



Our new project *Belarusian Land Treasures* invites you to explore the amazing sights of the Gomel Region

6



The unique white-patterned weaving of Ponemonie is our cultural and historical value

10

INTERNATIONAL

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BELTA

Patriotic club operates at the Memory historical museum of soldiers-internationalists of secondary school No. 3 in Lyuban

The future belongs to youth

‘Only a patriot can raise a patriot’ — this statement of the Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko has already become truly winged and widely quoted, and not just in Belarus. This is not surprising: after all, it is important to deal with the issues of education and inculcation of patriotic values among the younger generation in order to ensure a happy future in the interests of the people. Only by educating young people on specific examples, including those related to the preservation of historical memory, can one develop their national pride and civic consciousness, preserve history and increase the potential of Belarus in the future.

The best experience of military-patriotic education has been preserved in the country, a system of cadet education has been created, specialised military-patriotic classes are functioning. About 1,500 museums operate on the basis of educational institutions, of which more than 200 have a military history profile. The activity of military-patriotic clubs, which are created under the aegis of military units, the Interior Ministry, the Defence Ministry, the State Border Committee, as well as schools, additional institutions for the education of children and youth is an interesting and successful form of work.



Crucial conditions for maintaining sovereignty and independence

President Aleksandr Lukashenko outlined the most relevant and important aspects in the development of the country in his annual Address to the Belarusian People and the National Assembly. The Head of State outlined the conditions for maintaining sovereignty and independence as the main idea of the Address. During the 3 hours of his speech, Aleksandr Lukashenko thoroughly explained the geopolitical situation in the world, outlined the most important external vectors of Belarus and historical lessons for our state, and, most importantly, drew attention to the real possibilities of maintaining peace and continuing progressive development. We invite you to familiarise yourself with the key statements of the President during the Address as well as his answers to the participants' questions.

SIX CONDITIONS FOR MAINTAINING THE SOVEREIGNTY AND INDEPENDENCE OF BELARUS

- National unity
- Historical memory and national traditions
- Economy is the foundation
- Social justice
- Independent foreign policy
- National defence capability



Aleksandr Kushmer

President of the Republic of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko:

— Recall how all major conflicts of recent decades began. With the unwavering determination of the West to subjugate the whole world. And not even the West, but one country. With the transition of self-sufficient, sometimes very strong, truly independent states under external control. Like a virus, it penetrated the political landscape of a country either through the incumbent government or through the opposition. As a rule, it was done through the elites bogged in rampant corruption, because those who have something to lose, who have a hefty bank account abroad, will serve anyone and in any possible way...

— The so-called pivot to the East in our policy is the most reasonable reality dictated by the spirit of the times. After all, the sun sets in the West and rises, as we know, in the East...

— Let me emphasise once again: Belarus is our land. Only we ourselves know how Belarus should develop, only we determine and will determine the strategy for this development, only we bear real responsibility for our future.

On sovereignty and independence

• I want to ensure security of the Belarusian state and ensure peace for the Belarusian nation. My nation has earned it with its history, with its entire existence! We don't want to live in slavery anymore and we will not be slaves!

• Sovereignty means that only we, citizens of Belarus have the right to talk about our national interests and determine national goals of further development in the territory of our own state.

• If we want to be sovereign and independent, I repeat once again: there is no need to be in the clouds, there is no need to think about extraterrestrial civilisations there. Everyone should mind his or her own business.

• We must simply preserve sovereignty and independence today. That is why I based my today's appeal on this very thing. And we will preserve this sovereignty and independence and provide them with everything possible, including a nuclear arsenal.

On events in Ukraine

• The events in eastern Ukraine — Donbass — became a continuation of the policy of destroying everything Russian. The ideology of fascism is put into practice: murder of dissidents and arson that set people ablaze (recall Odessa).

• Through efforts of the United States of America and

its satellites, a full-scale war has been launched in a country that is kindred to us. A war 'to the last Ukrainian'. End of quote. About 0.5 million people from both sides have been killed and maimed over the course of one year because of the war. Millions are now refugees. As a result, World War III with nuclear fires now looms ahead.

• I will try to risk proposing to stop the hostilities. Indeed, many people now, especially in Russia, can say: 'Well, we already stopped in Donbass then'. It was another moment, another situation. But given those conditions, it is necessary to stop hostilities. To declare a truce without the right to move, regroup troops of both sides, without the right to move weapons and ammunition, manpower and equipment! For everybody just to freeze!

On the actions of Poland

• In 2023 alone Poland intends to spend about €21 billion on military needs or about 3 percent of the GDP. 70 percent more than in 2022. By 70 percent! Even the Americans did not allow themselves such growth.

• The decision to increase the number of military personnel up to 300,000 people by 2035 has been made. In other words, practically two times as many as what Poland has today.

• Besides, the formation of some regiments, legions for the

sake of deposing the Belarusian government is in full swing. All these facts will be published with time... They are getting ready to invade Belarus' territory in order to destroy our country!



On deployment of tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus

• In emerging conditions and the military and political situation around our country I've reactivated negotiations with the President of Russia Vladimir Putin on the return of nuclear weapons to Belarus.

• I have the right to raise the issue of returning nuclear weapons, which back then, before me, the madmen decided to give up, signed obligations to return them. I remember how they pressed me back then.

• Any encroachment upon the sovereign territory of Belarus, our

military and civil infrastructure will be met with an immediate response. I have always told you this. You sometimes listened, but thought your own. Some believed, some did not. Do you



now believe that we will respond? We will, and we will do it to the fullest.

• Everything will be according to the law and according to the rules. There are no uncontrolled weapons in Belarus and cannot be such. Therefore, it is we who will be here to manage everything in Belarus.

On Belarusian People's Congress and parties

• Delegates of the Belarusian People's Congress, representatives in municipal councils of deputies and members of the parliament will be elected by the Belarusian nation and only by the Belarusian nation instead of mythical OSCE observers.

• Whatever party or public movement they represent, MPs should first and foremost serve people instead of interests of individual oligarchs and politicians. Even more so foreign ones.

• But I repeat there will be no foreign agents funded by foreign countries in our political field. That's the end of it! And there will be no party of power either. For

those who have forgotten with what programme I went to the first presidential election, let me remind you: 'not with the left, not with the right, not with the party, but with my own people!' My stance has not changed.

On historical memory

• Time itself has forced us to take a tougher state stance on matters concerning the preservation of historical truth. To give a principled and uncompromised evaluation of individual facts.

• Medieval oligarchs made money off the hard work of ordinary people who were really struggling. However, is it mentioned during excursions around these castles, these palaces that we restored and refurbished? This is a question of the historical truth and objectivity.

• Belarus' official national symbols are a kind of custodians of historical memory. The fact that we have three national symbols (coat of arms, flag and anthem) and state holidays for only two of them, is probably wrong. We need to rectify this situation.

On the economy

• Let's take care of our country. There will be an economy — no missiles, armed terrorists and others will not threaten us. Give me that economy. It depends on you. Everything else I will decide myself.

• Great financial 'experts' predicted the fall of our economy, the fall of the ruble, the poverty of the population. Now when those predictions are far from the truth, it is necessary to explain to citizens of the European Union why Belarus endured when they had to be frugal about heating, hot water, gasoline.

• Our enterprises keep working and goods are being shipped



Aleksandr Shilov

to new markets despite all the sanctions. We secured a record-high foreign trade surplus of nearly \$4.3 billion (we even beat the record high of 2021), thus preserving the stability of the national currency.

- The development of our port infrastructure and new overland routes to China, Iran and other Asian countries must become the absolute priority of our transport industry.

On IT direction

- The status of the IT country provides for creating a product to serve needs of our own economy first. Preferences were granted with that in mind. I have yet to see the results.

- Not only resident companies of the Hi-Tech Park but the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, industrial groups, the financial sector, scientific and educational institutions should be granted support for creating new information technologies.

- The development of Belarusian software and its deployment should become an unconditional priority for all the organisations that are involved in the relevant business.

- The Hi-Tech Park should get seriously involved in this process, should create new competitive products for the benefit of its own country while leaving intellectual products here... We have to shake up this sector.

