



The large-scale command and staff exercise *Nerushimoye Bratstvo 2020* was held in Belarus



A new programme, entitled *Circus Kaleidoscope*, started at the Belarusian State Circus



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 39 (853) ● THURSDAY, OCTOBER 22, 2020 ● WWW.SB.BY



Andrei Sazonov

Most tourists know the Mstislavl District due to its Castle Hill and Knights' Fest

Mstislavl: canvas of time

Vladimir Korotkevich called Mstislavl ‘a diamond city’ after arriving there on a sunny morning after an incredible January snowstorm. In fact, the writer is not the only traveller who fell in love with these places at first sight. Atmospheric, cozy Mstislavl is beautiful at any time of the year. The ancient city and its surroundings have many advantages: 79 monuments of architecture, archaeology and history from the State List of Historical and Cultural Values are found here. Meanwhile, the locals continue the chronicle of glorious deeds on their land. → **10**



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By Yevgeny Kononovich,
Polina Konoga

The Head of State welcomed the Secretary General of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation, Stanislav Zas, at the Palace of Independence. The topics for discussion varied — including problems in the sphere of international security, a tense situation along our borders, attempts to carry out a ‘colour’ revolution in Belarus, aggravation of the situation in Nagorno-Karabakh and Kyrgyzstan, among others. These and other issues will be discussed in more detail at the CSTO summit in Moscow in early December. However, at present, it’s clear that we need to move towards further strengthening of collective security.

Aleksandr Lukashenko commented, “As for the Collective Security Treaty, the events in August and the reaction of the Russian Federation, first of all, to these events, indicate that this organisation is very important and we need to develop it.”

Accurate forecast

Lieutenant General Stanislav Zas became the CSTO Secretary General and moved to Moscow relatively recently: in January 2020. Although in Moscow, he is definitely well aware of the internal political situation in Belarus. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed in this regard that the main reason for the current domestic political events in Belarus is influence from outside. “The world is going through a difficult period which had been predicted before the elections. Many say that the President received information, analysed it and knew about it. But there was no information about what would happen after the elections either in our country and globally. My forecast, however, proved 100 percent accurate, both in terms of the pandemic and the situation that is developing today. It was not difficult to predict all this. Unfortunately, our western partners — as we used to call

them in more friendly times — have become too active and have gone too far in what concerns Belarus,” he said.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, Belarus ‘is not very alarmed about it, although I can hardly call such things pleasant’. He added, “It is a quiet and peaceful country. It’s only in Minsk that we can’t decide to move on. I think, however, we will definitely cope



During a report with the President. Stanislav Zas and Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin who was present at the meeting

with these problems. There are no doubts about it.”

We’ll be able to stand up for ourselves

The President believes everything would have developed differently if it were not for the external pressure. Aleksandr Lukashenko added, “We’ve experienced all sorts of things. After the past elections, we faced cars on fire, people running with knives and storming the House of Government. However, at that time, influence from outside was minimal. Meanwhile, they’ve taken the bit between their teeth but we’ll manage the situation. I think Belarusians are smart, they will understand this plan.”

The Head of State reminded everyone that a new military doctrine was adopted in Belarus several years ago. It took into account both the new geopolitical reality and the phenomenon of hybrid war, the loosening of the situation from within with subsequent military intervention from outside. This is exactly what could

Power of collective security

External pressure on Belarus, protection of national interests and joint exercises were among the topics discussed by the President with the CSTO Secretary General

have happened in our country, Aleksandr Lukashenko believes, and the authorities were forced to react accordingly, including using demonstrable force, “We looked at our entire western region closely, ‘finding the range’ in military language. It did make sense, to those outside the country, that we can respond very seriously. The CSTO still exists and we’ll be very actively involved in this. Even if

nificant impact on many events. “We survived the first stage, now the second wave is happening... The other day, Russia registered a record 244 people dead within 24 hours. Certain measures are being taken, experience has been gained in all states. I think we’ll overcome this challenge. However, the pandemic has affected the CSTO activities. We had to switch a number of events to online format, also

in Nagorno-Karabakh, we have seen quite successful attempts to establish a dialogue between the warring parties and return to the negotiation process. There is active discussion of peacekeeping measures in this region,” he said.

The CSTO notes that, after the escalation of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, no official appeals were received from the Armenian side to the permanent working bodies of the CSTO.

Platform for sharing experience

“I’ve informed the President about our practical activities and preparations for the meetings of the statutory bodies, including the summit of the heads of state on December 2nd in Moscow. The meeting agenda is rich. We very much hope that we will be able to hold a session of the Collective Security Council in person — this would be correct, given the difficult situation in which we are approaching this summit,” the CSTO Secretary General said.

17 documents are being prepared for signing in Moscow, including the statement of the CSTO Collective Security Council on the formation of a just and sustainable world order, and two agreements on ensuring the activities of the CSTO troops (Collective Forces). In addition, at the meeting in Moscow, it is planned to approve an anti-drug strategy for 2021-2025.

Speaking about the *Nerushimoye Bratstvo* exercise, Mr. Zas stated that this is a planned event that has nothing to do with the current situation in Belarus. He added that almost all participants in these manoeuvres have experience in conducting peacekeeping operations, including under the auspices of the UN, “It’s a good platform for sharing experience. In addition, this is the first time that we have deployed a peacekeeping mission from the CSTO Secretariat and the Joint Staff at such exercises. The goal is to work out the division of powers and functions between the command of the peacekeeping forces and the peacekeeping mission.”

some find this uncomfortable, we’ll continue as planned.”

As an example, the President mentioned the successful *Slavyanskoe Bratstvo* [Slavic Brotherhood] exercise held recently in Belarus jointly with Russia. Last week, the CSTO *Nerushimoye Bratstvo 2020* [Indestructible Brotherhood] exercise was held near Vitebsk. In other words, our country is still fulfilling its obligations. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, “During the Belarusian leadership in the CSTO, we would very much like the Secretary General to take the position we agreed on and push the CSTO members to work more effectively. There will be absolute support from our side.”

Second wave is circulating

After meeting the President, Stanislav Zas told journalists that their talk had been very comprehensive. The situation this year is quite difficult due to many factors, the CSTO Secretary General stated. In particular, the pandemic has had a sig-

rescheduling some for the next year,” said Mr. Zas.

Some events have been moved to next year. In particular, the *Kanal* [Canal] anti-drug campaign and the *Nelegal* [Illegal] campaign are have been shifted to 2021. In addition, out of the seven scheduled events, only *Eshelon* [Echelon] in Russia and *Nerushimoye Bratstvo* in Belarus have been held this year. The remaining five — *Vzaimodeistviye* [Interaction] and *Poisk* [Search] in Armenia, *Rubezh* [Frontier] in Kyrgyzstan, *Cobalt* in Tajikistan and the rescuers’ exercise in Russia — have been postponed until 2021.

