

In order not to damage the architectural structure of Minsk — especially in the historical part of the city — tunnelling and construction of stations were carried out with a high degree of reliability and accuracy. The 'wall in the ground' method — used for the first time in the practice of metro construction — has found wide application in Minsk. It enabled the builders to abandon the construction of large pits, which was especially important in condi-



A shallow depth is distinctive for the stations' location

"One of the most vivid memories of my student days was my first metro trip on the day of its opening in 1984. Smart stations, joyful faces of passengers and the odour — that is unlike anything in the air — and which we called 'the smell of the metro'. I don't remember what day it was, but it was certainly summer. I'd like to read about how the idea of building a metro came up and how one of the largest projects in the history of the Belarusian capital was implemented," reads a letter which recently came to our editorial office from a resident of the Mogilev Region, Alla Savitskaya. The MT reporter talked to builders of the early stations of the Minsk metro and learned firsthand how they were erected.

tions of work in cramped urban conditions. The reinforcement cage of the wall was lowered into narrow trenches and concrete was poured.

"The console of the gantry crane passed literally centimetres from the balconies of residential buildings," recalls Vladimir Kuznetsov, a master of open pit

Chelyuskintsev', a huge number of large boulders stood in the way of tunnelling shields. Moreover, at the 'Institut Kultury' station some of the piles fell into the underground workings from the war years, where a large ammunition depot was discovered. So, sappers also joined the construction of the Minsk metro.

Dam on the Svisloch River, ammunition found during excavations and complex groundwater drainage: how the Minsk metro was built, which received its first passengers 37 years ago

The River Svisloch was blocked by an earth dam.

"Freezing the soil under the river that would have eliminated the risk of water penetrating into the face, turned out to be too expensive," says Yevgeny Shalayev, now retired, and in the early 1980s he led a team of specialists in spatial and geometric measurements as a site surveyor. "Our engineers found a relatively simple and cheap way: ten passage pipes were laid in an artificial dam 38 metres wide, through which the river water passed over the construction site. The Svisloch River was overcome in just 12 days."

A happy journey!

On the day of the grand opening, a rally was held on Lenin Square involving the Republic's top officials, as well as guests of honour and members of the public. They cut the ribbon and made a test drive. The next day, the metro opened for the first passengers and travel was free on the first day. There were no tokens or metro passes at that time, so in order to get five-Kopeck coins, passengers exchanged their coins in special machines installed in the station lobbies. Senior cashiers in the first days of the new metro only managed to fill these machines with five-Kopeck coins. Passengers of all ages — workers, retirees, students and schoolchildren — have left hundreds of entries in the guest-book. The figures speak in confirmation of the love of the passengers for the Minsk metro: in the first year, more than 80 million people used the metro's services.



An underground walkway to the 'Ploshchad Pobedy' metro station

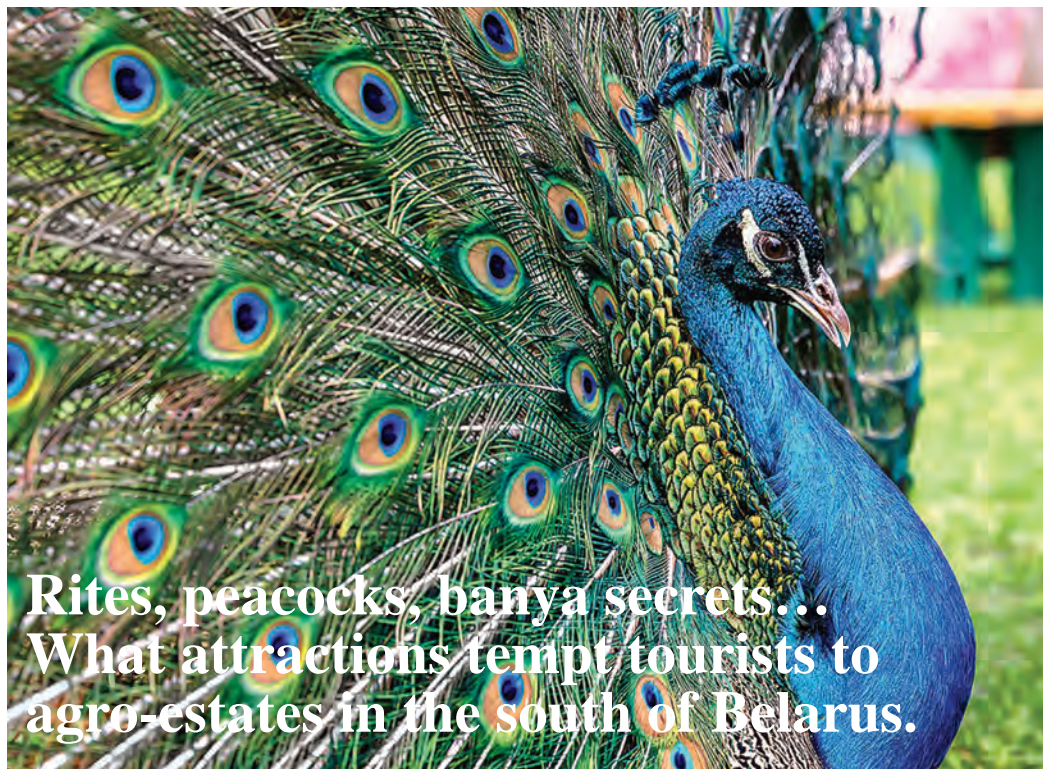
mining of the 11th section of SMU-2 UE Minskmetrostroy; as a young specialist he built the 'Ploshchad Pobedy' metro station.