On social justice

- When I hear that the richest man has \$300 billion as assets or in his pockets, I don't think it is acceptable. But nobody has calculated how many millions of people had to work to earn these billions and what these people got in return.

- The mankind is being gradually led into the so-called new world where there will be billions of redundant people. They will be deprived of rights, hungry, and poor but allegedly free in the most versatile liberalistic manifestations. You know which ones. People feel it and take to the streets. Look at what is going on in the West, for instance, in France

- In our country, everyone who wants and can work, work and earn.

- We always remember our elders. Pensions increased three times last year.

- Overall, income growth this year should exceed 4 percent in real terms. We'll take it.

- All decisions on price regulation have been made. Indeed, they are tough. You know my principled approach: no one is allowed to raise prices unreasonably and

rob people. This is the first. Secondly, Belarusians should not pay for 'empty' dollars, as the whole world does today.

- That's true, tariffs are set at the full rate for those who are fundamentally unemployed and self-exiled. I ask the State Control Committee to check whether this is so... This was done, but what is the reality? Part of society is already demanding from me, especially for self-exiled opposition. Their relatives are in gold, the property of these extremists is not touched. They are carrying out terrorist attacks today. Of course, we will not rush here, but there is a question.

- But we do not plan to increase payments for the population by more than \$5 in equivalent.

On the development of regions

- People need jobs where they live. In addition, the implementation of the 'one district – one project' principle is designed to promote the creation of new jobs and employment in the current five-year plan.

- We will move from targeted support for individual regions and the provision of an individual package of benefits to the implementation of the 'farther from Minsk and regional centres, the more benefits and preferences' approach.



- The economic development of all regions must be fair and balanced. This is a priority of the regional development programme. We must not allow the division of our compact country into Minsk and the rest of Belarus! There are seven 'I' — six regions and Minsk. This is our slogan.

- It is necessary to actively develop a single portal of electronic services and increase its accessibility, regardless of the place of residence of people.

On medicine

- The production of Belarusian medicines is under special control. Their share should increase incrementally, the assortment should be

expanded. The same pertains to domestic innovative technology and equipment.

- The fact that the West is using sanctions to hurt sick people, including the elderly and children, is simply outrageous. They have hit rock bottom. I will tell you one thing: we will pull through. This is a matter of honour. We will not depend on them in the medical field.

- In the near future, we plan to dramatically shake up the healthcare sector of Belarus.

- All healthcare facilities of the country should epitomise comfort and sterility. The governors and the minister should keep this matter under close control.

- Special focus will be on our little patients. It is necessary to create the most comfortable conditions for them! Children's health is also a matter of demographic security, without which it makes no sense to think about tomorrow.

On demographic security

- We provide for large families. Nevertheless, there are thousands of facts, when we give money to children, but parents drink them away. You know that large families are not always on Easy Street. Whatever it costs us, the government and governors should solve this problem. If you see that the family is drinking these funds away and the children are not getting it, make a decision on your level and pro-

vide for the children! Make sure kids get these benefits. So that these crazy drunk parents don't get this money in their hands if they don't deserve it.

- Any popularisation of the ideas of childfree families in our information and cultural space should be suppressed. Any such veiled appeals, as well as all non-traditional trends, is nothing but an attempt to depopulate and weaken the state. No less. Such ideology should be outlawed.

- The cult of a full-fledged family with two or more children should be the lifestyle of Belarusians. Only in this way can we be sure that the generations that follow us will grow, which

means that we will firmly hold sovereignty in our hands and are guaranteed to live in peace.

- We need to break the 'career or family' stereotype. All necessary conditions have been created in the country for a woman to realise herself as a mother and as a professional. There are such examples. Last year we introduced Father's Day.

On education

- Thousands of foreigners find a new home and a new homeland on Belarusian land... People come to us, among other things,



for knowledge. Today Belarus is an educational hub of Eastern Europe, where all conditions have been created for obtaining fundamental and applied education in the widest range of specialties.

- The entire education system should be directed to the future, to form a new type of worker — competent, flexible, proactive, and ready to live and work in an open information society. This principle applies to all specialties — from combine operators and builders to doctors.

- Only a patriot can raise a patriot. We have a colossal omission in this regard. We need to shake up our rector.

On foreign policy

- The intensification of interaction between Belarus, Russia, China, Iran, the countries of the Middle East, and other constructive centres of power poses a real threat to the concept of a unipolar world. What is our common response? It is in unity and common approaches to the formation of a just and multipolar world. They choke us with economic sanctions — we open up new markets for ourselves. They want to close transit — we build new logistics routes for trading with friends.

- Our merchandise export to Russia grew by 1.5 times to over \$23 billion (what was considered) in 2022. The overall trade (goods and services) went beyond \$50 billion.

- Achieving the status of all-weather comprehensive stra-

tegic partnership was a logical result of Belarus' interaction with China. This level of partnership will help Belarus explore new promising avenues in all the key areas regardless of any external factors.

- The forthcoming accession of Belarus to the SCO as a full member opens new prospects. Today this organisation is one of the world's largest regional associations. As part of it, we will become stronger, and we will make it stronger by providing additional opportunities for co-operation in many areas.

On defence capability

- I'd like the public, including Belarusian public and the Western public, to know that Belarusian Polonez is as good and in many parameters better than the famous MLRS HIMARS that Ukrainians use today. An American weapon.

- Our army has also acquired an even more powerful missile system Iskander. This weapon is unmatched in the world. A weapon capable of carrying nuclear warheads. Our refitted aircraft can also carry nuclear munitions. I am convinced these measures will give pause to overseas hawks and their satellites. We will make them reckon with our nation if they cannot understand another language.

- I must say: if we have to, Putin and I will bring strategic nuclear weapons here, too. And those foreign scums, who are now trying to blow us up from the inside and from the outside, have to understand it. We will stop at nothing in defence of our countries, our states, and our peoples.

- Once again I'd like to calm down everyone, who worries about peace and security in our country: don't be afraid of anything, everything will be fine. We will defend peace as good as we can instead of destroying it... All the defence, security, and law enforcement agencies had been instructed to preserve peace in Belarusian land whatever the cost and the task is being fulfilled.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



April 2nd is Day of Unity of the Peoples of Belarus and Russia — one of the most significant dates of the Union State. Our countries have a great many points of co-operation, from the common Soviet past to the present, where we work together in the field of culture, industry and science. Now it is important to realise and determine the role and place of the integration association of the two Slavic peoples in modern geopolitical processes. Over the past 30 years, we have seen the active formation and strengthening of various unions, associations, alliances on economic, political and military principles. Why is the role of the Union State so important now and what is the future of our integration in global politics and economics? It is important to look at what has been achieved so far before answering these questions.

The geopolitical importance of the Union State: how the integration association of Belarus and Russia plays a key role in the region

Creating the future together

By **Aleksei Avdonin**, an analyst with the **Belarusian Institute of Strategic Research (BISR)**

From Brest to Vladivostok

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, emphasised the fact that the Union State is actually one Fatherland from Brest to Vladivostok more than once. Moreover, I constantly drew attention to the fact that integration should reach a new level. The events of recent years only confirmed the course towards rapprochement chosen by the leaders of the two states. The Presidents of Belarus and Russia are in constant contact, promptly resolving the most pressing issues in the economic sphere and in terms of ensuring security in the region. Obviously, they will discuss these issues at the upcoming meeting of the Supreme State Council of the Union State in early April.

Let us remember: On March 27th, Moscow hosted a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State headed by Prime Minister of Belarus Roman Golovchenko and Prime Minister of Russia Mikhail Mishustin. Following the talks, Roman Golovchenko said that Belarus and Russia had resolved the main, systemic issues of economic integration. In response to Western sanctions, the two states developed coordinated measures of strategic importance.

Now the two countries are confidently following the path of the economic component of union building. In 2022, Belarus increased exports to Russia by 40 percent. In addition, according to operational data, this trend continues in January, February and March 2023.

