



**Russia and Belarus
to produce two
spacecraft with
a resolution
of 0.35 metres**



**Sculptors
turn new
metro
stations into
art spaces**



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 15 (829) ● THURSDAY, APRIL 16, 2020 ● WWW.SB.BY



Holiday of peace and hope

Catholics around the world have already celebrated the Resurrection of Christ — one of the most beautiful and special holidays which Orthodox believers are preparing to welcome. For all Christians, the Belarusian TV and Radio Company organises live broadcasts from churches, enabling anyone to participate in the general church prayer through online worship services.



Protect people and support the economy

Last week, the President held two important events on issues that concern society and directly affect the country's economy. The focus was on oil supplies to Belarusian refineries, the sowing campaign and the situation in the healthcare sector. Representatives of the regions were also invited to the dialogue: apart from the chairmen of regional executive committees, the meeting was attended by the heads of regional healthcare services, as well as Minsk's doctors — those from the hospitals that are currently in greatest demand.

Anton Stepanishchev



Important to minimise risks

Having an open economy, our country largely depends on the events going on in the world. Things sometimes unravel in an ambiguous way. "Therefore, I have planned a number of events concerning pending issues requiring paramount attention and having the biggest impact on our economy. I will reiterate: this is the main thing. The economy and people's lives — not only today, but also in the future — are top priorities," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

It seems that the mass psychosis associated with the spread of coronavirus has involved the world oil market and has greatly complicated the situation there. News from stock exchanges in recent times resemble reports from the front: the price falls and then suddenly rises sharply, volatility is huge. The worst of all is that the leading global players don't even hide what games they are playing and what goals they are pursuing. "They have already started taking action to raise oil prices. What we see is a cartel conspiracy. Unfortunately, we cannot influence the situation. Even this pandemic and psychosis cannot influence them. They were stirred into action when they felt the drop in income," the Head of State said.

In this situation, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, it is important to adapt the country's economy and society to avoid losses or minimise them. "The task of countries like ours is to be ready for any development. It's better, as I have already said, to depend least on the oil games of the major powers. The more pillars we create for our economy, the more stable society and independent our policies will be," he stressed.

No unsolvable problems exist

According to the President, not enough has been done so far in this regard. Problems that should be resolved between business entities within the framework of normal contractual relations (at most with the participation of the Belneftkhim Concern) have to be considered at the highest level.

"This means that when difficulties arise, the country's eco-

nomic, production, diplomatic and legal potentials are not fully used. If the issue is important and urgent, then not one or two people should put effort in, but the entire vertical of power. There are no unsolvable problems here and there shouldn't be," emphasised Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Head of State asked what agreements have been reached on oil supplies for the current month, what is expected before the end of the year, and how strict these plans are, "In the very near future, we need to get away from the constant disputes, clarifications and the state of eternal uncertainty. As regards unforeseen cases, it is necessary to create a serious stock of raw materials (both oil and fuel), which will not disrupt the work of industries and not interrupt technological processes."

This approach is important also taking into account the spring agricultural works. As the President reasonably noted, 'oil is important but it cannot be served as a meal'. With this in view, he urged to finish the spring planting campaign as soon as possible and take the whole cycle of agricultural works throughout the year under strict control. "This is the responsibility of the President's aides and inspectors for regions. It's our top priority and there is nothing more important than this. For, as we have said, quarantine, curfew, and so on are needed... Look, this is the easiest way. We will do this within 24 hours. But what are we going to eat?!"

We'll fight for every person!

After listening to a report on the readiness of the healthcare system to counteract the spread of coronavirus, the President called upon doctors to fight for each patient's life. Among the participants of the meeting were members of the Government, heads of both houses of Parliament and state bodies, governors, heads of healthcare departments of regional executive committees and the Minsk City Executive Committee, heads of healthcare institutions and the Republican Scientific-Practical Centre of Epidemiology and Microbiology: 30 people in total.

Aleksandr Lukashenko im-

mediately made it clear that the discussion will focus not only on the work of the healthcare system. The industry for fighting infectious diseases is coming to the fore. However, there are other things to consider. "The problem is closely related to the economy of our country. I must say that, to some extent, perhaps, with the future existence of our Republic, because none of you can say what will happen to the world after this disease and the psychosis that this disease has caused. We do not know the plans of the leaders of major states, how they will take advantage of this situa-

Aleksandr Kulevsky



The President calls for close attention to protecting the health of doctors against the spread of coronavirus

tion. But we know from history that everyone uses the situation as they see fit and profitable for themselves," the President said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko warned earlier: due to the panic around coronavirus, it's possible to face problems in the economy, and they will be generated by people themselves.

The President drew the attention of doctors: their first duty is to treat people and, if necessary, to calm the society by telling about their work. "I emphasise

once again: doctors treat, all information is in the Presidential Administration at the headquarters. You need to jointly decide how to inform the population. You don't need to hide information. God forbid there is deception somewhere. In our time, it is impossible to deceive anyone in our Republic. If you cheat once, no one will believe you," he said. "Let's all work together and follow the path that we have outlined. No matter how hard it is for us."

"We must fight for every person, especially when it comes to the elderly. If we want our

children to protect us and to fight for our lives in the future, we must fight for the lives of every elderly man and woman because, unfortunately, this virus is especially dangerous for the elderly, for people with a weakened immune system," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The Head of State added that the number of coronavirus cases is not falling in the country. On the other hand, the dynamics shows no avalanche-like increase. "We will be getting sick. However, it

would be good to avoid an avalanche-like increase in the number of cases and to have the curve as steep as possible. Right now, the healthcare system is coping with it," the President added.

At the same time, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that people must take care of their health, strengthen their immunity, engage in sports activities, give up on bad habits.

Protecting citizens and doctors

One of the shortcomings identified in the healthcare system is that authorities were not involved into the assistance to doctors. In this regard, the President strongly demanded that the Government solve the problems dealing with the availability of personal protective equipment, "I've warned the Prime Minister and the Government: if by the end of the week I am told that drugstores, shops or hospitals lack something, particularly means to protect medics, the Government will be replaced."

The President also called for paying close attention to protecting the health of doctors against the spread of coronavirus. He noted that doctors exposed to coronavirus patients are adequately protected. "As for doctors treating cancer patients and patients with cardiovascular diseases, they are also exposed to patients who contracted viruses. Some doctors from there were transferred to infectious diseases hospitals. Therefore, your most important task [that of Healthcare Minister Vladimir Karanik] is to protect doctors," Aleksandr Lukashenko noted.

In general, one of the main conditions for a successful fight against the virus is not to create a stir around the topic, the Head of State believes. "Everyone should do their jobs: without panic, calmly and beautifully. We should win and save people decently. People should not think that [if] they get hospitalised with the virus, they are doomed. No. We will save everyone we can. And we should do our utmost for this," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

OPINION

A well-known Ukrainian doctor, Yevgeny Komarovsky, shared his view on the strategy currently being implemented in Belarus to combat coronavirus — as part of the Big Money programme broadcast, "The way the Belarusian President acts means to take on the political responsibility for the people. Actually, I think everyone is looking at Belarus now. Those who introduced the quarantine simply dream of a catastrophe happening in Belarus tomorrow. They are dreaming of this since it will be an example if they see a great amount of infection here, though we see no such situation. They most of all do not want the President to be given as an example for them later. I'll repeat the fact

that someone must take on the responsibility... I am almost sure that when Mr. Lukashenko made this decision, it was not a decision exclusively of his own: he was surrounded by doctors, epidemiologists, and the Academy of Sciences. These people knew — when sharing advice with the President — that he would reprimand them if something goes wrong... We don't know today whether it's right or wrong. However, if I were a President, I would follow this [Belarusian] path."



Profitable energy

It is necessary to stimulate electricity consumptions in households, Belarus' President Aleksandr Lukashenko believes. He shared his view as part of the meeting aimed to discuss the draft decree 'On Repayment of Expenses Attributed to Supply of Electricity to Housing Stock'. Among those present were Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Nazarov, Energy Minister Viktor Karankevich, Chairman of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee Aleksandr Turchin and Chairman of the Minsk City Executive Committee Anatoly Sivak.

The key proposal is to encourage the consumption of electricity in individual housing stock for heating, hot water and cooking. The focus is on one-apartment (blocked) residential buildings. The importance and necessity of such a step is in no doubt, believes Aleksandr Lukashenko.

“Additional volumes of electricity will emerge after the commissioning of the nuclear power plant. As I was frequently saying, we need to consume more electricity because we will have it in abundance. This is clean energy. The transition to clean energy is a current trend worldwide. We will be less dependent on natural gas. According to our estimates, our consumption of natural gas will be reduced by 5m cubic metres,” the Head of State said.