Despite difficulties

During the construction process, the creators of the metro faced difficult geotechnical and hydrogeological conditions. About half the entire route had to be laid with artificial dewatering due to the high level of groundwater. Meanwhile, in the north-eastern section, the builders faced other difficulties. On the stretch between the stations 'Akademiya Nauk' and 'Park



'Ploshchad Frantishka Bogushevicha' metro station



Rites, peacocks, banya secrets... What attractions tempt tourists to agro-estates in the south of Belarus.

By Olga Valchenko

Reed-pipe dancing

The Yelsk District is one of the smallest in the Gomel Region. However, it can successfully compete with others regarding agro-ecotourism development. Eight farmsteads are happy to welcome guests here, and each of them has its own highlight.

We've decided to go to the agro-town of Staroe Vysokoe. The local U Zolotoi Pchelki (At Golden Bee's) homestead is truly original. The peacock Pasha welcomes us — meeting halfway, with his dazzling tail fluffing up. The hostess Lyubov Vlasenko explains, "This 'present' was made to us by guests from Brest. The peacock eats little: only 50 grams a day in summer. We feed it with bird food, dry white bread, and wheat. The bird has settled well but its legs get a little cold in winter. We also have two hen birds.

The peacock is exotic for the Yelsk area but it dances exclusively to the Belarusian reed-pipe for the guests who come. Folk tunes are traditionally performed by a local musician, Viktor Lyapko, who comments, "This is a Belarusian version of the bagpipe — though simpler. The principle is the same: the air is pumped into a bag made of genuine leather, from where it enters the vocal cords and reproduces sounds. Authentic songs and our authentic instrument are much appreciated by all guests!"

Lyubov Vlasenko makes all possible to introduce her guests to Belarusian rites and traditional crafts.

Exotic mowing

Ms. Vlasenko's homestead 'was born' seven years ago. The family had its own apiary, so they decided to use the profit from it to organise recreation for visitors. Until the end, they did not believe that it would work, but now tourist groups book their trips in advance. They enjoy a real rural experience here.

"We have goats, quails, guinea fowls, ducks, pigs, and bees. Children love ani-

mals very much, and visitors help in the yard — digging the garden, for example. A German once saw a scythe and asked me, "Can I use it?" He mowed all the grass for us then. We provided him with goat's milk and our home eggs for this. Actually, we treat all our guests with honey, while offering them the chance to inhale the 'beehive air'."

In 2019, the estate welcomed 1,127 people, in 2020 which was locked for travels — 313, but this figure has already been surpassed this year. Mozyr, Gomel, Zhlobin, Minsk, Russia and Europe... Tourists



Ivan Yarinovich

come from everywhere. The hostess notes, "We have prepared off-site trips, and Turov is particularly popular. With the help of our friends, I signed contracts with foreign companies to accept caravans."

At present, the hostess is thinking of renting a lake located a couple of kilometres away. So, maybe soon fishing will also join the list of entertainment. However, a very serious opponents will be faced then.

The Asaloda recreation facility is an example of a successful tourist site created by an agricultural enterprise. Eight years ago, Sovkhoz Kommunist focused on the lake which was created in Soviet times for field reclamation. Now, houses and a banya have been built on the bank of the lake. Its beach has been beautified with a volleyball court, swings and catamarans.