Interregional co-operation contributed to the record turnover. In 2022, more than a hundred delegations of various levels of constituent entities of the Russian Federation visited Belarus. Approximately the same number of visits of Belarusian delegations to Russian regions took place. Belarus has a positive balance in trade with Russia, that is, we supply more to the Russian market than we import. This is facilitated by the stability, despite all the challenges of the Russian economy. Belarusian enterprises are actively increasing supplies.

After 2020, when building integration co-operation under the conditions of sanctions, the most important task was solved — the reorientation of traffic flows and ensuring their economic benefits (cost reduction). Belarus and Russia managed to reduce tariffs. In addition, our country works with more than 20 Russian ports at fairly favourable rates, so everything is fine in this regard.

Now it can be stated that 28 programmes adopted by the heads of Belarus and Russia have worked. Almost 75 percent of the total number of tasks has been completed, eight programmes have been fully implemented.

They failed to separate us

Thanks to such productive work in the economic sphere, we were not covered by waves of economic crises, contrary to the intentions of certain Western politicians. Macroeconomic stability and financial stability of the economies of Belarus and Russia have been ensured.

On March 26th, the EU High Representative

for Foreign Affairs Josep Borrell said that the European Union is ready to impose new sanctions in case Russia deploys tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus.

But such ‘attempts’ by Washington and Brussels will no longer hold back the development of our flagships — Belarusian products are easily exported to Russia, the countries of the EAEU and the SCO.

It is important to note that the Union State became the prototype of larger integration associations, such as the EAEU, and served as the basis for the formation of political and economic models of interaction between Belarus and Russia with the countries of the Asia-Pacific region, the Middle East, Africa and Latin America.

Interestingly, on March 28th, ex-adviser to the President of the United States John Bolton said that ‘the possible absorption of Belarus is a problem that we do not pay attention to’. At the same time, at the end



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“Today, the countries of the post-Soviet space should be sincerely interested in rapprochement with the Union State, if, of course, they want to preserve their sovereignty and independence. We have seen that only together can we face global challenges. For the time being, those who still have doubts should understand: without the speedy unity and rallying, strengthening of interstate ties and simply normal human relations, we may not exist tomorrow.”

During a video address at the plenary session of the 9th Forum of Regions of Belarus and Russia on July 1st, 2022

Now all they have to say is that the integration of Belarus and Russia is an insignificant, unimportant process. In reality, the current development of the Union State means a great victory over the collective West.

Basis for other models

However, we cannot be complacent: the West is still extremely ‘interested’ in Belarus

WHAT DOES THE UNION STATE PROVIDE FOR PEOPLE

- **Simplified entry** (without customs control, migration card and Russian passport)
- **Simplified stay** (up to 90 days — without registration)
- **The right to choose a place of residence** (without taking into account the period of temporary stay and obtaining a temporary residence permit in the territory of both countries)
- **Equal access to education**
 - **Social security rights**
 - **Healthcare rights**

of 2019, all the ‘think tanks’ of the United States openly stated that it was necessary to use the gas conflict between Russia and Belarus to the maximum as a window of opportunity to prevent the strengthening of the integration of the two countries within the framework of the Union State.

In fact, through the mouth of John Bolton, the West admitted that it had missed the chance to inflame the conflict between Minsk and Moscow and lost.

and the issues of ‘pulling’ us away from Russia. It is no coincidence that the recent statement by US Secretary of State Anthony Blinken that Washington is considering the possibility of appointing a special representative for Belarus soon. Most likely, the latter will be engaged in ‘gathering’ political and destructive forces from the scattered Belarusian opposition.

Recently, Russian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Lavrov said for the *Razvedchik* magazine that now great importance is attached to the harmonisation of various integration mechanisms. In addition, it is the economy that should become the basis on which it is possible to build the architecture of peace and mutual trust in the future. This philosophy is also inherent in the idea of Vladimir Putin to create a Greater Eurasian Partnership (GEP). Interest in the Russian project has already been shown by the member states of the EAEU, SCO, ASEAN, including our Chinese and Indian friends.

In the logic of the GEP, work is underway to link the development plans of the EAEU and the Chinese Belt and Road Initiative. The deepening of integration within the framework of the Union State also makes a useful contribution to the common efforts.

Thus, the Union State acts as a kind of ideological progenitor of more complex, large-scale integration projects in the world (GEP, EAEU, SCO, ASEAN), which together change the dark future destined for all of us by the collective West.

A LARGE-SCALE SCIENTIFIC EVENT DEDICATED TO THE HOLIDAY DATE — THE CONGRESS OF YOUNG SCIENTISTS OF BELARUS AND RUSSIA — WAS HELD IN MINSK

The main idea of the congress is ‘Young scientists: tasks and areas of interaction for creating a common scientific and technological space of Belarus and Russia’. It was attended by about 500 young researchers of scientific organisations, higher educational institutions of the two countries — representatives of the National Research Centre Kurchatov Institute, the Russian Academy of Sciences and a number of its regional scientific centres, departments and institutes, as well as the National Academy of Sciences and dozens of leading universities and Research Institutes of Belarus.

Accurate response

Deployment of tactical warheads in Belarus will allow restoring the nuclear parity violated by the United States and its allies

On March 25th, the world media was shaken by a true sensation — Vladimir Putin announced that tactical nuclear weapons would be deployed in Belarus. The last straw that broke the patience of the Russian President was the information about the transfer of shells with depleted uranium by the UK to Ukraine. Aleksandr Lukashenko warned that raising rates to the limit by the West would lead to a Belarusian-Russian response, while talking to the press in Khatyn on March 23rd. Then the Head of State stated the following, "I'll say that Russia will supply us with ammunition with 'genuine' uranium." Several days passed, and the words of the President came true. The repeated request of the Belarusian side to deploy tactical nuclear weapons on our territory will be granted.

By Stanislav Fedoruk

When patience ends

Officially, Vladimir Putin announced that by July 1st a storage facility for special ammunition would be built in Belarus, and from April 3rd, Russian specialists would train the Belarusian military in the handling and combat use of tactical nuclear weapons. Nuclear bombs will be deployed on the territory of our country (for their use, 10 aircraft of the Belarusian Air Force were equipped in 2022), as well as, presumably, warheads for missiles of the Iskander complex, which was put into service with the Belarusian army this year and has a declared range of 500 kilometres.

Tactical nuclear weapons, unlike strategic ones, are designed to destroy large targets or concentrations of enemy troops on the front line or in the immediate rear. However, given the proximity of local decision-making centres and large NATO industrial and logistics complexes, tactical nuclear weapons can be used against them as well.

"We do not transfer. And the United States does not pass it on to its allies, we basically do everything that they have been doing for decades. They are preparing their (NATO allies) carriers, and their crews are preparing them. We are going to do the same," Vladimir Putin said in an interview with the Rossiya-24 TV channel.

The decision to use the atomic arsenal will be made by the Russian side according to the same principle that has been implemented in the NATO Joint Nuclear Missions, which have been operating for decades. This move makes it possible to deploy special munitions in Belarus without violating the provisions of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Nuclear Sharing programme referred to by Vladimir Putin involves the storage of American B61-type nuclear bombs at air bases in six European countries: Germany (Büchel), Belgium (Klein-Brogel), the Netherlands (Volkel), Italy (Aviano and Ghedi-Torre) and Turkey (Incirlik). In total, 160 bombs are located at these bases. The essence of the doctrine of the joint use of special munitions is that NATO states that do not own their own nuclear arsenal get access to US strategic weapons deployed on their territory.

At the same time, control over the activation codes for warheads remains with the US military. In fact, there is one American squadron with technical personnel and one aviation unit of the host country at each of the listed airfields.

They regularly work out introductions to the rapid deployment of nuclear bombs and the defeat of conditional targets. Thus, during last year's Steadfast Noon exercise, crews from the countries listed above, along with American, British and French pilots, trained over Belgium and the North Sea with full-size mock-ups of nuclear bombs.

He who has ears to hear, let him hear

Similar activities will be conducted from the summer and the armed forces of the Union State. It should be noted that this step was forced, but the leadership of Belarus and Russia could not do otherwise. The danger of unleashing NATO aggression against Belarus has been steadily growing over the past few years.