Stimulus in place

This year, the first block of the Belarusian nuclear power plant is to be launched as preparations for this truly historical event have reached the finish line. In late March, the block's engineering and technical means of physical protection were accepted and it's

now ready for fuel delivery. The second energy unit is scheduled to be commissioned in 2021. As a result, our country will not only fully provide itself with electricity but will also be able to earn money from its export.



Transition to greater electricity consumption in houses and production is beneficial from all sides. Unlike natural gas, it is safer, greener and cheaper. Citizens are also appreciating the advantages. After stimulating tariffs were introduced last year, there has been a significant rise in demand from the population to increase electric capacity for individual residential buildings as an alternative to gas. With this in view, the state is ready to continue using promoting and compensatory measures: in particular, it is proposed to reimburse citizens at the expense of local budgets for part of the costs for the work performed on the electricity supply of the operated housing stock for heating, hot water and cooking. However, it's important to analyse the situation carefully.

“This is because the issue concerns the population,” Aleksandr Lukashenko explained. “We should not impose it completely. Moreover, accounting must be considered. If we simply put figures on paper and the population fails to do this...

That's what I'm worried about most of all. We should not stress people and then go back if something goes wrong.”

The Head of State was not against the proposed draft law and is convinced that it's essential to stimulate the consumption of electricity in households. At the same time, he spoke of the key point, “Of course, we need to encourage people. I agree with it. However, this push should not be too hard. I am especially concerned that everything should be done gradually and in a calm manner.”

Deputy Prime Minister Yuri Nazarov considers the draft law to be a logical continuation of the earlier decision on individual electricity tariffs for the population, “We see that the population has started to increase consumption, con-

struction of new houses using electric energy for heating, hot water, cooking. Now we are talking about the fact that in those houses that have already been built, where people live, we also need to give a certain incentive to increase the use of electricity for these purposes.”

Quality and comfort

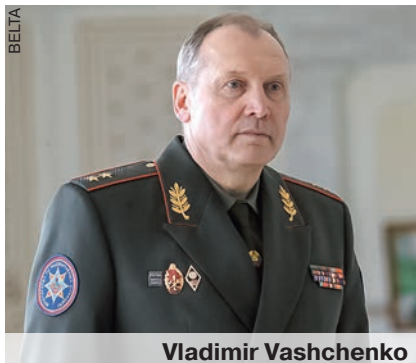
After the meeting, Energy Minister Viktor Karankevich told reporters that the draft decree was approved by the Head of State. Meanwhile, Aleksandr Lukashenko instructed its developers to study the possibility of increasing support for citizens.

“We see that this document will increase electricity consumption in the country and improve the quality and comfort of people's lives, primarily, in rural areas — where there is no centralised gas and heat supply,” the Minister said.

He also announced that it's planned to compensate for a fifth of the investment in converting houses to electricity. According to Mr. Karankevich, the issue of one-time provision of state support for reconstruction of engineering networks is being considered. “If gas pipelines were laid in a locality and budget money or soft loans were used, these citizens have already received state support. To create equal conditions in areas which lack gas networks, people will receive support as a gas alternative,” he stressed.

As for new housing, Mr. Karankevich explained that the draft decree envisages construction of engineering networks with an appropriate capacity reserve.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Vladimir Vashchenko

Everything is relative

The Head of State noted that the attention of many is concentrated exclusively on viral diseases, the theme of coronavirus.

“Without even comparing what happened last year, even in this terrible year, the situation is better than last. The same thing applies for pneumonia. But we have all focused on this problem,” noted the President. “I constantly emphasise that, for us, the most important element is the economy. All this will end (it is already reducing, as you see in Europe). But the economy will always be, because it's the life of people.”

Snowless winters, a sunny spring and strong wind exacerbated the fire-hazard situation in the country, with forests and peat bogs burning. Two figures alone testify how acute the problem is. Last year saw 2,688 fires occurring in the ecosystem while this year has already registered 2,460 cases. The President's concern is understandable, “There's little frost at night while in the morning the sun and wind dry out the soil. Naturally, forests account for 40 percent [of the country's territory] in Belarus. We always start to burn the grass in spring. Both biologists and others already say that it is harmful to

The basics of safe living

Fire-hazardous situations, rescue of people and assistance to doctors in the fight against viruses: the President received the Minister for Emergency Situations, Vladimir Vashchenko, with his report

the composition of the soil and for those who live in it. But, nevertheless, people continue doing so. Fires are our reality. Even if they are not in such volumes as our neighbours have, still they are frightening. And this is not just two or three fires, but dozens of them. This is money and cost,” he said.

In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko inquired about the situation regarding the fire-hazards in the country, “I was informed today [April 9th] that we have moderate fire danger up to the Pripyat River. But in the region of the Pripyat River and lower, to Ukraine, there is already a strong forest fire statistic. There the land is stronger. How do we handle this?”

The meeting also dealt with statistics on deaths in fires. “Unfortunately, we are still seeing this. And many times more [people die in fires] than from coronavirus. I cited this data for the first quarter,” noted the President. “Of course, we do not deny that we must fight against diseases, and against viral diseases. There is no state of emergency. Nevertheless, I would like to hear your point of view, how do you see it? Or does it make no sense for us to involve the Ministry for Emergency Situations in this situation?”

We cannot be careless

“The situation with fires and loss of life is taking place at the level of last

year, and recent years have seen a better situation in this regard. Nevertheless, I was told that while tragedies are happening and people are dying, we need to look for more effective ways to influence the situation. Of course, the main problem is carelessness of people,” Vladimir Vashchenko told reporters following the report.

According to him, the largest number of people killed in fires are elderly single people. At the same time, the state assists them, carrying out repairs of furnace heating and installing fire detectors. Moreover, social workers are assigned to this category of citizens.

“Nevertheless, age does not sometimes allow them to act carefully. Forgetfulness is common: often through the use of candles and carelessness with fire. Understanding this, the state has identified places where conditions have been created for a safe stay. Last year, we proposed that more than 6,000 lonely elderly citizens resettle. Little more than 600 people agreed,” the Minister said. According to him, drunkenness and careless handling of fire often also lead to tragedies.

Mr. Vashchenko cited the statistics: the number of deaths from fires decreased from 530 in 2018 to 491 people in 2019, and cases of deaths of children from nine to two. Over the ten-year period, it was possible to achieve a half reduction in the deaths of people from fire, and children — by 15 times.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Vitaly Pivovarchik

A mission of the World Health Organisation worked in Belarus from April 8th to 11th. Experts arrived in the country at the invitation of the President. The Head of State made the decision to dispel even the slightest doubt about measures taken in Belarus against coronavirus. The mission did not adhere to a programme prepared in advance. Experts studied the statistics and went to the most problematic regions, visiting medical institutions in Minsk and Vitebsk. WHO supported the measures taken by our country to combat the spread of the infection, noted the transparency, veracity and reliability of the Belarusian statistics on COVID-19, and announced its intention to disseminate the Belarusian experience in combating the epidemic in other countries.



Natalia Kochanova

Objective view

The Chair of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly, Natalia Kochanova met with the WHO mission in Minsk. She described the meeting and its results on the Belarus 1 TV Channel. According to Ms. Kochanova, the conversation lasted more than an hour. “They talked about their impressions, that we are truly open and everything that is being done in the country deserves all respect,” she said.

WHO experts noted the honest, open and decent work of domestic doctors and

‘Belarusian doctors know what to do in the situation with COVID-19’

The Chair of the Council of the Republic spoke about the invitation of the WHO mission to our country, its findings and evaluations

expressed their wish that ordinary Belarusians should be told more about it. WHO praised the performance of the Belarusian healthcare system as a whole.

“The experts visited healthcare facilities and saw that work was structured clearly and systematically. Everything that is being done today is absolutely right and clearly verified,” said Ms. Kochanova.

Referring to the words of the President, the Chair of the Council of the Republic emphasised that people remain a priority, *“For every person in our country, doctors fight equally wherever they get sick — be it Minsk, Vitebsk or another region. There is no doubt about that.”*

In addition, according to Ms. Kochanova, independent experts noted the work of the country’s economy. In particular, a number of enterprises have reorganised to produce personal protective equipment and antiseptics. This is very important, because against the background of coronavirus, the export of such items is prohibited by most countries.

Reliable statistics

The statistics on COVID-19 in Belarus are absolutely reliable and truthful. This was confirmed by representatives of the World Health Organisation, asserted the Chair of the Council of the Republic.