The Head of Asaloda, Aleksandr Khodakovsky, says that those who want to come here are also attracted by local prices, "The cost of recreation is low and we do not want to raise it, so as not to lose our clients. On weekends, 350-400 tourists gather by the lake, they come from Minsk,



Gomel, Mozyr, Lelchitsy. Before the pandemic outbreak, there were many Russians who came with their families and rented houses for more than a week. Belarusians bring their friends here from abroad."

Hunting is possible but precautions are needed

Each local farmstead tries to attract tourists with something special. Yelsk's U Petrovicha (At Petrovich's) surprises guests with an exquisite, almost scientifically organised banya — healing them with essential oils, herbal teas and even special brooms.

The hostess of the Vasilisa Prekrasnaya (Vasilisa the Beautiful) farmstead, Yelena Logvinenko, from the village of Zhuki, focuses on patriotism. She named her estate after her aunt, a veteran of the Great Patriotic War, and member of the partisan movement — Vasilisa Prokhorova. The lady tells her guests not only about her aunt, but also about all the heroes who liberated these lands from the invaders.

The market for agricultural

Pripyat southern banks calling

Until 1986, these areas were a Mecca for vacationers from all over the Soviet Union. Immediately after the Chernobyl tragedy, the situation completely changed: no one could imagine that the fresh air, fishing and green cucumbers could be enjoyed here ever again. Belarus has survived this disaster and tourists are now coming to the Gomel Region as they did in the past. Moreover, they are offered not simply picturesque landscapes and shashlik but also unique recreation. The revival and development of the southern regions of the country — affected by the 20th century major man-made disaster — are now the focus of attention in a variety of areas. Agro-ecotourism is one of the most promising.



estates is changing and success comes to those who fully devote themselves to this business and understand that the sphere is quite promising. New facilities will be opened in the near future in Yelsk, Khoiniki; in December 2020, a new estate opened in Narovlya.

In the Narovlya District the matter of attracting and entertaining visitors is taken very seriously — says an inspector of the Department of Education, Sports and Tourism at the District Executive Committee, Lyudmila Chaika,

"Our main attraction is the Pripyat. We organise excellent fishing in virtually virgin environment. There is an opportunity to hunt as well — though with some restrictions. Chernobyl definitely had its impact, but the system is well established. Animal carcasses are not taken away but hunters can take their trophies: horns or skulls. If any questions arise with the gifts of nature, the level of radiation can easily be checked at the district sanitary service."

Meanwhile, lovers of a more relaxing holiday could enjoy trips to the unique Narovlya museums. The Museum of Childhood features pre-revolutionary toys, textbooks and post-revolutionary cheat sheets, while the Village Store Museum represents the life and culture of Soviet society against the background of the interior of an ordinary store.



Flight to Tokyo

Several athletes added to the Belarusian team in the final days of Olympic qualification

jump at the Olympic Games.

The Belarusian Championship could be the last attempt to get to the Olympics in Tokyo for our hammer thrower, Ivan Tikhon. The athlete, who will be 45 years old during the Games, coped with the task of winning a place a little earlier by winning the Ukrainian Cup. Moreover, in the third attempt, Tikhon — who now heads the Belarusian Athletics Federation — sent the hammer to 77m 57cm, which is

than once close to meeting the standard but never quite reached the required standard. In addition, the Olympic squad will also include several representatives of sports walking, as well as our 4x400 relay team. Previously, World Athletics officially recorded the results of hammer throwers, Yuri Vasilchenko and Anastasia Kolomoets, shown by them at the championship in Moldova.

Even before the rating was added, the country fulfilled the

managed to 'jump into the last carriage'. Our tennis team has also expanded. Arina Sobolenko and Victoria Azarenko have unconditional places for the Olympics. The girls have repeatedly said they plan to compete for medals not only in the singles, but also in doubles, so they've already started training in a pair — a confirmation of this is the doubles title won in Berlin. It has also been announced that Yegor Gerasimov and Ilya Ivashko will

interesting to follow our tennis players in the singles.

The number of Belarusian boxers at the event will also increase. At the qualifying tournament, which started in London last year, but was stopped due to the pandemic and ended only recently in Paris, three of our athletes — Vitaly Bondarenko, Dmitry Asanov and Aleksandr Radionov — received places at the Games. Vladislav Smyaglikov, competing in the weight category up to 91kg, couldn't qualify for the Olympics (in his category it was necessary to get into the top four to qualify), but according to the world Olympic ranking, he was included in the list of athletes who will perform at this four-yearly event.