Poland is going to radically increase its army and has already begun rearmament with the latest American and South Korean models. The Baltic states are literally crammed with NATO troops, and exercises of the French, Americans, Danes, Canadians and other representatives of 'democratic' states do not stop for a day at its training grounds. Moreover, the once fraternal Ukraine perceived Belarus as a bitter enemy and now cherishes the idea of an armed coup in our country — do you think Kalinovsky regiment and other terrorist groups do not coordinate their appeals with the SBU?

For the first time, Aleksandr Lukashenko announced the possibility of deploying Russian nuclear weapons in Belarus at the end of November 2021 in an interview with Director General of the MIA Rossiya Segodnya Dmitry Kiselyov. Let us remember that at that moment Poland was actively gathering troops to the Belarusian border under the cover of an artificially created migration crisis.

The statement of the Head of State was more than a transparent hint to the Western neighbours. However, the Duda-Morawiecki regime and its overseas patrons pretended not to understand anything and continued to escalate. The next step was Poland's activity in joining the mentioned Nuclear Sharing programme. In response, Russia upgraded Belarusian aircraft for the use of nuclear weapons. Nevertheless, the West still thought that in the end it would conquer Lukashenko and Putin. But they failed.

Peace under the shadow of nuclear missiles

The deployment of Russian nuclear weapons is a guarantee of peace and tranquillity in Belarus in conditions when we are surrounded on three sides by unfriendly states that are preparing gangs of militants on their territory to overthrow the authorities elected by the Belarusian people.

The idea is extremely simple: the probability of an attack on a country that has its own atomic weapons or participates in joint nuclear missions with a friendly superpower is vanishingly small.

The armed conflicts of recent decades only confirm this thesis. Yugoslavia, Iraq, Libya, Syria — all these countries did not have an atomic bomb, and therefore were attacked from outside. Only Syria managed to survive with a monstrous effort and with the help of Russia, but even so, the price paid for survival turned out to be very high. At the same time, the DPRK, which has worked hard to create its own nuclear shield, has achieved considerable success, and now it can give a symmetrical response to any threat from Seoul, Washington or Tokyo. Moreover, Kim Jong-un and his designers do not rest on their laurels — only this year several new samples were presented at once, including a 600-mm MLRS with nuclear missiles, as well as an underwater drone, an analogue of the Russian Poseidon, capable of reaching any Pacific base of the USA.

Now compare: Libya and Iraq, which did not have access to special ammunition and are now in ruins after the arrival of 'democracy' or North Korea, which, despite regular provocations along the borders, no one in their right mind will dare to attack, because they will immediately get into response to all 20 available nuclear warheads. What fate do you want for Belarus — a peace under the shadow of nuclear missiles or chaos and collapse? I think the answer is obvious.



Nuclear arsenal of other countries (in warheads)

China	350
France	290
UK	225
Pakistan	165
India	160
Israel	90
North Korea	20

Currently, 9 countries have nuclear weapons. These are Great Britain, Israel, India, China, North Korea, Pakistan, Russia, USA and France. According to the Federation of American Scientists, at the beginning of 2022, Russia had 5977 nuclear warheads, the United States — 5428.



SAFETY

Belarusian Land Treasures



GOMEL REGION

The Republic of Belarus is located in the centre of Europe and is one of the 15 largest countries in this part of the world. Belarus is often called a 'blue-eyed country': there are thousands of lakes, rivers and protected forests. But the country is interesting not only for its unique nature. Each region of Belarus has its own modern industrial giants, amazing historical sites and sights.

Belarus consists of six regions: Brest, Vitebsk, Gomel, Grodno, Minsk and Mogilev. Minsk — the capital of the Republic of Belarus — retains an independent status and is not part of any regions. The MT presents the project called *Belarusian Land Treasures*. Today we will go to the Gomel Region — the largest region of the country, which has large natural, economic and intellectual resources.

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"Skilful, hardworking, courageous people who are infinitely devoted to the Motherland live in the Gomel Region... With your hard creative work, you turned the once ancient rural region into an industrial region with a high culture, developed science, medicine and education. Together we managed to revive part of the lands affected by the Chernobyl disaster and create decent living conditions for people... Gomel Region is the largest in Belarus in terms of territory, there are rich natural and intellectual resources, oil and gas are extracted, cellulose, agricultural machinery are produced and many promising investment projects are being implemented. There is something to be proud of and something to offer guests."

From the congratulations of the Head of State on January 15th, 2023

Historical journey, interesting facts

The Gomel Region — the south-eastern region of Belarus — celebrated its 85th anniversary at the beginning of the year.

Humans began to settle in the territory of the Gomel Region in the Middle Paleolithic Age (100-40 thousand years ago). It was in the Gomel Region that scientists discovered the most ancient sites of primitive people in Belarus (about 26-23 thousand years BC). From here, from the south, the development of the territories of modern Belarus began after the retreat of the last glacier in the 12th millennium BC.

According to ancient sources, two East Slavic tribes lived in the Gomel Region in the 9th-12th centuries — the Dregoviches and the Radimichs.

Turov is the oldest city in the Gomel Region, first mentioned in the *Tale of Bygone Years* in 980. The fact that Turov is one of the oldest centres of writing and annals is evidenced by a fragment of the *Gospel* of the 11th century found here in 1866, the most ancient book on the territory of Belarus. A glorious representative of the Belarusian culture of the 12th century, the theologian, church leader and writer Kirill Turovsky, lived and worked in Turov.

Gomel is also one of the oldest cities in Belarus. For the first time Homiy — such is the ancient name of Gomel — was mentioned in the *Hypatian Codex* of 1142.

Many famous personalities have the Gomel Region ancestry. Historian, ethnographer, founder of Belarusian national historiography Mitrofan Dovnar-Zapolsky was born in Rechitsa. The future Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Soviet Union, the representative of the USSR to the UN (the legendary 'Mr. No') Andrei Gromyko was born in the Gomel Region. Mikhail Plisetsky, the father of the legendary ballerina Maya Plisetskaya, was a native of Gomel.

People's Artist of Belarus Gavriil Vashchenko, playwright and screenwriter Andrei Makayonok, People's Writer of the BSSR Ivan Melezh, People's Artist of Belarus Mikhail Finberg were also of Gomel origin.

Because of the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant in April 1986, 13 districts of the Gomel Region were seriously affected. Their revival and sustainable development are under the constant control of the Head of State — the President personally visits the Chernobyl regions every year. Thanks to a balanced and targeted strategy for the rehabilitation of the affected areas, these territories are now gaining new life and, importantly, becoming attractive for investment.

Territory and population

The territory of the modern Gomel Region is almost forty and a half thousand square kilometres, which is one fifth of the territory of the country.

The population of the Gomel Region is about one and a half million people. About 580 thousand people are economically active. Gomel occupies the second place in the country after Minsk in terms of population (more than 500 thousand people).

Economic development

The Gomel Region is the largest industrial region of the country. More than 20 percent of the country's industrial production is concentrated in the region.

The main types of economic activity that determine the development of the real sector of the economy are the production of petroleum products, metallurgical production, the production of machinery and equipment, the extraction of fuel and energy minerals, chemical production, processing industry and others.

All Belarusian oil and gas are extracted in the Gomel Region, all Belarusian cellulose, more than 90 percent of harvesters, steel and polished glass, over 80 percent of wallpaper, edible salt, porcelain products, more than half of automotive fuel are produced in the Gomel Region.

More than 1,500 enterprises operate here, including a number of giants whose products are known far beyond the borders of Belarus. Among them are Mozyr Oil Refinery, Mozyrsalt, BMZ, the Management Company of the holding company Belarusian Metallurgical Company, Spartak and the famous for its condensed milk Rogachev Milk Canning Plant, Belorusneft, Gomselmash, SvetlogorskKhimvolokno, Gomelsteklo, Svetlogorsk Pulp and Cardboard Mill, Gomeldrev, Rechitsa Hardware Plant.