“Nothing is being hidden from the citizens of our country. The information that comes in is absolutely true and reliable. WHO representatives underlined this when they visited medical facilities.”



WHO experts were provided with information on each person who became ill, alongside contacts of the first and second levels.

“Huge amounts of work have been done. To date, more than 65,000 tests have been done and experts were delighted with what they saw,” emphasised Ms. Kochanova.

According to her, the Head of State analyses the COVID-19 statistics every morning and is completely handling the situation.

Pride in the doctors

The Head of the Council of the Republic emphasised that the Belarusian healthcare system does not need extra control, “Today there’s no need to interfere with our healthcare system. They clearly know what to do and how to do it.”

Natalia Kochanova met ordinary doctors in Minsk who work at the front line and save lives. She admitted that she is proud of these dedicated people who work with great dedication. The Speaker recalled that the Head of State set the task to provide physicians with everything necessary, especially with personal protective equipment, “Today we all work together to ensure that it is efficient. In Minsk, for example, there are hotels where doctors are accommodated, providing them with free food, and arranging their transportation to and from work.”

The Head of the Upper House of the Parliament called on journalists to avoid disseminating false information, “Fake news which insults and offends these people can’t be thrown around today.”

Based on materials of belta.by

Test. Made in Belarus



Vitebsk scientists have created a testing system for the diagnosis of coronavirus and, after testing and obtaining permission from the Healthcare Ministry, began production. We are talking about specialists of the Vitebsk State Medical University, who are working under contract at SIVital Ltd. At this research and production enterprise, a laboratory was created a decade ago to launch the production of tests for the detection of cancer, hepatitis B, C, D and other viruses. In a difficult pandemic situation, on behalf of the Head of State, a well-trained scientific group developed a test system in less than a month that diagnoses COVID-19 in an hour and a half.

By Natalia Yemelyanova

Test systems for detecting the dangerous virus were developed by a group of researchers under the direction of Valery Semenov, a Professor of the Vitebsk State Medical University and a Doctor of Medical Sciences. The Healthcare Ministry accelerated certification and issued a permit for the production of test systems.

“In the current situation, we interrupted our main work and created a test system for the diagnosis of the coronavirus infection. The virus is quite complex,” said Valery Semenov. According to him, the task is to provide primarily the Vitebsk Region and then the whole country with

tests. “It will take 45 minutes for our system to detect the virus. The procedure itself lasts 1.5 hours, but 96 studies can be done right there,” the scientist added.

The finished test system is a small sealed bag of special foil that does not transmit ultraviolet rays. It contains 4 plastic test tubes with reagents. The test has a triple system of control, therefore errors are excluded.

A study using the Vitebsk test system will cost about \$4.7 (equivalent). According to data that can be found in the public domain, today it is one of the cheapest offers in the world.

Within ten days, the company intends to issue 100,000 tests, followed by increasing capacity.

Fresh solutions for the economy

By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

Commercial electric trucks, snow-compacting and ice filling machines: these and other technologies are being industrially developed

To ensure the production of innovative and competitive products, it is necessary to constantly introduce the latest technologies and use the latest achievements of science and technology in production. Priority is now given to the development of the electronic engineering element base, the creation of equipment that is used in micro-, opto-, radioelectronics, universal machine tools with numerical control. In addition, classic industries are developing: new models of automotive equipment and equipment with robotic control are being created. This was announced by Sergei Kabishov, who oversees innovations at the Scientific and Technical Department of the Industry Ministry.

For example, the Minsk Tractor Works is developing commercial electric trucks that can be used in the city to deliver various types of goods, as well as snow generators, snow compacting and ice filling machines, including those with an electric drive for closed arenas. Gomselmash JSC creates a unique gas-fuelled harvester.

For the safety of road workers, mobile trailer damping devices will be used — a

unique development using digital technologies of the Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. When carrying out road repairs now, traffic on the highways is not blocked. At the beginning of the sections being repaired, cover vehicles — heavy trucks — are placed and drivers often don’t have time to pass: collisions with tragic consequences occur. A mobile damping device is attached to the back of the cover car and provides energy dampening of the ramming car, reducing the force of the impact.

According to Aleksei Shmelev, the Deputy General Director for Scientific Work at the Institute, computer modelling was used in the development of the device, and a fully-fledged crash test was modelled for its testing. The full-scale experiment on the polygon confirmed the stated properties from the first time.

“The peculiarity of digital design is that, without having a solid product, we can test hundreds of options for the design of systems and determine the best combinations. Digital technologies enable an engineer to get a lot of information about the object even before the first prototypes appear. Full-scale machine safety tests can now be replaced with virtual ones. The developed experimental methods give adequate results,” the specialist explains.

New large scale project for Minsk

The start of major construction work on the site of the Minsk World International Financial Centre has been announced. It's expected to become not only a business giant for the new Minsk World multifunctional complex but also aims to act as a catalyst for the country's economic development. Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kukharev has visited the venue.

By Maksim Nikolayev

At the moment, work is underway at the foundation stage: the soil is being taken down to the required level and piles are being driven in. The construction site is located almost in the centre of the future complex, neighbouring Emirates Lux – the first quarter in the Minsk Mir complex which is almost ready: construction works here are likely to finish this autumn.

The concept of the Minsk World International Financial Centre envisages attracting major global investors — enabling Belarus to take a leading role in the economic development of the region in the near future and become the most competitive and interesting country on the continent regarding the attraction of investments. The Centre aims to become a bridge between the European Union and the EAEU countries, as well as the efficient economies of the Middle and Far East. Moreover, Minsk World is particularly important since its establishment will result in thousands of new direct and indirect jobs for Belarusian citizens. “The International Financial Centre should demonstrate that Belarus is a country where major transactions are possible and that representatives of the largest businesses can work here,” Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kukharev said.

According to the official, the establishment of the International Financial Centre in Minsk is a long-term project and, to implement such a significant idea, careful preparation was required — including design works and study of the international construction experience. “This stage is over by now and we are turning directly to construction. We see that the work is well organised. It's a great experience for Belarusian builders who are studying international approaches to the construction of such facilities. We hope that works will be completed in line with the schedule and we'll soon be able to attract representatives of international businesses to open at the Centre. Undoubtedly, this will entail the creation of new financial institutions in the Republic of Belarus and will give a serious boost to the development of the country's economy,” Mr. Kukharev believes.

As the Deputy Prime Minister noted, the country is interested in completing the works on the Centre's establishment in the shortest possible time and it's high time to negotiate with major international businesses so that they are ready to start working in Belarus. The developer also strives to fulfil this task. “We hope the International Financial Centre will take our economy to a completely new level. We work three shifts and plan to meet the schedule ahead of time,” Svetlana Shchetko, Dana Holdings' Vice-President, stressed.

The Deputy Prime Minister also learnt about the overall pace of construction of the Minsk Mir complex which is recognised as the largest in Europe. It is being built on the site of the former Minsk-1 Airport, covering



In the centre of the photo are Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kukharev and Chairman of the Board of Directors of Dana Holdings, Vibor Mulic



At the moment, work is underway at the foundation stage on the site where the Minsk World International Financial Centre will be built

an area of 340 hectares. 3m square metres of residential, commercial and administrative buildings will appear here. Construction is in full swing in 14 blocks of the future complex and apartments in nine blocks are already put up for sale: these include over 60 houses and many of them have been completely sold out.

The new residential district is growing in leaps and bounds. The largest shopping and entertainment centre in the country will be built next to the Minsk World International Financial Centre; it'll become a true shopping mall, with an area twice the size of the Dana Mall trading centre. Travelling bridge cranes work on the site: here, the ‘Aerodromnaya’ station of Minsk's third metro line is being built.

According to Mr. Kukharev, the metro construction is on schedule, “We plan that, in two years, this line will be fully completed — making it possible to more intensively develop this part of the city, actively attracting residents and businesses. The new metro line will also contribute to the development of the city's transport infrastructure as it's the most mobile and popular means of transport,” the Deputy Prime Minister noted.

Mr. Kukharev also spoke of the innovative approach to



housing construction in the new complex. “When building housing, completely different approaches are being used. We see that the best conditions are being created for people: gardens without cars, good playgrounds and green zones — enabling residents to feel comfortable. This is very important. Naturally, such large-scale construction can also help solve the housing problem in Minsk,” Mr. Kukharev added.