With hope for peace

The meeting with the Head of State also focused on the discussion of the escalation of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh, as well as events in Kyrgyzstan. Mr. Zas admitted that the situation is developing in a very difficult way everywhere, but there is hope that it will stabilise in the coming weeks. “As for the escalation of hostilities

Telephone conversation

Lukashenko and Rahmon discussed bilateral co-operation, the situation in the region and COVID-19 by phone



counterpart on a convincing victory at the Presidential election. The two states’ leaders touched upon a wide range of topics, including bilateral relations, the latest developments in the region and the situation in the world. They focused on the situation in Kyrgyzstan and Nagorno-Karabakh.

Talking about Belarus-Tajikistan co-operation, they

Belarus’ President, Aleksandr Lukashenko, held phone talks with Tajikistan’s President, Emomali Rahmon.

The Belarusian Head of State congratulated his

described it as vibrant. Despite the current crisis in the global economy, the countries are managing to considerably increase mutual trade. In January-June 2020, bilateral trade grew significantly 2.5 times against 2019 figures. The presidents spoke in favour of further strengthening of industrial co-operation, including for entering third markets, and the expansion of mutual supplies.

COVID-19 was another theme the two presidents discussed. Emomali Rahmon stressed that the situation with the coronavirus in Tajikistan is under control. The heads of state shared opinions on counteracting the spread of infection.

Based on Presidential press service

Constructive discussion

In October, dialogue platforms on topical issues of the development of the country and regions were launched countrywide, focusing on such issues as the constitutional reform and party building, increasing the role of local self-government, youth policy, social sphere and the economy. Heads of state bodies, deputies of all levels and representatives of public organisations will be participants of these dialogue platforms and, following their discussions, all proposals will be sent to the organising committee overseeing the preparation of the All-Belarusian People's Assembly.

The Chairman of the Grodno Regional Executive Committee, Vladimir Karanik, explained the importance of creating dialogue platforms, "A dialogue between citizens, representatives of government bodies, political parties and public associations should be conducted within the legal framework. To give more opportunities, it was decided to create platforms for communication in various formats: face-to-face, online, in the form of round tables and plenary discussions. First of all, we will discuss topical issues that concern our citizens today: constitutional reform, amendments to election legislation, and party building."

The range of issues raised by participants during the panel discussion in Mozyr — Constitutional Reform and Party Building — was wide: state symbols, the status of languages, the redistribution of the constitutional powers of the President, Government and Parliament, changes in the electoral system. Lawyers, judges, representatives of the Prosecutor's Office, law faculties of universities and political parties gathered to share their views on the future of the country.

The moderator of the discussion, the Chair of the Gomel Regional Notary Chamber — Margarita Zhorova, noted



Dialogue platforms are deployed throughout the country. In the photo: Grodno Dialogue-2020

that the need for changes has come, but they must be made reasonable, "Any constitution, if it does not respond to social and economic changes and the development of civil society, remains on paper only. Our task is to listen to specialists and experts, formulate certain ideas and trends and assign them to further study."

The Head of the Department of Theory and History of State and Law of Gomel's Skorina State University, Tatiana Senkova, tackled the topic of state symbols and languages. "World practice is not uniform. Some countries have 3-4 official languages but their status can be determined in different ways," she said.

The point is that the language of an

overwhelming ethnic group can be considered the state language, and another can become the official language — used, for example, in court and office work.

The issue of introducing the position of a human rights commissioner — a non-political and independent mediator who does not go into solving minor problems but is engaged in creating a general practice — caused a heated discussion. Foreign experience in this field must be studied.

In Brest, the first forum of the Brest Dialogue regional discussion platform was attended by university professors, representatives of political parties and public organisations.

The Director of the Actual Concept information and educational institution, Aleksandr Shpakovsky, stressed, "Peace is the paramount achievement of the sovereign Belarusian state. However, society faces certain risks, challenges and threats. External competitors always try to use internal contradictions to scale negative effects, to take advantage of the situation. There are two options for further developments. The first envisages the continuation of the polarisation of society, sliding into chaos — which is already leading to losses in the economy, weakening the country as a subject of international relations. The second deals with the search for a national consensus. Only the Constitution can be a channel for such a dialogue."

Yevgeny Skakun, a Candidate of Historical Sciences and Departmental Head at the Pushkin State University, shared his view on the importance of such dialogue platforms. "Our society is ripe for the changes that the President is speaking about. We enjoyed a dialogue when representatives of civil society tried to express their point of view, while experts shared their own individual position. This is a path to consensus — which will be quite a difficult one," he said.

Time will show what offers will be received. Discussions will continue.

We are united!

The Republican car rally — For United Belarus! — was once again held in the country. This time it connected Minsk and Vitebsk — passing through Zhodino, Borisov, Krupki, Tolochin, Aleksandria, Orsha and Bogushevsk. Everyone who cares about the future of Belarus and supports peace and security in our common home was able to join this traditional campaign.

For United Belarus! rallies — initiated by enthusiastic citizens almost two months ago — envisage visits to places related to the Great Patriotic War history as part of their mandatory programme. Participants unanimously admit that this is extremely topical in modern times. "We need to remember that we have our own sacred places, that we have a common genetic memory. We are children and grandchildren of partisans," says Vitaly Leonovich, from Minsk, who says he'll come to every rally until the end, adding, "Here I represent the interests of my whole large family. I have 6 grandchildren and someone to tell everything to — including about the places we visit."

One of the rally organisers, Sergei Rachkovsky, says that all different kinds of people take part in the campaign, "They travel with their families, friends, colleagues and neighbours. This is a union of like-minded people. It's now especially important to support each other, so that people know that they are not alone, that there are many of us. Car rallies clearly show this."

"It's not our first car race," say neighbours Yelena and Yulia. "We try to take part whenever possible. We are for a peaceful and prosperous Belarus. We want to preserve what has been built. If people want changes, they should start with themselves and then everything will change, believe me." The Minskites add they have witnessed the generation that remembered how precious peace is. "Belarusians are a nation that has a genetic

understanding that war is evil. Recall how much blood was shed by our fathers and great-grandfathers. Therefore, we must preserve everything and pass it on to our children and grandchildren," they say.

Along with his children, entrepreneur Aleksandr Lim, from Minsk, has been participating in car rallies since their very beginning. He believes problems should



be resolved peacefully, "If the opposition, its peaceful part, wants to resolve issues peacefully, let them see how we behave. We don't violate traffic rules, our campaigns are tidy, they are held cleanly. Look and learn."

The rally drivers can't ignore the attempts of some people to block roads in Minsk. Aleksei Korobushchenko, the Chairman of the Leninsky District Department of DOSAAF, believes, in this

way, these people endanger not only their own lives. "16-17-year-olds don't really know what they are doing. It's like a game for them. However, this is a game with death." In his opinion, a radical part of the opposition is waiting for the moment to inflame the situation. "They need sacrifices. They are already rushing out into the streets with clubs and knives.

Therefore, the police warn that they will protect citizens and themselves, including with the use of military weapons. I served in the army for 28 years and I understand all this very well. If we don't miss this moment, stop them, then everything will be fine," the man adds.

Yevgeny Alekseyuk also speaks about the importance of peaceful solutions to problems, "I think it's very important to show the people who voted for the current

President that they have support. With such events, we want to demonstrate that it is important to engage in creation, not destruction."