As for agriculture, the Gomel Region has the longest growing season in the country. The main agricultural sectors are meat and dairy

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Turov Gospel — the oldest book on Belarusian land



Day of Belarusian Written Language in Rogachev



Spartak chocolate



Belorusneft oil field in Rechitsa District

farming, vegetable growing and potato growing, as well as flax production. There are 219 agricultural enterprises in the region.

In 1998, the free economic zone Gomel-Raton was created, its territories are located not only in Gomel itself, but also in 12 cities of the region.

Capital from more than 30 countries of the world works in the Gomel Region, about 300 enterprises with foreign investments operate here.

Organisations of the region co-operate with foreign trade partners from more than 115 countries of the world. Trade with the Russian Federation, Germany, Ukraine, Poland, the Baltic countries, Azerbaijan, China, Kazakhstan is developing most actively.

Natural wealth and mineral resources

There are 414 rivers in the Gomel Region, the largest of which are the Dnieper River, Pripyat River, Sozh River, Berezina River, Iput River. There are 429 lakes in the region. Of these, Chervonoye Lake, Belaye Lake, Krushinovskoye Lake, Revucheye Lake, Staroye Lake are widely known.

Almost half of the territory of the region is covered with forests. The Gomel Region ranks first in terms of forest reserves in Belarus.

The Polesie State Radioecological Reserve is located in the Gomel Region — the only one of its kind in the world in which territories that have been exposed to radioactive effects after the accident at the Chernobyl Nuclear Power Plant are studied and preserved in their natural state.

The Pripyatsky National Park is located on the territory of the Gomel Region, where the unique landscapes of the Belarusian Polesie have been preserved almost in their original state. This is the only place on the planet where there are primeval floodplain oak forests. The avifauna of the Pripyat floodplain includes more than 250 species of birds, or 80 percent of the avifauna of the entire country. That is why tourists from all over the world come to the national park to watch birds, 65 species of which are included in the IUCN Red List.

Among the minerals that are of particular importance for the national economy of the region are fuel and energy raw materials. In 1964, the first industrial oil was produced near Rechitsa. Today, more than 100 million tonnes have been produced. 1.8 million tonnes are mined annually. Rich deposits of potash and rocksalt, brown coal, oil shale, glass sand, and chalk are compactly located. There are also building stone, granite, clay and others. About 1500 peat deposits have been explored. There are prerequisites in the region for the identification and preparation for the industrial development of new types of raw materials — gypsum, basalt fibers, mineral sorbents and iodine-bromine brines.

Culture and main attractions

The originality of history, traditions, spiritual and material culture in every corner of the Gomel Region is explored and conveyed to visitors by 26 museum institutions. The most famous of them is the Gomel Palace and Park Ensemble. The Palace of the Rumyantsevs and the Paskeviches is one of the five most popular attractions in Belarus, an architectural monument of the late 18th century.

Among other iconic architectural monuments that are popular with residents and guests of the region are the Cathedral of St. Peter and Paul in Gomel, the Church of St. Michael the Archangel of the 18th century in Mozyr, the Holy Assumption Cathedral of the 19th century and the Holy Trinity Church of the early 20th century in Rechitsa and Castle Hill in Turov. The Yurovichi Monastery, whose history began in the distant 1673, is one of the oldest architectural monuments of the Gomel Region.

Stone crosses are among the sights of the Polesie region. According to legend, these crosses came to Turov along the Dnieper and Pripyat Rivers from Kiev right after the Christianisation of Kievan Rus' in the 10th century. Four crosses have survived to this day in Turov and its environs.

In Vetka there is a unique museum of the Old Believers and Belarusian traditions, founded in 1978, not only on a regional scale, but throughout the country. Here you can see books from the Kremlin cathedrals with notes and comments of the kings, icons, handwritten and early printed books of the 15th-19th centuries, weaving collections, archaeological finds.

Numerous festivals, competitions, plein airs are held on the territory of the region, in which hundreds of people from Belarus and around the world take part.

In its anniversary year, the Gomel Region will again become the venue for a number of creative forums: the International Children's Competition Music of Hope, the republican festivals of folk humor *Avtyuki* in the Kalinkovich District and folklore art *Beraginya* in Oktyabrsky, etc. **All these achievements have become possible thanks to the creative activity of many generations. Energy, strength and talent of thousands of people, boundless love for their small homeland of every inhabitant of the Gomel Region were the key components of labour victories.**

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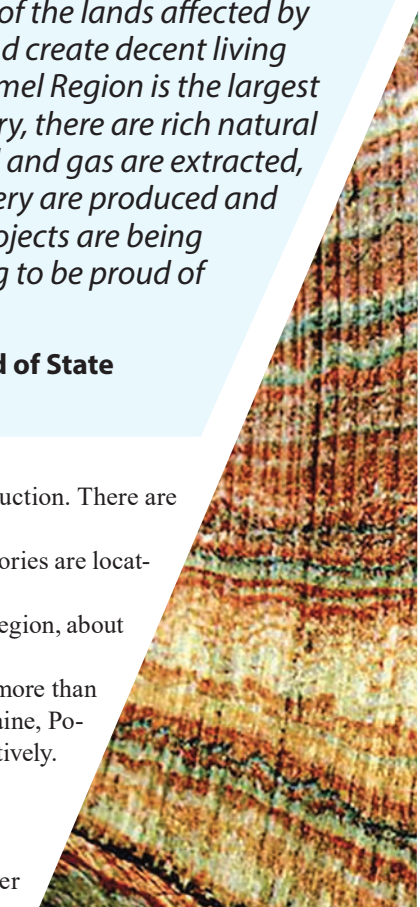
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Mining of the Starobinskoye potash salts deposit



The Pripjatsky National Park



Gomselmash harvester



The Palace of the Rumyantsevs and the Paskeviches

Monument to Kirill of Turov

Cranberry — red gold of Polesie





Gun violence in US

Gun Violence Archive reports 130 mass shootings in three months as fresh shooting at a private Christian grade school in Nashville claimed six more lives — the latest bloodshed in an epidemic of gun violence turning US schools into killing zones

Shooting incidents in the US in 2022 claimed the lives of over 43,600 people. Of these, more than 37,900 people were injured, including 4,500 children. More than 1,600 children were killed. Nothing has changed in 2023 either. In less than three months alone, over 10,000 people in the US have died from gun violence, including 401 children, according to the Gun Violence Archive — which is an average of more than 114 deaths each day.

There have been 130 mass shootings so far this year, according to the non-profit research group. The tracker shows that the number of people who have committed suicide with firearms

since the beginning of the year has reached 5,742 while 4,266 others have died in homicides, murders, accidental discharges and defensive gun use.

The surge in violence has reignited what has now become a familiar and highly political debate in the US over gun ownership rights and legislation.

US President Joe Biden said that he's exhausted what he can do through executive action on gun control as he called on Congress to act following the nation's latest mass shooting — a massacre at a Nashville private school that killed three children and three adults.

"I have gone the full extent of my executive authority, to do on my own

anything about guns," Biden said. "The Congress has to act. The majority of the American people think having assault weapons is bizarre, a crazy idea. They're against that."

Biden renewed his push for Congress to reinstate the nation's ban on assault weapons and high-capacity magazines, which expired in 2004, and to close loopholes for gun background checks after the deadly shooting at The Covenant School in Nashville.

"The last time we passed an assault weapons ban, violent shootings went down," Biden said. "I can't do anything except plead with Congress to act reasonably."

China completes first Yuan-settled LNG trade

China completed its first purchase of liquefied natural gas (LNG) using cross-border Yuan settlement. It comes amid rising acceptance of the Yuan in the international market.

China National Offshore Oil Corporation (CNOOC), the largest offshore oil and gas producer in China, purchased a shipment of LNG from TotalEnergies through Shanghai Petroleum and Natural Gas Exchange (SHPGX), according to the official WeChat account of SHPGX.

The transaction was completed in cross border Yuan settlement and the transaction volume was about 65,000 tonnes. The LNG is sourced from the United Arab Emirates.