Alongside these athletes, our judokas also got to the Olympics according to their ratings, with Nikita Svirid in the over 100kg category, Dmitry Minkov in the weight category up to 64kg and Marina Slutskaya in the over 78kg competing on the tatami in Tokyo. The application of the Belarusian pentathletes has also expanded: initially, our team won the maximum possible two places in women's competitions, and after the ratings, Ilya Polozkov was also included in the team.



Vitaly Parakhonko (right) pulled off at the national championship so that he received an Olympic license

7cm more than the standard, and in the fifth attempt he even improved, fixing the mark at 77m 72cm! For Ivan Tikhon, the Tokyo Games will be the sixth he's managed to qualify for, and the fifth at which he can compete.

But that's not all. On the eve of the event, World Athletics summed up the results of the world ranking, according to which several more of our athletes received qualification for the Olympics. So, for example, Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova was among the hopefuls, who, during the qualification period, was more

standards for 32 places. Unfortunately, we rejected two. Due to injury, hurdler Alina Talay won't be able to compete at the Olympic Games in Tokyo, and marathon runner Anastasia Ivanova will also miss the event for health reasons. The composition appears to be quite good. A third of our athletes are expected to compete in the finals of the Games, and a third should qualify for medals. This is the 30 percent rule: if you want to win one medal, you should have three people who can take it.

It wasn't only athletes who



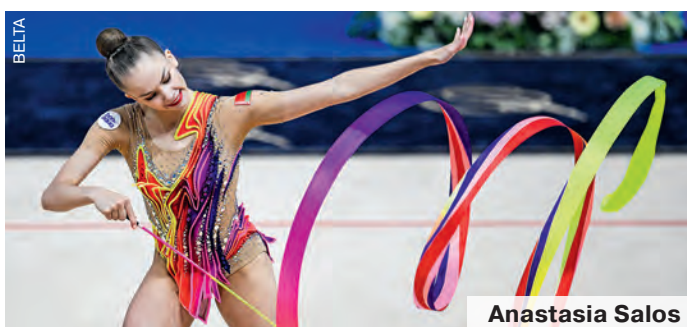
Ivan Tikhon

perform in Tokyo. There are no Belarusian pairings in the mixed doubles, but it will be

It is expected that 110 Belarusian athletes will compete at the Olympic Games in Tokyo.

Medal shower for Belarusian gymnasts

Nine medals earned by Belarusians at the FIG BSB Bank World Challenge Cup 2021, held in Minsk



Anastasia Salos

Alina Gornosko and Anastasia Salos claimed bronze and gold medals in the all-round event during the first day of the tournament while six more awards were won in the finals in individual events. Team representatives in the group exercises also made their medal

contribution to this success.

The triumphant of the final day of the tournament in Minsk was Alina Gornosko, who won three gold medals, scoring 27,700 points in the exercises with the hoop. Second place was taken by another Belarusian athlete — Anastasia Salos — who

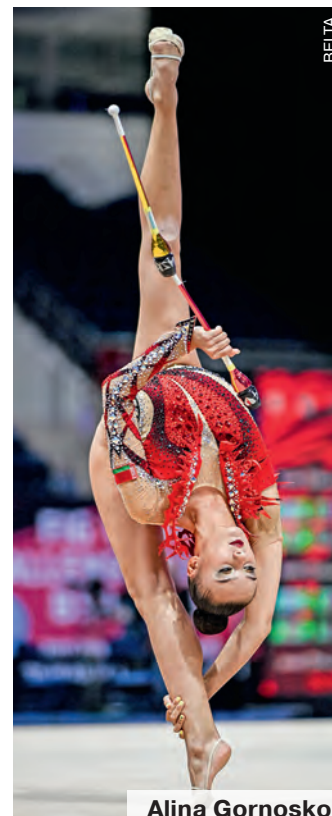
boasted 27,400 points, followed by Russian Lala Kramarenko with 26,650 points. In the exercises with the ball, Alina Gornosko was again out of reach for her rivals earning 28,600 points. Lala Kramarenko of Russia finished second with 27,100 points, followed by Anastasia Salos (26,250 points). Moreover, the young gymnast from Minsk performed better with the clubs than her opponents, boasting 27,500 points. Lala Kramarenko won silver (26,800 points), and Israeli Nicol Zelikman came third (26,150).

As far as Anastasia Salos is concerned, alongside bronze in the all-round and ball exercises

and silver in the hoop, the native of Barnaul also claimed silver in the ribbon event, being awarded 23,550 points from the judges. Lala Kramarenko won in this part of the programme with 24,500 points, followed by the Ukrainian gymnast Khrystyna Pohranychna with 22,250.