According to the rally participants, 79 cars left Minsk and new vehicles joined them along the way. As a result, more than a hundred cars — decorated with state flags — arrived in Aleksandria. It was an impressive scene. After the bread and salt presented to the participants, all those who had come to the Shklov District got on buses and went on excursions: to the school where the President studied and to Trofimova Krynitsa [springlet] — to learn something new about their native Belarus.

In Vitebsk, the participants visited a landmark point of the city: Pobedy [Victory] Square, laying flowers at the 'Three Bayonets' memorial complex in honour of the Soviet soldier-liberators, partisans and underground workers of the Vitebsk Region. Visitors from other regions of the country and motorists from the Vitebsk Region who joined the large-scale rally were greeted with music. A brass band set the tone for the event.

"What a reception!" said Natalia, from Minsk, pleasantly surprised. "This is our first time in Vitebsk, we've come as a family. As people who are passionate about the fate of the Motherland, we want to see Belarus independent, united and prosperous!" she says.

Based on materials of sb.by

Ideas for business and collaboration

The Italian city of Verona warmly welcomes participants and guests of the 13th Eurasian Economic Forum which is being held in a combined online and offline format because of the coronavirus pandemic



Verona, Italy



By Marta Astreiko

The organisers of the event are the Italian Association Conoscere Eurasia, the Ros-congress Foundation and the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum.

Political and public figures, representatives of business circles, diplomats, experts and journalists from the countries of Greater Eurasia are taking part in the current forum.

The business programme of the Verona Forum started on October 22nd. During the opening of this two-day event, Antonio Fallico, President of the Conoscere Eurasia Association and Chairman of the Board

of Directors of Banca Intesa, stressed that the Eurasian Economic Forum, even in the current difficult situation, continues to play the role of an important negotiating platform for business contacts, communications and discussion of issues relevant to Eurasia.

The participants focused on economic recovery after the pandemic, global economic trends and the future of the energy and oil industry in particular. A new topic for the Verona Forum is genetics and genome research.

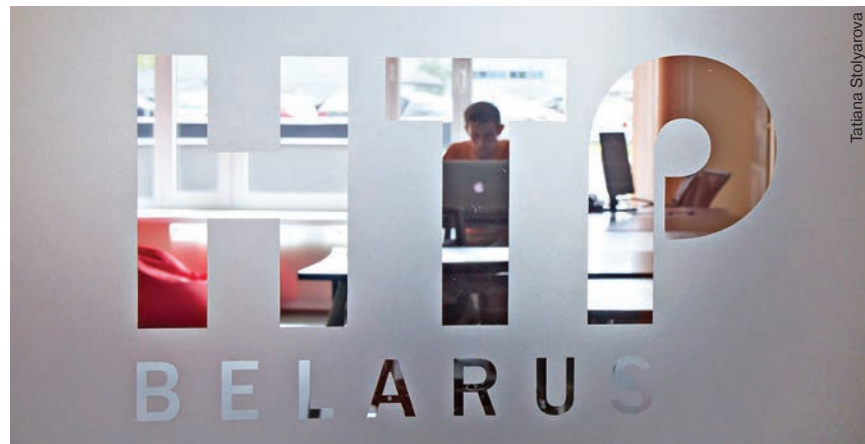
On the eve of the event, an extensive cultural programme was launched, dedicated to the 75th anniversary of the Great Victory and the end of WWII. An assembly dedicated to the memory of the Soviet partisan, Vladimir Tulisko (battle nickname Willy), was held in

the town of Caldiero near Verona. Together with Italian partisans, he fought against the Nazis and died on April 25th, 1945, on the day of the liberation of Italy from German occupation. The ceremony of reburial of the remains of the hero and the unveiling of a monument to him, created in collaboration with the Italian sculptor, Matteo Cavaioni, with the young craftsman from Russia, Nadezhda Golysheva, took place.

A photo exhibition dedicated to the history of the liberation of European capitals was unveiled on the central square of Verona.

Another important event that attracted the attention of the general public was the scientific conference of Russian, Italian and European historians on the 75th anniversary of the Victory.

Park growing by leaps and bounds



Tatiana Stolyarova

The Supervisory Board of the Hi-Tech Park has decided in favour of registering 83 companies as residents

“Two thirds of the new companies are those which were registered in 2019-2020; this signifies active development of start-ups. 76 companies operate in the city of Minsk and the Minsk Region, 3 — in Gomel, and 2 — in Brest. Mogilev and Polotsk has one company each. The new residents operate in various industries, including logistics, e-commerce, gaming industry, healthcare, financial technologies, auditing, consulting and education,” the HTP press service has announced.

The new companies include residents with foreign capital established by representatives of Germany, Israel, Latvia and the USA. Six development centres of foreign corporations have also joined.

Belarus' Hi-Tech Park is currently home to 969 companies

ITH Development (InTouch Technologies Inc., USA) intends to further develop and improve its telemedicine platform ‘SOLO’. TangoMe Inc. (USA) is represented in Belarus by TangoMe which intends to develop new functionality for the streaming platform ‘Tango Live’ (an application for live streaming, video calls and messaging).

As a development centre of Webby GmbH (Germany), Webby Technologies will focus on developing the ‘Veranstaltungsbutter’ application aimed at German-based providers of courses, seminars and events. In turn, Veraxen Bel (Veraxen Ltd, Cyprus) intends to develop and provide support to mobile games.

Over 80 new residents registered at HTP

FORTVISION (FORTVISION Ltd, Israel) aims to work on the ‘FORTVISION’ solution designed to improve the marketing effectiveness of websites and mobile apps. As a development centre of the Russian BSL Group of Companies, Business Solutions Lab Bel plans to develop software for the maintenance of aircraft, among other things.

The transport industry is represented by Belarusian BelSimTech which develops imitation and modelling systems for training transportation personnel (air, sea, land, metro, and others).

Another new resident — EVO Electronics — deals with software develop-

ment and manufacturing of high-tech devices for the ‘smart home’ and ‘smart building’ systems.

LINLINE Medical Systems will develop and produce a laser device able to restore biological tissues for applications in dermatology, purulent surgery, rehabilitation and aesthetic medicine, while AKDev Group is establishing the ‘RadioHeart’ platform. Any person without special skills and knowledge can use the latter to create their own Internet radio station and broadcast 24/7 across the world.

Based on materials of belta.by



Belarus presents its trade and economic potential in Turkish Eskisehir



Further development of trade and investment co-operation between Belarus and Turkey's Eskisehir Province was discussed during a visit of Belarus' Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary to Turkey, Viktor Rybak, to Eskisehir.

During the visit, the diplomat met with authorities from the province and the City Hall. “The parties discussed the further development of trade and investment co-operation between Eskisehir and Belarus, including regional as-

pects,” reported the Foreign Ministry.

Belarus offered a presentation of its trade and economic potential at the Eskisehir Chamber of Industry and Commerce. The Ambassador presented trade proposals of Belarusian economic entities interested in the supply of products to Turkey and the development of co-operation with the Turkish business.