The deal, which marks the first international LNG transaction settled in Yuan, is a meaningful attempt to promote multi-currency pricing, settlement and cross-border payment in international LNG trading, said SHPGX Chairman Guo Xu. It also provides a new channel for international players to participate in the Chinese market, helping to build a new pattern of dual circulation in China.



Moreover, China and Brazil have also reached a deal to trade in their own currencies, ditching the US Dollar as an intermediary, the Brazilian government said, Beijing's latest salvo against the almighty greenback.

NATO should answer for 1999 bombing

According to Serbian experts, NATO dropped 15 tonnes of depleted uranium munitions over the three months of the bombing campaign

The Belgrade Forum for the World of Equals, an organisation embracing influential Serbian diplomats, political analysts, and military and medical professionals, has called for the resumption of the work conducted by the parliamentary commission investigating the consequences of the use of depleted uranium bombs during NATO's aggression against the former Yugoslavia in 1999.

"[We plan] to submit three requests to the government: firstly, to demand that the work of the parliamentary commission and inter-ministerial body for the investigation of the consequences of the use of depleted uranium weapons during NATO's aggression be resumed. Second-

ly, that work on compiling an exact list of all civilian victims of the aggression be completed by the 25th anniversary of NATO's aggression in March of next year. Thirdly, we demand that the chapters covering NATO's aggression in all textbooks for educational establishments at all levels be analysed to ensure that they are providing a truthful interpretation of events," the Forum said in a statement.

On March 24th, 1999, NATO began a military operation against the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. NATO leadership claimed that the prevention of genocide against the ethnic Albanian population in Kosovo was the main rationale for launching the operation, dubbed Allied Force.



Israel protesters vow to continue

'Historic' strikes leave Israel at standstill with crowds in streets to protest judicial reform

Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu announced a pause on his controversial judicial reforms to 'allow dialogue' and avoid a 'civil war' — succumbing to growing pressure from within his own coalition after one of the biggest protests in Israel's history. The proposed changes would see the Supreme Court's ability to rule laws unconstitutional taken away from it and would give the government a greater say in the selection of judges, proposals that angered many in Israel.

People had been protesting against the proposed 'reforms' for months, but after news of Netanyahu firing Defence Minister Yoav Gallant one day after the latter called for a halt to the process, tens of thousands gathered in the streets in a show of spontaneous anger.

Painting the protesters as extremists, Netanyahu portrayed his capitulation to

the opposition in terms of the biblical character King Solomon, famous for his wisdom and tolerance. "I am not ready to tear the country apart" announced Netanyahu, referring to the growing rift between leading members of the military and his own government. "It is forbidden that there will be a civil war".

With the large Histadrut labour federation announcing a 'historic strike', departing flights at Ben Gurion Airport were halted, alongside universities, malls and many other institutions across the country for the day.

Israeli society, which views its mandatory civilian army as essential to protecting the country, proved to be extremely sensitive to the firing of a defence minister — especially under the current conditions and with the perception of Netanyahu's self-serving political motive.



The bloody march of Americanism

March is a special month for the memory of the victims of the American aggressors. On March 16th, 1968, C Company (Charlie), 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry Regiment, US Army, massacred the civilian population of the rural community of Son My in South Vietnam under the command of Captain Ernest Medina. As a result of a punitive operation that lasted several hours, 504 civilians were killed, including 210 children. Many victims were subjected to cruel torture before their death, women were subjected to gang rape... Punishers, brutalised from impunity, threw grenades at homes, threw children still alive into wells. The Star-Spangled Democrats have managed to compete even with hardened scumbags, like the killers from the Dirlewanger Brigade.

The United States committed hundreds of war crimes after World War II, but was never punished

By Anton Popov

Born to kill

C Company, which became the main anti-hero of this story, purposefully went to its crime. According to eyewitnesses, Captain Medina, speaking at a memorial service for a staff sergeant blown up by a mine, called for revenge. On the morning of March 16th, he announced to his subordinates that there were no civilians in the village, but only Viet Cong guerrillas.

The same command stated that after cleaning up the house, outbuildings and rice fields should be burned, and all animals should be killed in order to deprive the Viet Cong of food.

It is impossible to interpret these words otherwise than as a direct instruction to commit a war crime.

What happened in Son My was hidden from the world community for almost a year. The invaders continued to commit cruelties unseen since the World War II, and the whole world remained in the dark. It was possible to break through the veil of silence by accident: helicopter gunner Ronald Ridenhour wrote down the rumours about the 'bloody harvest' heard from friends during the service and, after demobilisation, handed them over to President Nixon, the Pentagon, the State Department and a number of senators. However, of all, only Congressman Morris Odell responded, who managed to launch an investigation into the punitive action.

Seymour Hersh, the same brave journalist who in February 2023 provided the world with evidence of US guilt in undermining the Nord Stream, took a significant part in the publication of information about the massacre in Son My.

However, the American system of its faithful servants, even if their hands are up to the elbows in the blood of innocents, does not give up to the last. Of the 80 involved in the crime, six people appeared before the tribunal, of which five were acquitted. The only member of the

punitive raid who received at least some punishment was Lieutenant William Kelly. He was sentenced to life hard labour for the murder of 22 people, but after 3 days, he was transferred to house arrest, from where he was pardoned in November 1974.

Speaking of Son My, one cannot fail to mention the reaction of the American society to the sentence of Lieutenant Kelly.

Thousands of people sent letters to Nixon and the head of the Pentagon with a request to release the punisher. According to opinion polls, 71 percent of the US population reacted negatively to the verdict, and 51 percent even said that the head of the White House should immediately pardon Kelly.

This example clearly shows that the Charlie Company killers were the product of a xenophobic, violent society. The action in Son My was not the result of intelligence errors, but was a targeted extermination of the civilian population, for which no one was ever held responsible.

Impunity gives birth to monsters

The purposeful extermination of civilian objects and civilians was a characteristic feature of the American strategy in Vietnam. The Nazis used similar methods during the World War II, and the Americans learned a lot from them in terms of a systematic approach to the destruction of people.

Son My has become only a textbook example of the atrocities of the US soldiers, largely due to the resonance in the media. Other no less brutal crimes remained in the shadows. For example, Operation Rolling Thunder, which lasted from March 2nd, 1965 to October 31st, 1968. In its course, US aircraft destroyed hundreds of objects in North Vietnam, including water pipes, power plants, bridges and residential areas of Hanoi and other large cities, killing up to 180,000 civilians along the way. Planes with white stars on their wings deliberately burned rice fields with napalm,



trying to cause starvation among the Vietnamese. No one was held responsible for this aerial genocide either.

Americans are characterised by unhealthy cynicism — they called the aircraft carrier formations that ensured terrorist attacks on the DRV the Tonkin Gulf Yacht Club.

However, if in Vietnam the punishers were still 'working' on the ground and the people's avengers had a chance to deal with a dozen or two self-satisfied Yankees, then by the end of the century the strategy of unlimited air warfare prevailed, which most clearly manifested itself during the 78-day bombing of Yugoslavia, which began on March 24th, 1999.

Unleashed dirty hands

According to Yugoslav sources, Operation Allied Force caused the death of 1,700 people, including 400 children.

Human Rights Watch, known for its bias, counted only 528 victims. NATO planes destroyed hospitals and social infrastructure facilities. In one of the episodes of the war, two rockets hit a passenger train, killing 14 civilians, including women and children. The commander-in-chief of the joint forces in Europe, Wesley Clark, then cynically called the tragedy an accident and explained that the pilot did not see the train on the bridge. However, it is clearly visible on the published recording: the American coolly watched the train on the bridge...

It is symptomatic that Joe Biden, then a senator, was one of the most ardent supporters of the bombing and, moreover, called for the occupation of Yugoslavia in general.

According to the China Society for Human Rights Research, between 1945 and 2001, the United States initiated 201 of the 248 military conflicts on Earth. Thirty three of them are characterised by experts as large. In addition, this is not even taking into account a whole series of wars and colour revolutions, the Arab Spring, as well as the actual destruction of Ukraine, which began after the Maidan 2014 and continues to this day. Dirty hands and interests of America are visible in 80 percent of all power crises of the second half of the last — the beginning of this century.