Ensuring the stable operation of the construction industry is an important issue — especially against the background of alarming reports from Europe where construction of almost all facilities is frozen due to the pandemic-caused crisis. In our country, the construction industry relies on its own resources, so it's able to adequately respond to the challenges of the time. According to Vibor Mulic, the Chairman of the Board of Directors of Dana Holdings, more than 20 general contractors and about a thousand subcontractors are involved in the company's facilities — ensuring tens of thousands of jobs! This is very important for the country's economy as a whole. “In addition, we provide stable work for many Belarusian manufacturers. Last year, we purchased a large batch of Belarus-made construction equipment based on MAZ vehicles. 95 percent of all construction and finishing materials are made in Belarus,” he said.

According to Vibor Mulic, the global crisis is an opportunity to highlight the advantages of the Belarusian model of economic and social relations in comparison with the neoliberal views of the West. With this in mind, the developer strives not simply to meet the established schedules but to work ahead of them. Two residential buildings have already been completed before the deadline, and investments in construction will continue growing. “In Belarus, our company is increasing construction volumes and invites new contractors. Moreover, we offer discounts, promotions, and favourable credit programmes to our customers. Our company invests significant own funds in construction of residential buildings, so that buyers can buy apartments in our complexes using long-term instalments. This investment is made not simply in construction but in Belarusian families who can take advantage of interest-free instalments for 10 years, at the price of an apartment rent. We intend to invest at least \$100m on the site of the Minsk Mir complex alone by late 2020. Apart from the profitable financial instruments, we are introducing new modern forms of sale in our complexes: i.e. our online service makes it possible to choose and buy an apartment without leaving your home. We are convinced that every Belarusian family with a stable income should have an opportunity to build a home of their own!” Vibor Mulic emphasised.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Foreign Ministry has assisted 6,700 Belarusian citizens in returning home

The Foreign Ministry said that recently 156 people have returned from Poland by bus. 49 of our compatriots have been transported by Belavia — Belarusian Airlines flight along the Tel-Aviv-Minsk route to the Belarusian capital. 174 passengers — citizens of the United Kingdom, Germany, the Netherlands, Russia, the United States, Ukraine, France and the Czech Republic — also arrived by the same plane, to travel home. The best ways to return Belarusians from India, Vietnam, Sri Lanka and Thailand are being worked out.



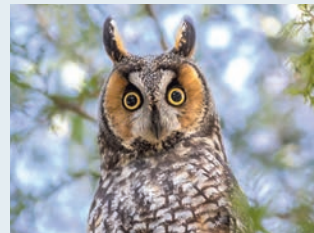
Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War has prepared an exhibition for the 75th anniversary of liberation of prisoners of Buchenwald

Buchenwald temporary exposition has opened in the Belarusian State Museum of the History of the Great Patriotic War. It's dedicated to the International Day of Liberation of the Nazi Concentration Camps, which is celebrated annually on April 11th and to the 75th anniversary of the release of prisoners from the Nazi camp, Buchenwald. The exhibition shows photo-documentary materials about the camp itself and its prisoners.



The number of long-eared owls in the Brest Region is growing at a record pace

The number of long-eared owls in the Brest Region over the past two decades has grown ten-fold. In recent years, both the abundance and species composition of these predatory birds have changed. They have learnt to live in settlements, that is, they are characterised by the process of synanthropisation — adaptation to living near people. This is the most significant phenomenon in the life of these birds. In fact, there is not a single district centre in the region where long-eared owls don't live.



Satellites of high flight

Russia and Belarus to produce two spacecraft with a resolution of 0.35 metres

In recent years, our country has not only managed to become one of the space powers but also to declare the creation of its own space industry. Belarusian satellites provide important information to 12 different ministries and departments and our space technology has been evaluated far beyond the borders of the state. Moreover, modern space technologies have become a driver for the development of some other areas. This opinion was shared by the Chief of Staff of the National Academy of Sciences, Piotr Vityaz, on the eve of the World Aviation and Cosmonautics Day celebrated on April 12th.

By Vera Arteaga

Piotr Vityaz

“Space technologies are now the engine for development of a number of related industries. Primarily, we have attracted domestic optical companies for this purpose — i.e. Peleng JSC which is actively involved in this work and has created a target device that successfully competes in the modern world market,” Piotr Vityaz said. “Two satellites use this target equipment with a resolution of 2 metres and our neighbours have also praised the quality of it. Thanks to the successful solution, such equipment will be installed on six more Russian satellites.”

In the field of space, Belarus liaises fruitfully with its Russian colleagues and, according to the Director of Geoinformation Systems Unitary Enterprise of the National Academy of Sciences — Sergey Zolotoy, the orbital grouping of the Belarusian spacecraft (BS) and the Russian ‘Kanopus-V’ satellite will be soon supplemented by other satellites.

“This year, the National Academy of Sciences and Roscosmos have signed an agreement to expand the orbital grouping and other ‘Kanopus’ satellites will join the next operation. The group will consist of six spacecraft — enabling us to increase the speed of obtaining information for any object in the area of our interest. Currently, provisions on interaction between national operators are being finalised with Roscosmos and appropriate technical



IN ADDITION

The BS was launched in 2012 and has now been operating in orbit for 8 years. All its systems function efficiently. Scientists believe that the fuel reserve (there were 7.5kg of fuel at launch and there’s now 5kg) will make it possible to use the spacecraft for a long time.

solutions are being prepared; the latter will ensure the effective operation of this orbital grouping,” the official said.

Sergey Zolotoy

According to Mr. Zolotoy, the exchange of space information between the EAEU countries will expand in the near future, “In 2018, the Supreme Eurasian Economic Council signed an agreement under which it was planned to develop the *Integrated System of Member States of the Eurasian Economic Union (EAEU) for the Manufacture and Provision of Space and Geoinformation-*

al Services Based on National Sources of Earth Remote Sensing (ERS) Data intergovernmental programme. The document has been developed and submitted to the Economy Ministry and the Ministry of Economic Development for approval. The programme will get the ‘green light’ at the next meeting of the EEC Board. In particular, we are considering the development of national remote sensing systems. Belarus and Russia will produce two spacecraft with a resolution of 0.35 metres and Kazakhstan — three spacecraft with a resolution of 5 metres. As a result, we’ll close the entire spectrum of receiving remote sensing data in the interests of our countries.”



Vitebsk paratroopers thank doctors for their work

Together we are a force to be reckoned with!

Belarusians team up to help doctors

By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

You have probably heard more than once that people today are not the same: they have become selfish, are only interested in money and other material goods, have ceased to pay attention to the problems of others. However, it’s well-known that human character strikingly manifests itself in extreme circumstances. And now, when a dangerous virus scares and tears the world apart, we can say with confidence: Belarusians remain compassionate, they are always ready to help. As you know, the main burden of overcoming the situation with COVID-19 fell on medical workers. They really have a hard time, working almost around the clock. Non-governmental organisations, businesses and volunteers joined together to help doctors.

For example, the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus has made a decision on insurance and material support for employees of health facilities who provide assistance to patients with coronavirus.

The Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions, Mikhail Orda, said that unions began

to provide support to the most vulnerable categories of doctors who were at the forefront back in March, when the first cases of coronavirus were registered in the country.

“Now it’s important to create the safest working conditions for the medical staff,” said Viktor Malinovsky, the Chairman of the Minsk Regional Trade Union. “We decided to cancel all non-essential expenses in trade union organisations and send the released funds to ‘mutual assistance cash desks’. These are used to provide assistance to physicians, as well as to the most vulnerable groups of the population: war and labour veterans, single elderly people, boarding schools, orphanages and social shelters.”

The action in support of Belarusian doctors was carried out by servicemen of the 103rd Vitebsk separate guards airborne brigade. Standing in the square the soldiers held sheets with the words ‘Thank you!’, which they then shouted out several times.

For safety reasons, we keep our physical distance, but spiritually we are very close to deal with common problems. Anyway, as always in difficult times...

Under protection

Interior Ministry’s troops have taken up combat duty to protect the Belarusian nuclear power plant: the official ceremony of launching security at one of the country’s most important state sites was held on April 5th

By Igor Svetlov

The staff of military unit 7434 was read a greeting from the Deputy Interior Minister, the commander of internal troops — Colonel Yuri Nazarenko. ‘Your team is the heir of the legendary 132nd separate battalion of the NKVD convoy troops: a participant in the heroic defence of the Brest Fortress. In our modern times, the security of our state and millions of citizens

the first guard went to the facility to ensure the access regime and protection of the Belarusian nuclear power plant. This important event was preceded by painstaking work: from studying the experience of protecting nuclear power plants, selecting personnel, training specialists to setting up and testing the physical protection system.

The complex of engineering and technical means of physical protection, equipped with the latest



The Belarusian nuclear power plant

depends directly on your professionalism, dedication and quality of service. Keep this in mind every time you stand guard’, reads the greeting.