Mr. Rybak also visited ALBAYRAK Makine which co-operates with the Minsk metro in equipping the facilities of the third metro line in the Belarusian capital.

Based on materials of belta.by

Mutual interest

Eskisehir is a big cultural and industrial centre in the north-west of Turkey; its population is approximately 900,000 people. The city is home to a number of Turkey's important mechanical engineering companies, representatives of the aviation industry, producers of agricultural, food, construction, textile and woodworking sectors, about 20,000 economic entities, and Anadolu University — the biggest in Turkey for the number of students and the fourth largest in the world.

Since November 1st, 2020, rapeseed oil and buckwheat are included in the range of goods for sale in retail facilities — following a decree of the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade. In other words, these products will become mandatory for Belarusian stores. Rapeseed oil is currently not always found on the shelves, and the measures taken should contribute to its promotion. Let's look at the prospects for this product in our market.



DIRECT SPEECH

Valentina Babodei, the Head of the Department of Technologies for Confectionery and Fat-and-Oil Products at the Scientific and Practical Centre of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus for Food RUE:

The nutritional value of rapeseed oil relies on its rich composition. It contains tocopherols (vitamin E) and essential fatty acids of the omega-3, omega-6 and omega-9 family (vitamin F), which are not produced in the organism but are essential for maintaining many vital processes. Rapeseed oil is characterised by a balanced combination of fatty acids and has the lowest amount of saturated fatty acids compared to other vegetable oils. In terms of the content of oleic acid (omega-9), rapeseed oil is in second place after olive oil. The balance between omega-3 and omega-6 polyunsaturated fatty acids is 1:2, and it is considered optimal for the organism. That is why rapeseed oil is one of the most balanced oils in terms of fatty acid composition.

Black gold in the fields

Belarusian rapeseed to challenge competitors

By Stanislav Galkovsky

The Head of State, while getting acquainted with the harvesting process in the Minsk Region, noted the importance of rapeseed for the country's agriculture. "Rapeseed is money. We need to promote rapeseed oil," he said, adding, "Why is it profitable for us to cultivate rapeseed today? This is because it's bought all around the world. People have realised that rapeseed is a medicine, especially in our country. However, we have rapeseed oil, and sell it abroad but still prefer sunflower oil here. We need to consume our own product if we want to be healthy."

Experts confirm the effectiveness of this strategy. An oilseed processing facility at Agrokombinat Yuzhny JSC, in the Gomel Region, grinds 45 tonnes of rapeseed daily: partly of its own production and partly on a private 'toll' basis. The company uses modern equipment and the whole process is environmentally friendly: direct extraction technology uses no solvents as in other raw material processing. Black seeds produce a greenish oily liquid. After

the press, the oil is filtered and sent directly to consumers.

"Everything sells out well; nothing remains in the storehouses," comments Igor Kostrov, who heads the facility. "We are actually dealing with waste-free production."

One tonne of rape seeds produces up to 400 kilograms of oil. The remaining 60 percent of the mass is a cake, which has high profitability since it contains up to 10 percent fat and about 34 percent protein. A tonne of rapeseed costs \$310 (equivalent), a tonne of rapeseed oil — \$740, cake — about \$230 per tonne. The profit margin can reach 80 percent.

Belarus is among the top three suppliers of rapeseed oil to the EU markets



Svetlana Pimenova, a lab technician at Agrokombinat Yuzhny JSC

About 350,000 hectares of rapeseed are sown annually in Belarus. It would seem that we need to sow more, as this would bring in more money, being of high liquidity. However, it's not that simple. Nature is not a computer programme. It has many nuances, especially weather-related. Despite the undeniable value and waste-free nature of rapeseed, this grain is quite capricious, especially in the low fertility area of Polesie.

Yelena Filipovich, the Deputy Head of the Department of the Committee on Agriculture and Food at the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, explains, "Last year, 57,000 hectares of rapeseed were sown in the region.

However, the lack of precipitation in winter and spring led to significant loss of crops. As practice shows, up to 30 percent of rapeseed sown cannot overwinter in the climatic conditions of the south-east of the country. This year, we'll plant 46,200 hectares of rapeseed and 32,700 hectares of winter cress (as a more drought-resistant crop). This is the best option. We grow an important crop in the import substitution segment and optimise it so as not to waste money due to natural anomalies. There is enough capacity for processing rapeseed in the region. Domestic rapeseed oil as an excellent alternative to imports is being relied on by companies in the

fat and oil industry. In addition, by-products such as rapeseed cake, with a high content of vegetable protein are a possible source of imported meal, without requiring additional currency costs for its purchase."

The climate factor is not the only difficulty for the development of rapeseed production. Domestic demand for vegetable oil from this crop is extremely low: Belarusians prefer sunflower oil — supplied mostly by Russian and Ukrainian manufacturers.

To change the situation, manufacturers must advertise their product and its strengths widely and attract customers. Only then can rapeseed compete with sunflower oil.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belarus joins top 20 countries in terms of postal development

The Integrated Index for Postal Development (2IPD) is defined by the Universal Postal Union. It is an integrated index that provides a generalised picture of postal development in any country or region based on four key components: reliability, reach, relevance, resilience. The information collected and processed in this context helps compile the global ranking — published annually.

Each assessed country can score from 0 to 100 points. The latest ranking includes 170 countries. The index of Belarus in 2020 was 65.56 points; the country rose from 21st to 20th place. Switzerland, Austria and Germany lead the rating.



Belarusian scientists have developed a biochip to study brain functions

The Brain Centre operates at the Institute of Physiology of the National Academy of Sciences. One of their latest developments is a biochip for studying neural networks, brain functions, and subsequently creating new approaches to the treatment and restoration of brain structures.

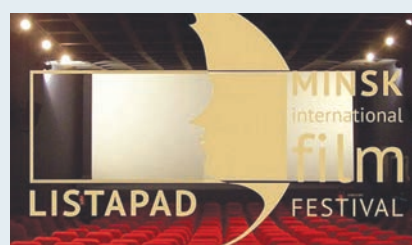
The uniqueness of this biochip is that it can register electrical indicators



(brain cells are electrically excitable tissues, that is, they transmit electricity) and train stem cells, i.e. it is possible to carry out pre-differentiation of stem cells in the neurogenic direction and obtain nerve cells and tissues.

Listapad Film Festival will be held under the 'Magic of Image' slogan

The 27th Listapad Minsk International Film Festival will be held from November 6th-13th under the slogan 'Magic of Image', addressing the unique nature of cinema. This year's visual concept is based on a tribute to the legendary Belarusian film



The City of Masters. The landmark Belarusian film turns 55 this year. *The City of Masters* glorifies freedom and patriotism, heroism and determination, turning a fairy tale into a movie for all time.

For foreign jury members and media representatives, the directorate of the forum will conduct Listapad in an online format. Screenings will be held in cinemas, where social distancing and all necessary precautions will be ensured.