Washington has only two main interests: influence and resources, and most often they go hand in hand.

For their sake, the United States is ready to commit the most terrible war crimes. As long as America remained in the position of world hegemon, it got away with it — a shining city on a hill skilfully manipulated international laws and interpreted them in its favour. The new world order, based on justice and respect for each other's interests and supported by Belarus, Russia, China, Iran and other progressive countries, must firstly restore the violated law and with all efforts continue to prevent bloody horrors like Son My and the bombing of Yugoslavia.



Linen and silk with special chic



Aleksey Bibikov

Snow-white towels, the patterns on which are woven not with colour, but with an intricate relief on the fabric, are the unique white-patterned weaving of Ponemonie (Neman River area), a historical and cultural value of our country. The technique of creating such beauty is so complex that the tradition of its use has developed and taken root only among the needlewomen of Lida District. Among those who still carefully keep the secrets of creating such woven fabrics is Valentina Silvanovich, a folk craftswoman of Belarus, an employee of the Department of Crafts and Traditional Culture of the Lida District Centre of Culture and Folk Art.



The folk craftswoman from Lida Valentina Silvanovich wove over a hundred towels, never repeating the pattern

By Katerina Charovskaya

Closeness to the roots

Needlework is an occupation familiar for Valentina Genrikhovna from her childhood. As a schoolgirl, she sewed clothes for dolls, knitted and crocheted. In winter, a special place was given to a loom in a village house. The craftswoman recalls that they installed it in the hut of her own aunt after the New Year and actively used it until spring — at a time when there is a pause in field work and rural women can devote their free time to weaving. The family kept sheep, sheared them and stored wool, and also bought coloured yarn in large quantities. Therefore, by winter, usually half the room was clogged with thread. During the season, Valentina's grandmother and two aunts managed to turn them into wonderful towels, bedspreads and carpets.

"We children were allowed to wind the spools, which were then inserted into the looper. The wool was grey and milky. White is usually dyed. After it acquired a different colour, the skeins had to be unwound — this was also our duty," the craftswoman shares her memories.

When it came time to choose a profession, Valentina Silvanovich decided to become a handicraft teacher, later she received a higher education and, in addition, she was able to teach children the Belarusian language and literature. She devoted 16 years to pedagogy: she taught children in a rural school the wisdom of needlework, her native language and culture.

White on white

She had to change her occupation after moving to Lida: the family got an apartment here. Having come to work at the district centre of culture and folk art, Valentina met her former student here, whom she once taught to sew, knit, and cook at handicraft lessons. But this time, her student already acted as a mentor, an experienced weaver, passing on her skills. So, in 2015, Valentina Silvanovich sat down at the handloom for the first time.

"Little by little I learned this art. A distinctive feature of towels made using the technique of white-patterned weaving is a rich snow-white fabric, along the edges of which there can be a coloured pattern and lace. The authentic material for them was bleached linen threads. Later, about a century ago, it was considered especially chic to add silk to linen. It was not so easy to get a silk thread, but in order for the fabric to have a special shine, the locals went after it on foot to the Lithuanian Salcininkai. Another element of the chic of that time was the weaving of shiny red threads into the fabric of the towel, with ropes from which bales with various goods were tied. The natural colour of linen is grey, but our ancestors wanted the fabric to be more festive. In order for the linen to become snow-white, the finished linen was laid out in a meadow. In winter, they wove, and in summer the sun and rain gave the fabric the right colour. A week was enough — and the fabric brightened. As for the coloured part, since there were no chemical dyes before, natural ones

were used. Orange — onion skins, black and grey — soot, green — tree leaves, greenish yellow — nettles, red — beets," the craftswoman says.

Valentina Silvanovich is sure that the most difficult thing in weaving is not the process of creating a patterned fabric, but preparing the handloom. Usually there were few women who mastered this art in the village — one or two. They were specially invited to prepare the machine, of course, for a certain fee. It is very difficult to distribute the threads evenly over the warp winding shaft. It is impossible for at least one thread to sag or stretch unnecessarily: such a defect will later affect the quality of the fabric, and it will be insane waste of the time, effort and material spent.

Therefore, when the craftswomen were busy preparing the handloom, the door to the house was bolted so that at that time no one would come in and distract them from this responsible occupation. It is enough to lose concentration for a very short time — and a mistake will be made, which will become noticeable only on the finished fabric. Such work required almost a day, or even more. For example, for a towel it is necessary to stretch 640 threads.

Endless story

Restoring the traditional technique of white-patterned weaving, Lida craftspeople initially focused on authentic historical ornaments, examples of which were at their disposal. Later they supplemented the variety with their own patterns.

"During the work in this technique, we were able to make sure that it was indeed widespread in this area. Sometimes you want to try to weave something of your own, but authentic towels with new patterns are constantly brought to us. You see them — and you want to try to weave one, the other, and the third... So that you understand: white-patterned weaving includes a dozen techniques, and in one technique, for example, four types of towels are obtained. And there are an incredible number of patterns: checkers, stripes, streams and rows... Only I have woven more than a hundred towels together with a colleague, and at the same time we have never repeated the same pattern," Valentina Silvanovich shares her observations.

Recently, Valentina Silvanovich received the title of People's Master of Belarus. She has made a lot of efforts to revive the unique old craft over the years of her passion for weaving, and today she is doing everything to captivate Lida schoolchildren with traditional needlework. By the way, among those who once visited the centre with a class during the excursion, there were girls who later came here to learn white-patterned weaving. They are ready to pick up the baton of preserving this amazing historical and cultural value.



BELTA





When the fox preaches, take care of your geese

The International Olympic Committee, on the eve of the next meeting of its Executive Board, which is taking place these days, tried to lay softly, voicing the agenda and hinting that some breakthrough decisions would be made regarding the admission of athletes from Belarus and Russia to international starts. 'Tis hard to credit now, though fresh is its renown. Which is what happened — it turned out to be hard to sleep.

Inquisitors from the International Olympic Committee should stop mocking Belarusian and Russian athletes

Bach's racial theory

By Sergei Kanashits

Such decisions can be described as follows: they offer a hand and trip at the same time. After the meeting of the Executive Board, Bach announced the adopted resolutions. Formally, the IOC seems to look like a good-natured and truthful person, recommends all international organisations to allow Russian and Belarusian athletes to competitions, advocates for peacekeeping, calls for respect for human rights and not to allow discrimination based on nationality. In fact, the accepted Draconian restrictions and admission conditions look akin to an invitation to slavery and break all the principles of world sport that existed before.

Recently, the IOC does not look like an apologist for Olympic values at all. Rather, a cunning sharper, whose soul is saturated with vile political dirt. The once respected and authoritative organisation with an impeccable reputation has turned into a farce. They pull the puppets' strings with a smile: serve two masters — we will all dance. The statements made these days are the height of cynicism. Interestingly, stones flew at Bach from all sides. Both from the one whom he tried to 'benefit', and from those with whom he rows in the same boat. Poland, Finland, the Czech Republic, Germany, after the current recommendations of the IOC, hysterically screamed about the 'shame' and 'slap in the face'. In addition, the ardent and implacable anti-Russian Dominik Hašek, once known as a hockey goalkeeper who did not hesitate to play for the Moscow Spartak and earn millions there, subjected Bach to rabid criticism, saying that the head of the IOC is either completely corrupt or crazy. Everyone judges for themselves, but you know, here it is quite possible to agree with the Czech nationalist who has flown off the coils. Only an insane person would offer such conditions as a step towards defusing relations and reducing the degree of conflict. Check it out.

There are many questions. Why, for example, are teams forbidden to perform? Are they not people? And why are athletes who have a contract with military organisations, national security agencies not allowed? In many countries and sports, the system is built in such a way that athletes are assigned to similar organ-

OFFICIAL POSITION OF THE NOC OF BELARUS

The National Olympic Committee (NOC) of Belarus has taken note of the statement issued by the Executive Board of the International Olympic Committee on 28 March and views it as an attempt to rectify the discriminatory decision of last year. The NOC of Belarus sees the statement as the willingness of the leadership of the International Olympic Committee to find a way out of the situation. At the same time, we disagree with the recommendations of the IOC regarding the participation of Belarusian and Russian athletes in international competitions. Unreasonable restrictions, like the ban on the display of national symbols, participation in team events and affiliation with law enforcement agencies, are absolutely discriminatory. We want to tell with all responsibility that the interests

of athletes will be the major factor in the NOC's decision-making. Special attention will be paid to the terms of participation of Belarusians in international competitions that will be offered by international federations.