The commander of the unit, Lieutenant Colonel Vyacheslav Barakov, inspected the readiness of the guard, provided information and conditions about the situation for the duration of the task and gave the order to enter combat service. Straight from the parade ground,

equipment, has passed through a long stage of pilot operation, during which the security system of the facility was tested and adjusted. According to the first deputy commander of the internal troops, chief of staff — Major General Igor Burmistrov, it is a great honour and responsibility to perform a combat task in peacetime. Military personnel of military unit 7434 are provided with all the necessary weapons and equipment.

Scientists of the General and Inorganic Chemistry Institute of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus have developed a technology to make a new type of wrapping paper — an active material that can make stored food stay fresh longer

By Svetlana Savelieva

The Institute’s Director, Anatoly Kulak, announced that the new paper has antibacterial qualities and can substantially increase the shelf life of perishable commodities such as vegetables, fruits, baked goods, sliced sausage, cheese, and confectionery goods sold in bulk. The paper is imbued with a set of reagents to be able to suppress the ability of micro-

Wrapping products up in smart paper



organisms to proliferate.

“Importantly, the reagents are harmless. They are categorised as food additives and attach to the paper so strongly that virtually nothing is transferred to the food that comes in contact with the wrapping. Unlike traditional plastic wrapping materials, the new one is totally biode-

gradable. It is kind of a breathing material thanks to its microporous structure,” Mr. Kulak explained.

The new paper is now made by the Borisov-based enterprise Paper Mill Goznak.

This year, the General and Inorganic Chemistry Institute intends to work on

technologies to manufacture new kinds of wrapping paper by enhancing its functional qualities and expanding the lineup of products — such as water-resistant, fat-resistant, high-strength paper with biostatic qualities.

“Food industry often uses paper imbued with fluorine-containing polymers, for instance, for wrapping butter. Our product will not contain fluorine-containing polymers but only biodegradable polymers. We are also working on paper that can regulate the ripening of fruit: depending on its composition such paper will be able to slow down or accelerate ripening. The new products also include packaging solutions for long-term food storage. They can absorb and chemically destroy the substances that food produces in storage. The new product will allow for the reduction of smells permeating through packaging. To achieve this effect, we add non-organic oxidic compounds to paper. We are considering adding silver nano-particles,” the official added.

‘Census’ conducted in Belovezhskaya Pushcha

Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park counts its wild animals

By Irina Sergeeva

“We need information about the number of wild animals to ensure the rational management hunting,” staff of the Department of Wildlife Protection and Hunting of the National Park note. “Such data enables us to set optimal standards for the production of animals and birds, to solve questions about the restrictions or complete ban on the production of certain species, as well as to evaluate the measures taken on the farm for protection and reproduction.”

From September to March, the National Park completed all necessary records of hunting animals. “Due to the lack of snow cover, it was not possible to conduct winter route accounting. Among the main methods for accounting for hunting animals were selected accounting on feeding grounds, questionnaire accounting, accounting during rutting, etc.,” the staff say.



es, 70 wolves and 100 otters. It is estimated that 360 beavers and 186 raccoon dogs live in the territory of the National Park.

Mammals of the Pushcha are currently represented by 59 species, which is 85 percent of the fauna of Belarus. Among them, the auroch — listed in the International Red Book — is of the greatest interest. Apart from aurochs, other ungulates are represented by red deer, roe deer, elk and wild boar. The population of the European roe deer is subject to significant fluctuations and depends on the conditions of winter and the presence of its enemies: the wolf and lynx. Before the necessary reduction of the wild boar population, the elk was represented in small numbers (among the hoofed animals): about 80 previously lived in the Pushcha. Predatory mammals are represented by 12 species. The largest of them are the wolf, lynx, fox, raccoon dog, badger and otter. Small predators are represented by the beach marten and pine marten.

It’s been calculated that 604 aurochs, 260 elk, more than 1,100 roe deer and 2,600 red deer live in the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Experts say that the wild boar population involves 80 animals. There are 330 fox-



On May 9th, in full readiness

The military parade in honour of the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory is to be held in the evening, in the traditional format: with the participation of an air display, mechanised and foot columns. It is planned to last for about an hour and will end with a parade ground concert of the composite company of the honour guard and a performance of the composite orchestra.

By Ilya Krasovsky

“The preparation is in full swing,” said the Deputy Defence Minister, Major General Sergey Potapenko, who commands the parade. “Foot columns train three times a week on the parade ground of the

internal troops and emergency teams. Soldiers of the special operations forces will close the column which will also include two women’s sections of the Armed Forces and the Interior Ministry. Military from Russia and China are also expected to take part in the parade.



Minsk military commandant’s office, and mechanised columns train at the Lipki airfield. General training sessions are scheduled for May 5th and 7th.”

22 parade teams will take part in the walking column with over 3,000 people. Students of the Suvorov College will lead, followed by cadets, frontline, partisan and officer detachments, air force and air defence troops, border troops, police,

42 aircraft will fly in the sky over Minsk and 185 vehicles will pass as part of a mechanised column — led by the legendary T-34 tank, followed by new and modernised army machinery. “Among them will be, for example, the ‘Flute’ multiple launch rocket system. Almost all machinery will be wheeled and only one team will be tracked,” said Mr. Potapenko.

President Donald Trump signed a decree securing the right of Americans to extract minerals in space. In general, this is a continuation of the frantic race for primacy in the world, which affects all spheres of earthly life.

By Nina Vasilieva

Huge leap for humanity

Half a century has passed since the US astronaut Neil Armstrong — who was the first to visit the Moon in 1969 — said his famous words: ‘That’s one small step for man, one giant leap for mankind’.

The Moon is rich in iron, aluminium, titanium and, most importantly, the rare helium-3 isotope — able to provide energy in unlimited quantities. Mankind has only to co-operate and work together. At the beginning of the space age, everything seemed to be so: some international treaties and agreements were drawn up. However, all this was only good intentions. It turned out that the development and delivery of resources from the Moon currently requires more energy than the return from these resources.

Then why is interest in this topic resurfacing today? Over the past fifty years, humanity has managed to make a huge leap. Though not towards universal co-operation, as Armstrong dreamed. It’s a technological leap, allowing us to return to this issue. Over the past decade, new energy storage technologies have appeared, enabling us to increase the duration of missions to the Moon.



NASA

It’s no accident that, as noted in Trump’s decree, the United States intends to return a man to the Moon, start working on the surface of the Earth’s natural satellite and move further in space exploration, sending a man to Mars, including using lunar resources, as part of the *Artemis* programme.

Russia also has its own Moon exploration programme compiled by the Space Research Institute of the Russian Academy of Sciences in 2014. In short, 4 stages can be distinguished. The first is the choice of a landing site. The second is the sending of a super-heavy carrier rocket with a carrying capacity of

about 90 tonnes. The third stage is the construction of the lunar test site. And finally, after 2040, a fully inhabited lunar base is planned.

As we see, over fifty years the technology has matured so much that from pioneering in space, the countries have come close to creating lunar bases. Why, as Trump stated, is space no longer a ‘public domain’?

Transition from multinational to interplanetary companies

The answer is simple. In the 1960s and 1970s, when there was no opportunity for the exploration of the Moon, it was easy to make speeches about all of humanity. Now that there is a real opportunity to create one’s own colonies there, the approach is different.

And it is no coincidence that business has joined the NASA lunar programme. US venture capital and institutional investors are ready to invest in spacecraft development. According to Ros Business Consulting, Amazon owner Jeff Bezos last year announced the formation of a consortium that should return Americans to the Moon by 2024. If we recall the SpaceX, which plans to conquer Mars and also participates in the competition for the lunar module, it becomes clear that the future of manned space in the United States is increasingly determined by the alliances and ambitions of the richest people, RBC observer Aleksandr Borisov summarises.

Now imagine the power of the company that first calls itself interplanetary!..

This is what everyone should understand when listening to Donald Trump’s words about supporting public-private use of resources in outer space...



REUTERS

Some European countries are starting to lift coronavirus lockdown measures

Some European countries have cautiously announced plans to lift coronavirus lockdown measures over the coming days, seeking to pave the way for a return to normal life after a month of severe restrictions

Austria, the Czech Republic, Denmark and Norway have now all announced plans to slowly relax national lockdowns later this month.

The ongoing public health crisis has meant countries around the world have effectively had to shut down, with many governments imposing draconian measures on the daily lives of billions of people.

Austria laid out plans to emerge from lockdown, proposing to re-open some shops from April 14th.