Belarus will be represented by Arina Pekhtereva from Mogilev at Junior Eurovision 2020



In connection with the coronavirus pandemic, the European Broadcasting Union has made an unprecedented decision to hold the Junior Eurovision 2020 Song Contest in a new format: pre-recorded compositions by the show participants will be aired. The main reasons are ensuring the safety of children in a pandemic, as well as the impossibility of the presence of delegations in the host country due to the closure of borders.

The Junior Eurovision 2020 Song Contest will take place on November 29th. The live broadcast will be carried out by the Belarus 1 and Belarus 24 TV channels.

The first hundred

By Kristina Khilko

Before launching a satellite into space, scientists conduct hundreds of studies, checking every detail. The same is now happening with 'Sputnik V', the first Russian COVID-19 vaccine developed by scientists at the Gamaleya Research Institute of Epidemiology and Microbiology. In line with personal agreements of the two heads of state — Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin, our country is also participating in clinical tests and, after their successful completion, the vaccine can be used on a wider public scale.

"That's it!" a nurse smiles, deftly giving an injection in the shoulder.

"Does it hurt? How do you feel?" a volunteer is 'attacked' by journalists.

"Wait for a while! We'll first measure the blood pressure... Oh, you can be sent to space: 120/80mm Hg!" doctors treat the first patient.

Interestingly, it's not advisable to leave the clinic right after the vaccination: doctors continue supervising volunteers for another 30 minutes.

"I was a little worried. We'll see how my body reacts but I'm sure everything will be ok — though I was warned that my temperature might rise or I might get a headache. Actually, such side effects are not uncommon even after vaccination against the flu. I know that many people don't have any reactions to the vaccination at all," the Minsker — who's agreed to participate in the test — shares her first thoughts.

Belarus has become the first country to receive the Russian COVID-19 vac-



Russian scientists were the first in the world to register their 'Sputnik V' vaccine against the coronavirus. No serious side effects were found during clinical trials. Only headaches, unpleasant tingling at the injection site and temperature were registered, and doctors view these as insignificant side effects. Russia has already received applications for a billion doses from two dozen countries, including the UAE, Saudi Arabia, Brazil, Mexico and India.

cine and the first hundred volunteers are already being vaccinated in Minsk. All Belarusian clinics that conduct clinical tests of 'Sputnik V' after its registration in Russia have received the status of research centres. So far, testing will only take place in the capital.

A batch of ampoules was brought to Minsk's polyclinic No. 28 in special con-

tainers several days prior to the launch of the campaign. The vaccine is stored in refrigerators. "We have accreditation of the Healthcare Ministry to conduct clinical tests," Head Doctor Larisa Kazak tells us. "Such experiments for us are not new, in recent years, we have often conducted drug testing. We have a modern medical base and qualified special-



ists. Admittedly, when they announced the recruitment of volunteers, the phone didn't stop ringing."

No wonder, there were about four thousand people in Minsk who expressed their desire to participate but not all are admitted: doctors take into account medical indications. Each volunteer who wishes to participate in a medical experiment is treated individually. Before vaccination, they pass the necessary tests and are examined.

"The desire is key but there are restrictions. For example, volunteers must be between the ages of 18 and 60 and have no history of coronavirus and SARS," Sergei Chernyak, a clinical research specialist at Russian Ifarma, comments. "They will be monitored by specialists."

People who have passed the selection stage will have a completely normal life, but there will definitely be an additional control. They will be monitored for 120-180 days, and vaccinated in two stages. Only 75 patients will be vaccinated, while the others will get a placebo.

"No one knows what injection they'll receive, even us. Everything will be known at the end of the clinical tests," Mr. Chernyak adds.

It is planned that, after the research, Belarus will be the first to receive the Russian COVID-19 vaccine.



Clear symbols

By Lyudmila Minkevich

Symbols of Belarus unites over a hundred events and sites that make our country well-known and appreciated around the world

The *Symbols of Belarus* book has been released by the Petrus Brovka Belarusian Encyclopaedia Publishing House. The unique 224-page edition was prepared jointly with the Museum of Modern Belarusian Statehood and is dedicated to the most significant symbols of Belarus, thanks to which our country is known and appreciated globally. It presents more than 100 sites and phenomena in three languages: Belarusian, Russian and English.

The book is actually not only about the country's state symbols: a significant part of it is devoted to architectural objects. Among these attractions are Nesvizh and Mir castles, the architectural

ensemble of Nezavisimosti Avenue in Minsk, the Minsk-Arena multifunctional sports complex, the National Library of Belarus, the Bolshoi Theatre and many others. The St. Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya's cross, the Zhiroviichi icon of the Mother of God, the Turov Gospel, Slutsk sashes and some other objects are considered spiritual symbols of the Belarusian nation. In turn, the symbols of Belarusian nature include the stork, bison, flax, cornflowers and potatoes, as well as Belovezhskaya Pushcha, Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve, Braslav Lakes and the pearl of the country: Lake Naroch.

The book also describes the people who have become true symbols of Belarus and glorified the country far beyond its borders. These are the writers



Maksim Bogdanovich, Yanka Kupala, Yakub Kolas, Vladimir Korotkevich, artists Ivan Khrtusky, Marc Chagall, Mikhail Savitsky, athletes Ruslan Saley, Daria Domracheva and others.

The publishing house believes that the book will appeal to everyone who is interested in the history and modernity of the Belarusian state, guests and residents of the country.

Unique Belarusian heritage

The National Historical Museum presented 26 banners displaying the uniqueness of Belarusian heritage at an exhibition in its courtyard organised as part of the *Rarities of the National Historical Museum of the Republic of Belarus* project

By Olga Korneeva

The exhibition was attended by all 5 branches of the National Historical Museum: the Museum of Modern Belarusian Statehood, the Museum of Theatre and Musical Culture History, the Museum of Belarusian Cinema History, the House-Museum of the 1st Congress of the RSDLP and the Museum of Nature and Ecology. As the organisers note, this has made it possible to reveal the richness and uniqueness of the Belarusian historical and cultural heritage.



The exhibition presented in the museum courtyard is a continuation of the project and consists of 26 banners with accompanying information in Belarusian, Russian and English.

The first exhibition of the project opened this June on the fence of the Chelyuskinstev Park in Minsk's Nezavisimosti Avenue. It featured photo banners representing treasures from the archives of the National Historical Museum: coins, weapons, national costumes, religious items, works of fine art, folk crafts, books, precious metals, awards and musical instruments. "The exhibition — presenting Belarus as a modern, developed European state that takes its place in the international community with dignity — has become a real guide to national history through the centuries," the Historical Museum noted.

The project is supported by the Culture Ministry and the Minsk City Executive Committee. ASB Belarusbank JSC acts as its general partner.

The large-scale command and staff exercise *Nerushimoye Bratstvo 2020* [Indestructible Brotherhood] for the peacekeeping forces of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation (CSTO) was successfully held on Belarusian territory. A total of over 900 people took part, in addition to more than 120 units of military and special hardware, including two Mi-8AMTSH helicopters and two Mi-24 attack helicopters of the Central Military District of the Armed Forces of the Russian Federation. The exercise was conducted in two stages and ended with a practical exercise at the Losvido training ground in the Vitebsk Region.