Meanwhile, the national team of Belarus didn't leave without medals in the group exercises either. Our athletes won bronze in the five ball exercises, earning 46,500 points. The Bulgarian gymnasts claimed victory with 47,800 points while silver went to the Israeli team (47,000 points).

Based on materials of belta.by



Alina Gornosko

Daria Titova



Photo of the week

A veteran of the Great Patriotic War, retired Colonel Mikhail Shashkov: 'Young people need to be patriots, love their country and remember those who defended it from the enemy — sometimes at the cost of their own lives'.

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On July 8th, 1861, Magdalena Radziwiłł was born — a figure of the Belarusian cultural movement and patroness of art. She conducted educational activities and supported the first Belarusian periodical editions. She took care of the Zaglyane Sontsa i u Nasha Akontsa (The Sun Will Also Peek Into Our Window) Publishing House in St. Petersburg and *Belarus* newspaper while also providing material assistance in releasing the first books by M. Bogdanovich and K. Builo. Moreover, Magdalena Radziwiłł provided comprehensive assistance to creative youth while also helping Belarusian organisations in Western Belarus, alongside Lithuanian and Jewish cultural movements. She died in 1945.



On July 10th — September 10th, 1941, the Battle of Smolensk took place — a complex of defensive and offensive actions of the troops of the Western, Reserve, Central and Bryansk fronts in the western area. The heroic resistance of the Soviet troops, which unfolded at the front up to 650km in breadth and up to 250km in depth, thwarted the plans of the Hitlerite command to break through to Moscow on the move. For the first time in WWII, fascist German troops were forced to move towards defence on their main front.



The population of Belarus built defensive lines on the Zapadnaya Dvina, Dnieper and Sozh rivers, fought in the people's volunteer corps, fighter squads, self-defence units, partisan detachments and brigades.

On July 11th, 1911, Belarusian writer Yanka Chabor was born (present name Ivan Potapovich) — one of the initiators of the creation of the Literary Front of Peasant-Workers' Writers and a participant of the national liberation struggle in Western Belarus. He was engaged in cultural and educational work, as well as the organisation of the co-operative movement in the countryside. He wrote poems of a journalistic and moral-educational nature and was published in the *Belaruskaya Gazeta* and *Litaraturnaya Staronka* newspapers (he was its editor). He died in 1943.



On July 11th, 1921, the Belarusian State University was opened. Academician Karsky, professors Volgin, Minor, Pichet and others took part in its creation. Among the first teachers were Dovnar-Zapolsky, Mitskevich (Yakub Kolas), Nikolsky, as well as scientists from Moscow, Petrograd and Kiev. During the Great



Patriotic War, the scientific and material base of the university was taken out by the invaders or destroyed. Today BSU is a leading higher educational institution in the system of national education of the Republic of Belarus and a large educational, scientific and industrial complex, in which, along with faculties, there are many research institutes and centres as well as manufacturing enterprises.

July 11th is the Day of Tax Authorities in the Republic of Belarus. The State Tax Service in the country was established in 1990 within the system of the Ministry of Finance of the BSSR. Since 2001, this service has been the Ministry of Taxes and Duties of the Republic of Belarus. Currently, the staff of the tax authorities of the Republic is more than 9,000 people. The structure of the Ministry includes 157 inspections.



July 11th is World Chocolate Day. This delicious holiday was invented and first held by the French in 1995. It is believed that the Aztecs were the first to learn how to make chocolate. They called it 'food of the gods'. The Spanish conquistadors, who first brought it to Europe, christened the delicacy 'black gold'. As established by modern science, chocolate



contains elements that promote relaxation and psychological recovery. Moreover, dark chocolates stimulate the release of endorphins — happiness hormones that improve mood and tone the body.

July 11th is World Population Day. According to the United Nations, on July 11th, 1987, the population of the Earth was 5bn people — this day was named the 'Five Billion Day'. The world's population is growing at an annual rate of 83 million. According to UN forecasts, based on the averaged data, by 2030, the Earth will be home to 8.6 billion people, by 2050 — 9.8bn. The purpose of the holiday is to draw attention to population issues, general development programmes, and the search for solutions to common problems.



On July 12th, 1931, Vyacheslav Kubarev was born — a Belarusian film artist, painter and Honoured Art Worker of Belarus. He worked at the Belarusfilm Studio and was production designer of the films *Moscow-Genoa*, *Alpine Ballad*, *To Go and Not To Return*, *Time-Doesn't Wait*, *State Border*, etc. He also authored many picturesque paintings and landscapes and died in 1995.