“We reacted faster and more restrictively than in other countries and could therefore avoid the worst. But this fast and restrictive reaction now also gives us the possibility to come out of this crisis more quickly,” Chancellor Sebastian Kurz said.

In Denmark, care centres and schools are set to re-open from April 15th, allowing parents to return to a normal workday. However, all remaining restrictions, including bans of public gatherings of more

than 10 people, will stay in place for another four weeks.

“This will probably be a bit like walking the tightrope,” Prime Minister Mette Frederiksen told a media briefing. “If we stand still along the way we could fall and if we go too fast it can go wrong. Therefore, we must take one cautious step at a time.”

Norway has also announced plans to gradually relax coronavirus restrictions, with kindergartens now scheduled to re-open between April 20th and April 27th. Schools from the first grade to fourth grade will open from April 27th.

“Together we have taken control of the virus, therefore we can open up society little by little,” Prime Minister Erna Solberg told a news conference.

In the Czech Republic, the Government has said some shops will re-open, with rules to be relaxed on sporting activities that don’t involve the congregation of people — such as running and cycling.

“We’re clearly saying now that we are able to relatively well manage the pandemic here, it is not the pandemic managing us,” Health Minister Adam Vojtech said in a press conference.

Mysteries of decorated ostrich eggs in British Museum were revealed

5,000 year old mystery surrounding how a collection of ostrich eggs got their colourful decorations may have finally been cracked

Ornate eggs were prized items among the elite circles of Mediterranean civilisations during the Bronze and Iron Ages, but little was known about how they were produced, traded and moved around the region. So, just in time for Easter, researchers re-examined a group of five eggs which were on display at the British Museum in London and found that their origin story was ‘much more complicated than we had imagined’.

The team, from the universities of Bristol and Durham, found that the eggs were traded around a vast region in the Mediterranean after being taken from wild

of Arts, said in a press release.

“Using a variety of isotopic indicators, we were able to distinguish eggs laid in different climatic zones (cooler, wetter and hotter, drier). What was most surprising to us was that eggs from both zones were found at sites in the other zone, suggestive of more extensive trade routes,” Hodos added.

The eggs on display at the museum were found in the Isis Tomb, an elite burial in Italy, and were dated to around 625 to 550 BC.

Four of the eggs are carved and painted, while one is only painted. Their motifs include animals, flora, geometric patterns, soldiers and chariots, and all were fashioned into vessels with metal attachments — none of which survived.



birds’ nests — no easy feat, given that ostriches can be dangerous animals.

The large area around which they were traded suggests that the ancient world ‘was much more interconnected than previously thought’, Tamar Hodos, a reader in Mediterranean Archaeology in Bristol’s School

“We also found eggs require time to dry before the shell can be carved and therefore require safe storage. This has economic implications, since storage necessitates a long-term investment,” Hodos said.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Maksim Petrul



Kovalskaya Sloboda station will be decorated with original forged chandeliers

Sun in the underground

By Irina Ovsepyan

Sculptors turn new metro stations into art spaces

The metro is a huge space — echoing and beautiful. It has the potential to boast great artistic expressiveness. That is why art historians have written thick volumes on the decor and decoration of metro stations in different cities and countries: the metro is both a landmark and a mirror of the era. Soon, the lower transport artery of Minsk will become four stops longer. *The MT* reporters visited the workshops of the sculptors whose works will decorate the station platforms: Aleksandr Shappo's 'The Tree of Roads' was chosen from a variety of competitive options for the Vokzalnaya metro station, while the original 'Kavalskiya Vytsinanki' by Maria Tarletskaya and Pavel Voinitsky was chosen for the Kovalskaya Sloboda station. In addition, Aleksei Sorokin and Viktor Kopach's 'Loom' as well as the 'Belarusian Book' by Maksim Petrul will grace the Francysk Bogushevich Plushchad station. Maksim Petrul has also created an unusual composition for Yubileinaya station: the sparkling 'Sun'.

Crossroads of all the ways

'The Tree of Roads' is a symbolic work, as Belarusians have lived at a crossroads since ancient times. Sculptor Aleksandr Shappo jokes that the idea was, one might say, at his feet, "Belarusians have always lived at the crossroads of the east and west, north and south, on the route 'from the Varangians to the Greeks'. The station is called Vokzalnaya, where the railway lines converge; for some this is the first meeting place with our country, with the capital, the place where Belarusians and foreigners, Minsk dwellers and city guests intersect. I tried to create an image of our identity, life at the crossroads: Belarusian archetypes are not only bisons and storks. Some will see in my sculpture the ancient 'drevy zhytstysya' while others will see the lines of fate or an intersection of roads, as they are seen from above, from an aeroplane."

In the metro, unlike the usual urban environment, it's not easy for sculptors to work as many technical requirements need to be taken into account, for example, human traffic or wind pressure. The sculpture will be cast in metal: silumin — an alloy of aluminium with silicon — is quite resistant to external influences, being tough enough for external influences and to holds its shape, it is also lighter and cheaper than bronze. The internal framework of 'The Tree of Roads' will be mounted by the designers of Metrostroy, taking into account all the issues of the environment, since safety issues must always come first.

Architects Olga Telepneva, Sergey Bukato and Grigory Vasiliev are convinced that empty space does not give rise to any feelings or thoughts, it is uncomfortable to be in it while the appearance of art objects within metro stations will create a special atmosphere in each case.

Vytinanka from metal

At the Kovalskaya Sloboda station, where in ancient times the settlement of blacksmiths was located, we will see forged sculptural elements — 'Kavalskiya Vytsinanki' created by Maria Tarletskaya and Pavel Voinitsky.

"Vytinanka is an important and peculiar part of the national culture of Belarus. Cheap folded paper determined the budget and expressiveness of this traditional occupation of our great-grandmothers and great-grandfathers," explains Pavel Voinitsky. "But what if we imagine that the vytinanka is done by a blacksmith? He has metal and flame at his disposal, he can use all his heat energy and unbridled imagination, not being limited to a 'paper' budget.



Aleksei Sorokin



'Kavalskiye Vytsinanki' by Maria Tarletskaya and Pavel Voinitsky



Sculptor Aleksandr Shappo works over 'The Tree of Roads' composition for the new Vokzalnaya metro station

Our blacksmith took the inspiration from images which are traditional for this craft: the sun and the moon, birds, trees and other plants and most importantly, the wheels — a symbol of movement. The openwork interweaving of light, shadow and metal on the ceiling will lead urbanites to an understanding of the beauty of local blacksmithing, and not only blacksmithing traditions."

The Kovalskaya Sloboda station is unique in that it approved the whole concept of artistic decoration, including several original works of art made in various materials and techniques. Its main parameters were set by architects Vladimir Telepnev and Olga Telepneva, as well as Anna Morozova, while the team of artists tried to offer spectacular solutions.

'Do not pack away our language..'

'The Belarusian Book' by Maksim Petrul will be located at one end of the Francysk Bogushevich Plushchad station while the other end of the platform will be decorated with the project by Aleksei Sorokin and Viktor Kopach, entitled 'The Loom'. The authors of the compositions tried to get away from the simplest and most expected solution, so we won't see the statue of a writer; everything is both simpler, deeper and more symbolic at the same time.

"In the 21st century, I would like to present the image of a writer not realistically, but more complex," admitted Aleksei Sorokin. "Talking about Bogushevich, we thought that, after all, he always tried to get as close to the people as possible and his whole life was devoted to this mission. How to reflect this in sculpture? And we came up with the image of a loom — as a reference immediately to the folk culture of Belarus and to the fabric of the story. However, instead of traditional patterns, we have on the canvas the words from the preface to the *Belaruskaya Dudka*.

'The Belarusian Book' by Maksim Petrul, despite its rather large dimensions — 6m wide — leaves a feeling of lightness and grace and the fluency of the pen, which was led by a talented hand. The interweaving of threads (rolled products of different thicknesses) is either a weave or a bizarrely shaped tree. One can even see a hint of a window taken up by the bars, symbolising that Bogushevich spent some time in prison after the Polish uprising. The quote from the classic 'Do not leave our Belarusian language, so as not to die' is also lined with copper 'thread'.

The King-Sun

Another work of Maksim Petrul will appear at the Yubileinaya Plushchad metro station: an unusual 'Sun' made of copper, brass and stainless steel turns the platform into a kind of palace hall, in some ways even luxurious.

"There was an urban legend that the sun hides behind the Snake Mountain," the sculptor comments. "We should also recall the origin of the station name itself: the square in 1826 was named Yubileinaya in honour of the first Ecumenical Council in the history of Christianity, which at that time was 1,500 years old."