An impressive checkpoint with engineering equipment: concrete blocks and barriers. Here, peacekeepers practiced actions, including the inspection of transport

Their mission is achievable

By Igor Svetlov

The exercise involved the military contingents of the CSTO member states and the police forces and units from the emergencies ministries. Representatives of the International Committee of the Red Cross were invited as observers. Among the aims of the manoeuvres was the preparation and training of a peacekeeping operation.

The exercise was held in two stages. At the first stage, the peacekeeping contingents worked on the preparation of a joint operation. At the second stage, they moved on to practical training.

The first stage began with the presentation of the UN mandate to conduct a peacekeeping operation to the commander of the collective peacekeeping forces of the CSTO, Colonel Dmitry Sobol who reported on the plan of the joint operation.

“The units are practicing escorting convoys with humanitarian cargoes, engaging peacekeeping contingents in their areas of responsibility, guarding and countering attacks,” Colonel Vladimir Bely, the Chief of Staff of the exercise’s leadership, told reporters during the first stage of the exercise.

The peacekeepers also learned how to provide first aid in the framework of self- and mutual assistance, patrolled the area, organised the work of checkpoints and also practiced actions when performing tasks to counter mass riots. All tacti-



The exercise took place at the Losvido training ground of the 103rd Vitebsk separate guards airborne brigade

Yury Mozolevsky

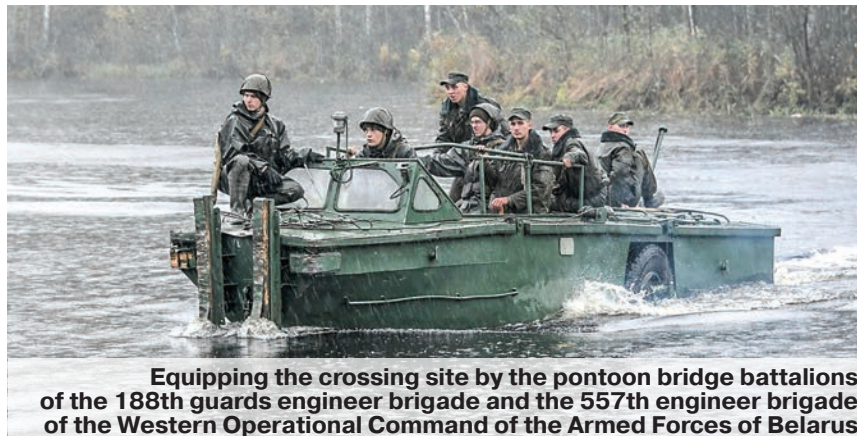


The training group perfected its actions when detecting improvised explosive devices



cal and combat training as part of *Nerushimoye Bratstvo 2020* will help peacekeepers to professionally perform specific tasks in the future.

As Vladimir Bely noted, this year, a research group worked during the exercise; it’s engaged in studying logistics issues and comprehensive support



Equipping the crossing site by the pontoon bridge battalions of the 188th guards engineer brigade and the 557th engineer brigade of the Western Operational Command of the Armed Forces of Belarus

for the actions of the CSTO collective peacekeeping forces. “It is important for us to understand and further refine certain issues of interaction. Based on the results of the exercise, we will make proposals to the governing bodies,” he said.

Vladimir Bely also explained how the actions of military personnel from different countries are co-ordinated during the exercise, “Work in the head-

quarters is in full swing, the operational staff are working day and night. Much attention is paid to the training of management bodies. This is because the effective work of collective peacekeeping forces is largely ensured by well co-ordinated and trained management bodies.”

An operational group of officers of Kazakhstan’s Armed Forces also observed the exercise. A senior officer of the Department of Peacekeeping Training at the General Staff of Kazakhstan’s Armed Forces, Lieutenant Colonel Ilya Smustafin, praised the organisational level of the exercise and the quality of Losvido’s infra-

structure, saying, “The military personnel of the CSTO peacekeeping forces have already developed points of understanding over the years of the exercise. Therefore, the interaction between us is at the highest level. The Belarusian military are our partners, our brothers. They are good-natured and responsive, professionals who are always a pleasure to work with.”

Protected area with a diploma

EU experts renewed the European Diploma for Protected Areas for the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve through to 2030

By Irina Sergeeva

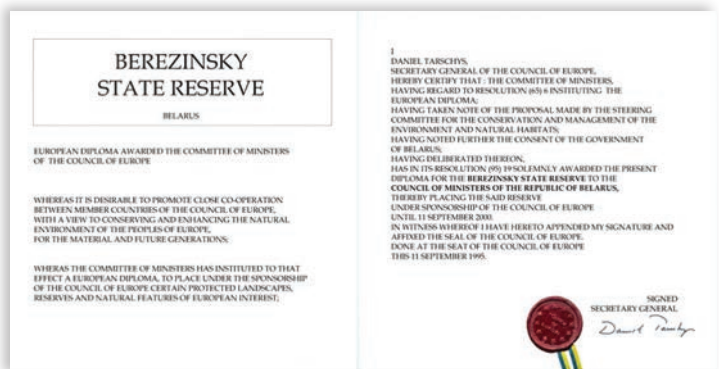
“The final resolution on the renewal of the European Diploma for Protected Areas awarded to the Berezinsky Biosphere Reserve was adopted on September 23rd, 2020 at the meeting of the Committee of Ministers of the Council of Europe. According to the document, the diploma was renewed for the next 10 years, until September 11th, 2030,” said representatives of the reserve.

The European Diploma of the highest category A was first awarded to the reserve on September 11th, 1995. It confirms that a conservation institution has an

exceptional value in terms of conservation and boasts a high level of management. If all criteria are met, the diploma is renewed every five or ten years. The last time the ten-year document was issued to the Berezinsky Biosphere Re-

serve was in 2010. European experts visited the reserve with an inspection mission in June 2019.

Another holder of the European Diploma for Protected Areas in Belarus is the Belovezhskaya Pushcha National Park.



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B&W Belarus & World

The Minsk Times
Thursday
October 22
2020

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REUTERS

Gunfire continues

Armenia and Azerbaijan accused each other of violating an agreed ceasefire to quell fighting over the Nagorno-Karabakh enclave, drawing warnings from international groups of a humanitarian crisis

The conflict between Armenia and Azerbaijan escalated, as both sides exchanged accusations and claims of new attacks over the separatist territory of Nagorno-Karabakh, where heavy fighting continues despite a Russia-brokered ceasefire deal.

Russian President Vladimir Putin spoke by phone with his Turkish counterpart Recep Tayyip Erdogan, emphasising the need to respect the truce that was violated immediately after taking effect. Mr. Putin also voiced concern about the

involvement in the conflict by militants from the Middle East.

The Minsk Group — a committee set up by the OSCE security watchdog to help mediate in Nagorno-Karabakh — called on the Armenian and Azeri leaders to implement the ceasefire to prevent ‘catastrophic consequences for the region’.

The 11-member group is led by the United States, Russia and France. Turkey is also a member but not involved in the Nagorno-Karabakh talks, though it has

said it wants to join them.