We want to emphasise that the NOC of Belarus will not allow any disrespect for our athletes who have always showed a great deal of determination and effort while representing Belarus at international events and have made a significant contribution to the development of the Olympic movement.

We are all interested in a speedy end to the difficult period in world sport and call on the International Olympic Committee, international sports organisations, national Olympic committees to remain fully committed to Olympic principles, to unite, not divide athletes from all over the world.

- Athletes with Russian and Belarusian passports must only compete as Individual Neutral Athletes (to be abbreviated as AIN).
- The outfit of Belarusian and Russian athletes must be completely white or one colour.
- National teams of athletes with Russian and Belarusian passports cannot be represented as participants in international competitions.
- Athletes who actively support special military operation cannot compete. Personnel who actively support special military operation cannot be invited to international competitions.
- Athletes who have a contract with Russian or Belarusian military organisations, national security agencies, cannot be participants in international competitions. The same goes for staff.



isations. In biathlon, for example, shooting and all sorts of martial arts... Dozens of athletes from Italy, Germany, Austria, China, South Korea, the legendary Martin Fourcade and Dorothea Wierer, Simon Eder and Dario Cologna — they are just from this cohort. Even in the US team, where the sports system is generally arranged differently, there were 19 military athletes at the Tokyo Games. In the French team — 54. They are admitted. Of course they are, because this is different.

In addition, the IOC advised not to include awards won by neutral athletes from Russia and Belarus in the team

medal standings. That is, you can compete, but only in the status of an outcast underlined by bold lines. Moreover, even in this number of disenfranchised outcasts, you still need to try to get into it. How? Bach recommended that international sports federations create special commissions that would decide whether this or that athlete supported the war against Ukraine or not. Objectivism is so rushing, justice and human rights as the highest value at the head of everything: bravo! It remains only to come up with a special ghetto where neutral athletes will be settled, where they will eat (gruel)

and rest (behind bars). This is the purest sports holocaust, don't you think?

Bach insolently says that everyone needs to avoid the principle of punishing a person only for having this or that passport (we modestly keep silent about having a different opinion), but at the same time he spits on the UN statements and does the exact opposite.

The Russian skier Veronika Stepanova, the champion of the Beijing 2022 Olympics, briefly and clearly said about this, "Just go to hell with your own conditions and recommendations!"

ARENA

• Judoists from Belarus won five awards at the international tournament in Khabarovsk

Athletes from Armenia, India, Mongolia, Serbia, Tajikistan and Russia, as well as seventeen representatives of the national team of Belarus, which participated in the tournament for the first time this year, took part in the competition dedicated to the founder of Russian judo Vasili Oshchepkov. Athletes competed for medals in 14 weight categories, Belarusian judoists climbed the podium five times: twice to the second step and three times to the third.

• Belarusian cyclists won ten medals at competitions in Uzbekistan

More than 60 athletes from Belarus, Uzbekistan, Russia, Kazakhstan and Hong Kong took part in the international cycling competitions on the Silk Road Namangan II track under the auspices of the International Cycling Union (UCI). During three competitive days, the Belarusian team won 4 gold, 2 silver and 4 bronze medals. Our Roman Tishkov was the two-time winner of the Silk Road Namangan, who first became the strongest in the omnium, and then, together with Denis Mazur, won the madison.

• Belarusian gymnasts won 22 medals at competitions in Yekaterinburg

The international competitions in gymnastic sports 2023 Legend Challenge Games included competitions in four gymnastic disciplines: sports acrobatics, sports aerobics, artistic gymnastics and rhythmic gymnastics. More than 2,500 athletes from 13 countries took part in the complex event: Belarus, Russia, Armenia, Israel, Kazakhstan, Cyprus, Kyrgyzstan, China, Moldova, Mongolia, Syria, Turkmenistan and Uzbekistan. As a result, Belarusian athletes won 2 gold, 3 silver and 17 bronze medals.



Anton Stepanishchev

Photo of the week

At the *Grace International* competition of national cultures, creativity and beauty in Vitebsk

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On April 6th, 1896, the Games of the I Olympiad opened in Athens (Greece). The French Baron Pierre de Coubertin

was ideological inspirer of the revival of the Olympic Games. The first modern Games featured 241 all-male athletes from 14 countries. The programme of the first Games included 9 athletic disciplines. After the success of the Games of the I Olympiad, it was decided to hold them regularly every four years in a leap year.

April 7th is World Health Day. On April 7th, 1948, the World Health Organisation (WHO) was created, and its constitution came into force. Belarus has been a member of the World Health Organisation since its foundation. 194 countries of the world are members of the WHO.



April 7th is Annunciation to the Blessed Virgin Mary in Orthodoxy, one of the most significant holidays. It was established in memory of the event when the archangel Gabriel, sent by God to the city of Nazareth, informed the Virgin Mary about the immaculate conception and the

birth of the Son of the Most High by her. It is believed that it was on this day that the Holy Spirit descended on Mary, and she conceived the Divine Infant Jesus.



On April 7th, 1795, France passed the Law on the Introduction of the Metric System of Measures, which,

among other things, defined the units of length — metre and mass — kilogramme. The metric system of measures was conceived as international from the very beginning, so its units did not coincide with any national systems.

On April 7th, 1827, the first modern matches were sold. English pharmacist John Walker came up with his invention quite by accident. He mixed the chemicals with a stick, at the end of which a dried drop formed. To remove it, he struck a stick on the floor and a fire broke out. On April 7th, 1827, the first commercial transaction took place: Walker sold the first matches, which consisted of a mixture of bartholium salt, white phosphorus and glue.



On April 8th, 1341, 36-year-old Francesco Petrarca was crowned with a laurel wreath on the Capitoline Hill in Rome. This act was performed in recognition

of him as the best poet and unsurpassed connoisseur of ancient literature. Many cultural historians agree that it was from this symbolic date that the Renaissance began.



April 9th is Day of Air Defence Forces in the Republic of Belarus. The Air Forces and Air Defence Forces of

the Republic of Belarus occupy a worthy place in the system of ensuring the security of the Fatherland. The air defence units of Belarus are armed with modern anti-aircraft missile systems, new-generation automated control systems created by the domestic military-industrial complex, as well as MIG-29 and Su-27 fighter aircraft modernised at Belarusian enterprises.

April 9th is Catholic Easter — Bright Resurrection of Christ. Easter is the largest and most revered Christian holiday, celebrated in honour of the resurrection of Jesus Christ. The main attributes of Easter are coloured eggs and bunnies that bring them. During the entire Easter week, church services are attended, and street performances on religious topics continue.



On April 10th, 1918, a Belarusian Ivan Pstygo was born, Air Marshal, Hero of the

Soviet Union, Honored Military Pilot of the USSR. During the Great Patriotic War, he was a flight and squadron commander, head of the air rifle service of an air division and corps, as well as commander of an assault aviation regiment. Member of the Battle of Stalingrad, Byelorussian, Vilnius, Kaunas, Vistula-Oder and Berlin operations. He made 96 sorties. Died in 2009.



April 11th is International Day of the liberation of Nazi concentration camps. In 1945, in the conditions of the defeat of the

Nazi troops in World War II, the prisoners of Buchenwald, led by the international political centre, raised an armed uprising, as a result of which they captured the camp and held it until the arrival of the Allied troops.

April 12th is International Day of Human Space Flight. On April 12th, 1961, Soviet cosmonaut Yuri Gagarin made the world's first orbital flight around the Earth on the Vostok 1 spacecraft. World Aviation and Cosmonautics Day is celebrated annually on April 12th around the globe in honour of this significant event.