The semicircle of the 'sun' is reflected in the square, which will be fixed on the ceiling so that a person sees the entire disk from the platform: silver stainless steel, warm stripes of copper, shining brass... Even the seams which are used to solder the elements of the sculpture together have their role to play: technological solutions in creative space are part of the artistic concept.

The sculptor himself is deeply convinced that the metro is a platform — alternative to galleries and museums: now the new stations will become a kind of monument and a reflection of the current decade.



Riddles of Stanislaw Moniuszko's legacy

By Irina Ovsepyan

It's well-known that the new is the long-forgotten old — thoroughly powdered with archival dust and found in the far corners of libraries by painstaking prospectors. A piece of historical memory is once again returned to Belarusians by musicologists with the recent publication of the *Libretto of Stanislaw Moniuszko's Operas* — filled with the new discoveries of the researchers. Seven librettos by the founder of the Belarusian and Polish opera have been released in Belarusian — most of them for the first time.

The authors of this unique book are Professor Viktor Skorobogatov, the Artistic Director of Belarusian Capella at the Bolshoi Theatre and PhD in Art History Svetlana Nemogai. The research took several years to complete. The collection of libretto operas by Stanislaw Moniuszko was given the 'green light' by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House — which was no surprise: in different times, among the composer's co-authors were such playwrights as Wincenty Dunin-Marcinkiewicz and Jan Checinski.

"I have long drawn attention to the fact that opera librettos are not published separately in Belarus, although this tradition has been, is and will continue in international theatrical practice," Viktor Skorobogatov notes. "We also had it but, in the 20th century, it was lost. If, for example, the translation of the libretto of the 4-act version of Moniuszko's *Halka* — made by Yanka Kupala — was published, it was released in the collected works of the poet: not as a separate edition. The same situation is observed with *Idyll*, the libretto composed by Wincenty Dunin-Marcinkiewicz: the

The word for music



Viktor Skorobogatov and Svetlana Nemogai with their publication of the libretto of operas by Stanislaw Moniuszko

author's collection of works continues it but a separate edition was published back in 1846."

In 2017, under the auspices of Belarusian Capella, the literary foundations of operas by 18th-19th century Nesvizh composers were published (it is in Nesvizh that the opera culture of Belarus originates). The publication dedicated to Stanislaw Moniuszko includes the *Sielanka* (*Idyll*) libretto, 2-act and 4-act versions of *Halka*, *Loteria* (*The Lottery*) and *Karmaniol* (*Carmagnole*) operettas, and *Verbum Mobile* and *Straszny Dwór* (*The Haunted Manor*) operas.

Libretto of Stanislaw Moniuszko's Operas was published in Belarusian for the first time, with details of Belarusian productions and rare photographs

"Chopin and Moniuszko are often compared but Chopin was formed in Warsaw, in the salons, while Moniuszko remains somewhat in the shadows because his perception of the world was formed in manors and Belarusian villages," art critic Svetlana Nemogai says. "If we were to analyse all his operas, everywhere — from *Carmagnole* to *Halka* — the action takes place either in the

manor or in the village. Even in *Hrabina* (*The Countess*), where there is a scene at the Warsaw ball, the main character is served in a negative sense. Heroes from Moniuszko live in villages, while villains live in the capital. Moreover, his music itself boasts a powerful folk foundation!"

Contrary to the popular belief that the name of Stanislaw Moniuszko was completely forgotten in the 20th century



in Belarus, attempts to return his works to the

current cultural programme were made in the Soviet era. In the 21st century, musicians are turning to the composer's legacy more and more.

For example, his *Halka* opera was first performed at the Bolshoi Opera and Ballet Theatre of the BSSR in 1975 — in 4 acts, though in Russian. However, *The Haunted Manor* — translated by Maksim Tank —

was staged at the Bolshoi Theatre even earlier: in 1952, the composition of the play was truly stellar: Mikhail Denisov, Tamara Nizhnikova, Isidor Bolotin, Nikolay Vorvulev, Valentina Volchanetskaya... Larisa Aleksandrovskaya directed the production; People's Artiste Lev Lyubimov (a friend of Lemeshev and Kozlovsky) was a conductor and Pavel Maslenikov, now considered the pride of the Mogilev school of painting, was an artist on the production.

"When opening the complete collection of Maksim Tank, we fail to find a translation of *The Haunted Manor*," says Mr. Skorobogatov. "It turned out that the poet's archive does not have it but the 1952 hand-written clavier is kept at the library of the Bolshoi Theatre. I took them and wrote out the full text of the libretto, which was taught and sung by our artistes."

Of course, various details came to the fore while working on it: for example, comparing the translation of Tank and the Polish original by Jan Checinski, researchers found that the poet corrected the text to make it more acceptable for the Soviet theatre. "The details of gentry life were as much as possible smoothed over," Ms. Nemogai explains. "The poet censored some things from the very beginning. Reviewing the translation of Maksim Tank, I found that this is a completely different work, but as a literary monument of its era, it has the right to exist, so we decided to print it word for word."

Working on the legacy of Stanislaw Moniuszko will be enough for researchers for a long time. For example, the musical text of the first national Belarusian opera *Idyll* is considered to be lost almost completely; only the aria of Commissioner Bonaventure Vykrutach has been completely preserved. *Idyll* was staged at the Kupala Theatre in 1993 as a play by Dunin-Marcinkiewicz, translated from Polish into Belarusian by Yanka Kupala and Yazep Lesik. Nikolay Pinigin's production featured Zoya Belokhvostik, Viktor Manaev, Oleg Garbuz, Gennady Ovsyannikov, Anatoly Lutsevich and other actors. We can now talk about three versions of the original opera restored bit by bit. The Musical Director of the Yanka Kupala Theatre — composer Vladimir Kuryan — has made a contribution. The search for notes, at least in the form of fragments that could be used to reconstruct Moniuszko's music, continues.

From the Stone Age to the Middle Ages

By Irina Sergeeva



New stage of construction of an open-air archaeological museum launched in Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park

The new museum complex will open in the Gory area, near the village of Kamenyuki. Here, along with the scientific research on the already explored sites of the archaeological monument, builders have begun recreating the site of an ancient monument from the Mesolithic and Neolithic periods and a Bronze Age settlement. The site will include residential premises and outbuildings that correspond to the history and culture of that period.

The Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus is conducting the archaeological research. The scientists are assisted by employees of the National Park and students of Brest State University. Over a month of excavations, several thousand different artefacts have already been identified, including some unique to European archaeology.

"The Scythian bronze arrowhead of the 5th-4th century BC is especially impressive; it testifies to the involvement of modern Belarus in the Scythian world. Of particular interest are fragments of an ornamented vessel, a battle rook-shaped axe, triangular arrowheads, and polished flint

axes of the corded pottery culture. This once again proves that the region of the Pushcha was included in the area of settlement of ancient Indo-Europeans. Fragments of dishes of the Trzciniec culture are very important in scientific terms. We have yet to evaluate and decipher a unique find: a treasure trove of 10 flint nuclei. Hidden by our ancestors several thousand years ago, they have become the property of modern Belarusian archaeology," said Vadim Lakiza, the Deputy Director for Research at the Institute of History.

The first open-air archaeological museum in Belarus in Belovezhskaya Pushcha was opened in order to preserve and promote the country's unique historical and cultural heritage in the summer of 2019. According to archaeological data, a fortified settlement of the late Bronze and early Iron Ages was recreated, which belongs to the 8th century BC — 5th century AD. Later, in the floodplain of the Lesnaya Pravaya River, there was an ancient German farmstead and a settlement of Slavs in the 2th-4th and 5th-9th century AD. Soon they will also open their doors to visitors. It is planned that the new tourist site will include seven museum complexes that will reflect the development of the material and spiritual culture of Belarus' western regions in different historical periods — from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages.

Drawing a line under the season

Yunost captures the President's Cup and becomes Belarus' ice hockey champion for the ninth time in its history. At Chizhovka-Arena, the home team defeats Shakhtyor Soligorsk in extra time (3:2) in the fifth match of the final — to draw a beautiful line under the season.



By Tatiana Pastushenko

The teams met for the fourth time in the final series of the national championships and Minskers have now won three times. Only five matches were needed for Yunost to win — just as four years ago. The final match was not simple for the home team: they led twice but the Soligorsk guys each time managed to play back the missed pucks. The match ended only in extra time: Maksim Parfeyevets scored the winning point in the second minute.

“The game was quite difficult and nervous,” Yunost’s captain Andrey Antonov said

after the award ceremony. “You know, when the last step still needs to be taken, it is difficult psychologically.”