Martin Schuepp, Eurasia Regional Director for the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), said his organisation was trying to facilitate handovers of detainees or dead bodies, but the security situation hindered the efforts.

The recent fighting between Armenian and Azerbaijani forces erupted on September 27th and marked the biggest escalation of the conflict in more than a quarter-century. It has killed hundreds despite numerous calls for peace.

‘Traffic-light’ travel zones concept



EU member states adopted common standards to co-ordinate coronavirus travel restrictions, including a ‘traffic-light’ system of affected areas — in a bid to prevent a recurrence of individual and unilateral measures, as seen during the first COVID-19 wave

Under the proposal of the German presidency, endorsed by EU ambassadors, the European Centre for Disease Prevention and Control will publish a map that categories EU regions into green, orange and red zones (or grey, for insufficient data), according to COVID-19 infection rates. It’ll be available in the coming days.

In an attempt to make things clearer for citizens and businesses, the European Commission proposed in early September that travel restrictions should only apply to the red and grey areas of this weekly map.



EU countries have been ignoring, to some extent, the commission’s calls for co-ordination since the beginning of the pandemic — when some decided to unilaterally impose export bans on medical supplies or closed internal borders.

Live flamenco shows are back in Madrid

Flamenco, a traditional Andalusian art form, is one of the most popular attractions for tourists in Spain. Small businesses that offer live flamenco shows operate all over the country, far beyond its native region in the south.



Torres Bermejas, a flamenco show venue in Madrid which was founded half a century ago, is one of the most celebrated in Spain. This year hasn’t been easy for business. Due to the pandemic, it had to keep its doors shut for 7 months. But it has now reopened, welcoming tourists, but hoping to see more locals among the guests too.

The venue is allowed to welcome

up to 50 guests for a show. Their body temperatures are measured before they can enter. Powerful air filters were installed to keep the air in the venue well ventilated.

The usual interior of Torres Bermejas with a hollow wooden stage in the centre, multi-coloured tiles on the walls and ceiling in a typical Andalusian style, is now complemented by large see-through screens that are suspended from the ceiling and raised about 1 metre from the floor.

Performers dance behind these screens without masks and keep their distance from the audience. The guests can only take the masks off when seated. Most tables are set for two guests at a time.

Like Torres Bermejas, many venues had to close because of the pandemic. With the tourism sector and economy hit by restrictions, the regional Madrid Government has promised to help these businesses live through unstable times.

‘Wildlife Photographer of the Year’ winners revealed



Russian photographer Sergey Gorshkov has won the prestigious ‘Wildlife Photographer of the Year’ award for an image of an Amur tigress hugging a tree

It took Mr. Gorshkov more than eleven months to capture the image using hidden cameras in Russia’s Far East, the only place on Earth where Amur, or Siberian, tigers are found.

“It’s a scene like no other. A unique glimpse of an intimate moment deep in a magical forest,” said Roz Kidman Cox, the Chair of the judging panel. “Shafts of low winter sun highlight

the ancient fir tree and the coat of the huge tigress as she grips the trunk in obvious ecstasy and inhales the scent of tiger on resin, leaving her own mark as her message.”

Amur tigers were hunted almost to extinction in the last century, said Tim Littlewood, a jury member and the Natural History Museum’s Executive Director of Science, and are

still threatened by poaching and logging.

“The remarkable sight of the tigress immersed in her natural environment offers us hope, as recent reports suggest numbers are growing from dedicated conservation efforts,” said Mr. Littlewood.

Winners were announced at an online awards ceremony featuring Catherine, the Duchess of Cambridge.

Circus kaleidoscope of wonders

A new programme, entitled *Circus Kaleidoscope*, started at the Belarusian State Circus on October 10th. The hour and a half performance takes place without intermission: measures taken for the purpose of sanitary and epidemiological safety.

By Irina Ovsepyan

Since foreign visits are impossible due to the pandemic, the programme includes performances by Belarusian State Circus artists, who, for some time now, has included the famous Russian trainer, Sergei Nesterov. White tigers, with whom the Honoured Artiste of Russia has the most tender and respectful relationship, didn't suffer at all during the downtime (performances stopped in April, while new rehearsals began in August), except that they have put on weight.

"If you think that we deprived our tigers of meat, you are mistaken," the Director of the Belarusian State Circus, Vladimir Shaban, assured us with a smile. "We did feed them properly and continue to! We haven't reduced the diet of our animals by a single gram. While there was no active work, we bought broiler meat for the predators and even removed the skin so that they received the maximum dietary nutrition. Now, each tiger is entitled to eight kilograms of first grade beef."

The fact that the predators are healthy, well-fed and happy is striking: the animals rush around and disturb the peace. The trained bears of Sergei Prichinich look just as cute: they ride gyroscooters, juggle with balls and, judging by their blooming appearance and shiny shaggy skins, are quite happy with their lot and living conditions. Moreover, the trainers had to put some of their animals on a diet: laziness and life without rehearsals do no good to anyone, while obesity for an animal can be dangerous and large predators in such a situation often have heart problems.

The Belarusian circus is traditionally a circus with animals, and there are many of them in the new programme. In addition to tigers and bears, we will see trained dogs, as well as a unique performance, which is unrivalled in the world — a juggling monkey riding a donkey. It is not the first time that



Aleksei Vyazmitinov

the head of the performance — Aydin Israfilov — delights the audience with his own achievements and the successes of his pets. In addition, the pig-tailed macaque Kuzya is an old friend of ours: as a teenager, when we met him in person, he tried to steal my earrings, then deftly tapped a photojournalist's finger, who refused to give his camera over to the curious primate's tenacious paws. Even then — being a cheeky youngster — Kuzya showed great promise as an artist, and now, having matured, he has become a real star of the arena. The talented pig-tailed monkey invents many elements and tricks himself: the trainer's task is to polish them and organically integrate them into the performance. This is exactly how, according to Aydin Israfilov, genuine training works: on a purely voluntary basis.

"During the time we're rehearsing, the monkey had time to make friends with the donkey and the animals got used to each other; however, in public they are still a little nervous," said the trainer.

One of the most stellar performances of the Belarusian State Circus —



Mermaids, abductions of princesses by dragons and fairy tales of a night arena: the new show brings together the best Belarusian performances



strength athletes Bogdan Kazakov and Dmitry Kazakov who continue to delight with both power and their Herculean figures, bending iron bars and dragging constructions made of logs, which are then hardly able to be carried away from the arena by a whole brigade of helpers.

Six months without work and performances creates a very unhappy situation, and the circus is calculating their losses. However, thanks to their hard work at the beginning of the year, the

'Belarusian Horse Riders' — has also been updated. The former leader, Honoured Artiste of Ossetia, Boris Lazarov, handed over the reins to his son. Ruslan Lazarov copes with leadership but admitted that it takes time to get used to the new role.

Another tradition of the Belarusian State Circus is brilliant trapeze artists. This programme includes both novices and familiar names: the 'Air Flight' performance under the direction of Yevgeny Kononovich (which debuted last autumn at the 2nd Minsk International Festival of Circus Arts), gymnasts on belts, on the net, on canvas (an incredibly spectacular and romantic performance from Valeria

situation was kept under control.