Andrey knows first-hand about responsibility at such moments. The recent championship was the seventh in the defender’s career. He remembers the end of the first series especially well — a fight for gold between Yunost and Shakhtyor. He then played in the Soligorsk team. Having made it to the final of the championship for the first time, Shakhtyor gave battle to the then four time national champions. The series lasted for seven matches and, in the decisive struggle at Minsk-Are-



In the fifth match in their own arena, Minsk ended the series against Shakhtyor — 4:1

na, Antonov’s mistake played into the hands of Yunost. In extra time, the defender tried to throw the puck out of his zone but the transfer was intercepted by Minsk’s forward Artem Senkevich — to send it to the goal of Shakhtyor and bring his team victory in the match and in the series.

“Of course, I remember that match,” admits Andrey Antonov. “Many years have passed since then. Many of the guys I played with have already become coaches. There are now special emotions and no sense of principle now. The final is the final, no matter who you play with. We still wish to win.”

Yunost has succeeded. According to Andrey Antonov, it’s great that it was decided to finish the playoffs as — if the championship title was given to the Minsk team as the winner of the regular season as is done in some countries — the emotions would be completely different.

Summing up the results of the final series, Minsk’s head coach Aleksandr Makritsky says that this season was the best

in the history of the team, “We have been working towards this goal all year, although our path was not easy during the regular season and in the playoffs. However, we’ve done it! Actually, this season was the best in the history of Minsk Yunost: we won the Saley Cup, the regular championship and the President’s Cup at home. In the Champions League, we’ve reached further than before.”

However, these are not all the achievements of Minsk

Yunost: the players lead the top of the best scorers of the President’s Cup and several hockey players are among the best strikers and defenders of the playoffs.

Mr. Makritsky adds that Yunost still has a lot to strive for, “There is no limit to perfection. We need not to stop in any case. We need to move forward and develop. This refers to the club, the team and each player individually. This is an endless process.”

PLAYERS AND FIGURES
Top strikers of the President’s Cup
1. Ivan Drozdov, Yunost — 19 (5+14) points in 14 matches
2. Mikhail Stefanovich, Yunost — 14 (5+9) points in 14 matches
3. Vsevolod Kashkar, Yunost — 12 (9+3) points in 16 matches
Top strikers of the playoffs
1. Vsevolod Kashkar, Yunost — 9 goals
2. Yevgeny Dadonov, Shakhtyor — 7 goals
3. Dmitry Ambrozheichik, Dinamo Molodechno; Maksim Parfeyevets, Yunost — 6 goals each
Top striker-defenders of the playoffs
1. Vladislav Yeremenko, Yunost — 11 (3+8) points in 14 matches
2. Ilya Kaznadey, Shakhtyor — 10 (4+6) points in 15 matches
3. Nikita Ustinenko, Dinamo Molodechno — 7 (1+6) points in 12 matches

The governing body of athletics has suspended Olympic qualification until December 1st due to the coronavirus outbreak — as stated by World Athletics website



Maksim Nedosekov (Belarus)

Qualification for track and field athletes suspended

By Arina Novikova

From April 6th to November 30th, 2020, all results achieved at any competition will not be considered for Tokyo 2020 entry standards or world rankings; publications of the latter will also be suspended. The results of athletes who have already met the standards for the Games will remain in force. Qualification would restart on December 1st, subject to the global situation returning to normal.

World Athletics President Sebastian Coe said they thanked the athletes’ commission and the council of the organisation for their detailed work. “They believe that suspending Olympic qualification during this period gives more certainty for athletes’ planning and preparation and is the best way to address fairness in what

is expected to be the uneven delivery of competition opportunities across the globe,” he added.

It is noted that international sports federations have the right to determine their own deadlines for the end of qualification, but they cannot be completed later than the date set by the IOC.

At the moment, 72 Belarusian athletes representing 15 sports have met the qualification requirements and standards which enable them to compete at the Tokyo Olympics. Qualifying tournaments for the Games are suspended due to the spread of COVID-19 but, after their resumption, Belarusians intend to win several dozen more Olympic places.

The 32nd summer Olympics in the Japanese capital will be held from July 23rd to August 8th, 2021.

Bundesliga has developed a plan to resume the season



The leaders of the German Football Union and Bundesliga (German football championship) expect to finish the 2019/20 season which was interrupted due to the coronavirus pandemic — as reported by RBC-Ukraine, with reference to German Bild

The German championship may resume in early May, but teams will have to meet a number of requirements. The clubs of the first and second leagues received a list of conditions from the German Football Union, enabling them to return to hosting matches. 239 people will be allowed to attend the matches. These are the players themselves, the

coaches and the staff of up to eight people. 30 journalists from printed media and 36 TV reporters will be allowed into the stands, as well as four people who serve the balls. Each club will have the opportunity to send eight representatives of the delegation to the match: a total of 113 spectators will get to the stands. The presence of fans will be excluded at the initial stage.

Bundesliga, like other major competitions, has been suspended due to the coronavirus epidemic. After 25 rounds, FC Bayern München leads the league table. Due to the pause in the season, the top five European football championships may lose at least 4bn Euros.





Photo of the week

Artist Aleksandr Blagiy drawing 'My Minsk' mural in the capital's Myasnikov Street

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On April 16th, 1945, the Berlin Strategic Offensive Operation (the Battle of Berlin) of the 2nd Belorussian, 1st Belorussian and 1st Ukrainian fronts began with the participation of part of the Baltic Fleet forces, the Dnieper military flotilla, as well as the 1st and 2nd armies of Polish Troops. It ended on May 8th. During the operation, Soviet troops defeated 70 infantry, 23 tank and motorised divisions of the enemy, captured 480,000 soldiers, more than 1,500 tanks and assault guns, 4,500 aircraft and other equipment. Soviet troops lost about 350,000 people as



killed, wounded and missing. For courage and heroism, more than 600 soldiers were awarded the 'Hero of the Soviet Union' title. The 187 most distinguished units and formations were given the honorary name 'Berlin'.

On April 17th, 1940, Rubinchik Valery Davydovich was born in Minsk, a Belarusian film director. In 1959-1961, he studied at the Belarusian Theatre and Art Institute and, in 1967, he graduated from the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography (VGIK). In 1969-1992, he worked at the Belarusfilm Studio. He

shot the films *The Tomb of a Lion*, *The Wreath of Sonnets*, and *The Savage Hunt of King Stakh*. At the Theatre-Studio of Film Actors, he staged the play entitled *The Comedy of Lysistrata*. Rubinchik — a laureate of the Lenin Komsomol Prize of Belarus (1978) — died in 2011.



April 18th is the International Day for Monuments and Sites (also known as World Heritage Day). It was established in 1983 by the Assembly of the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS), created by UNESCO. The holiday has been celebrated since 1984 aiming to attract public attention towards the protection and preservation of the world's cultural heritage. The UNESCO World Heritage List has four sites in the Republic of Belarus: the Belovezhskaya Pushcha, the Mir Castle, the Struve Geodetic Arc and the Radziwill Palace and Park Complex in Nesvizh.

On April 19th, 1971, the Salyut space station — the first in the world — was launched. On this day, the Proton rocket carrier successfully launched into orbit the world's first long-term Salyut orbital station,

weighing almost 20 tonnes. A new era began in space exploration. The station was a new type of spacecraft, enabling automatically and with human participation to solve the widest range of scientific and applied problems in long-term flight conditions.



April 22nd is the International Earth Day. The tradition to celebrate this holiday originated in the United States in 1970 and, in 1990, the day became an international event. Since 2009, by the decision of the UN General Assembly, the holiday has acquired official status.

In the northern hemisphere, the Earth Day is celebrated in spring while in the southern



hemisphere it's marked in autumn. The main goal of this worldwide action is to attract the attention of society and every person on the planet towards the problems of the Earth and of the environment.

On April 22nd, 1910, Volchek Viktor Matveevich, an Honoured Architect of Belarus (1978), was born. In 1936, he graduated from the All-Russian Academy of Arts in Leningrad. Since 1953, he has been the chief architect of the Belgosproekt Institute and since 1979 — at the Minskmetroproekt enterprise. In 1954-1975, he taught at BPI. His works include the building of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee, the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, monuments to Marat Kazey and the victims of the Masyukovshchina death camp. He was also one of the authors of the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial. He died in 1985.

On April 23rd, 1568, the privilege of the Magdeburg Right was granted to the city of Nesvizh by the King of the Rzecz Pospolita and the Grand Duke of Lithuania, Stephen Báthory. This gave the city full self-government, tax benefits, judicial immunity, as well as favourable conditions for the work of artisans and traders. At the same time, Nesvizh received its coat of arms.