Vladimir Shaban noted, "Thanks to our spectators and the New Year's performances. During this period, we've created a good financial cushion and didn't ask the state for money either for salaries or for food. I talked a lot with colleagues in Ukraine and Russia, and they have a more difficult situation, even in terms of animals' diet. The artists also reacted with understanding to the situation, but, to be honest, several people got other jobs, although during all these months, according to the President's decree, the minimum wage was paid. Since April we have been idle, so now both the artists and our smaller colleagues are back to work with enthusiasm. I would like to thank our Artistic Director Vytautas Grigaliunas and Chief Director Alla Nikolaeva-Aliyeva for the new production. We have good ticket sales, and we did everything to protect the audience."

The circus is already thinking about a New Year's show and some performances by Belarusian artists are kept in store, being carefully polished. Negotiations are also underway for a tour in Russia, when full communication between the countries is restored.

Shopik) won't leave anyone indifferent. Of course, there will be also the audience's favourites: the





The Church of the Intercession on the site of the Pustynsky Monastery

Vladimir Korotkevich called Mstislavl 'a diamond city' after arriving there on a sunny morning after an incredible January snowstorm. In fact, the writer is not the only traveller who fell in love with these places at first sight. Atmospheric, cozy Mstislavl is beautiful at any time of the year. The ancient city and its surroundings have many advantages: 79 monuments of architecture, archaeology and history from the State List of Historical and Cultural Values are found here. Meanwhile, the locals continue the chronicle of glorious deeds on their land.

Andrei Sazonov



Blacksmith Sergei Kudikov creates swords and armour while also taking part in knights' tournaments

Mstislavl: canvas of time

By Olga Kislyak

Knights of Castle Hill

Most tourists know the Mstislavl District due to its Castle Hill and Knights' Fest. Every year thousands of guests from different countries come to the festival which takes them back to the Middle Ages — to enjoy knights on horseback and hand-to-hand combat, mass battles, archery competitions, storming the fortress and a collection of ancient weapons and treasures found during archaeological excavations.

Sergei Kudikov is one of the regular participants of the tournament. He attended the Knights' Fest for the first time in 2007 — as an IT lecturer at the Construction College. The medieval battles on Castle Hill inspired him so much that, at the age of 40, he decided to change his profession. Sergei continues to teach his fellow countrymen but it's the craft of blacksmithing that inspires him now: he works at the District House of Crafts as a junior researcher. He opened the Mstislavl Banner reconstruction club here. Joined by enthusiastic people of different ages and professions, he makes knights' equipment from iron. Along with schoolchildren, he is engaged in fencing and the making of chain armour at the Master of Metal club, and opened a Call of the Forefathers historic studio at the House of Children's Art last year. Many teenagers are also attracted to chivalrous romance.

We met 14-year-olds Slava Fedosov and Kirill Kozyrev making chain armour at the House of Crafts: they were twisting wire rings. The process is not easy. As the boys explained, 30,000 or even more rings are needed. All are different. An armour of large rings would weigh 16 kilograms, small — 30 kilograms. The teenagers who've fallen in love with blacksmithing have a dream: to participate in a knights' tournament and fight in their own armour.



Holy Dormition Monastery in Pustynki

Authentic armour envisages working not only with metal. Under the guidance of their master, the schoolchildren make shirts, underwear, woollen stockings (chausses). They don't use bone needles, as was common in the Middle Ages, but observe ancient technologies — working with their hands and using

only natural fabrics: wool and flax.

Mr. Kudikov was making his first armour — iron gloves weighing about three kilograms, shoulder pads, breastplate, chain mail, a helmet, foot and hand shields — for about a year.

The man demonstrates how to forge and mould metal in the blacksmith shop which is just like in the old days: with an anvil, a horn, bellows... Metal here is heated to 900 degrees. Apart from armour, Sergei makes wrought-iron chairs, bench-

Pustynki. The fate of the monastery itself, founded in 1380, is also amazing, as well as the people who gave it a new life.

In the early 20th century, little remained of the monastery but, in 2003, with the blessing of Bishop Sofrony of Mogilev and Mstislavl, the monastery began to be revived. The priest of the Pustyn Monastery, hieromonk Hilarion, who graduated from the Zhirovichi Theological Seminary, remembers how it all began.

"When monks settled in Pustynki again, the place was in a deplorable state: a broken bell tower, dilapidated walls of temples, overgrown with weeds... I had to cut down the bushes, take out mountains of garbage. Together with the monks, ordinary people worked here — not only from the Mstislavl District, but also from Gorki, Klimovichi, Mogilev. The miracle happened again: in one of the ancient buildings, an image of Christ appeared on a wall. The face, which appeared through several layers of peeling plaster and strikingly resembles the imprint of the famous shroud of Turin, has been called non-man-made. And it's getting clearer and brighter every year," he says.

Hieromonk Hilarion leads us to the very face to which pilgrims from different parts of Belarus, Russia and Ukraine come, explaining, "People fall in front of him with prayers, asking for the most intimate things. And after a while they come back here again to share their joy. One parishioner said that her brain tumour disappeared — the operation was not necessary. More than once, women came who, after visiting the monastery, finally found the joy of motherhood."

Hieromonk Hilarion is very happy that this place was given a second life. It restored the Church of the Nativity of Christ, the Protection Chapel, the restoration and reconstruction of which lasted ten years and was completed this year. It would be also great — if not to rebuild — but at least to preserve the Assumption Chapel made of red brick.

The monastery in Pustynki is being revived by the efforts of not only monks. For the reconstruction and restoration of the Protection Chapel, money was allocated from the Republican and regional budgets. A resident of Magnitogorsk presented bells to the monastery and another Russian promises to bring a few more this autumn. People often work on Saturdays here: residents of the Mstislavl District decorate the site of the place which fills their souls with faith and pure and positive thoughts.



At the Knights' Fest

es and horseshoes — all manually, without electricity. Antique lovers from different cities come to attend his master classes.

Speaking of why people are attracted to this craft, he says, "Unique items have a soul. When you're dealing with fire, it's even more fascinating. Forging is always fashionable. People order different items but, in recent times, charms — horseshoes — are mostly popular."

The 'Varvara Candle' ancient rite — revived in the Mstislavl District by residents of the village of Bastenovichi — has been included in the State List of Historical and Cultural Values. Master Kudikov dreams of reviving another one: wedding. "A blacksmith was asked in older times not only for a horse shoe but to receive a blessing for marriage. That's why the ceremony was called a 'blacksmith's wedding'. We want to revive it: newlyweds will make nails themselves and 'seal' a metal heart with them. This is very symbolic, because every person is the blacksmith of their own happiness," the man explains.

Miracles in Pustynki

Tourists come to the Mstislavl District not only to enjoy the old times and participate in jousting tournaments, but also to experience a miracle. Incredible stories have happened more than once in the Holy Dormition Monastery in

Doing first-rate work

Mogilev hosts the final stage of the all-Belarusian cross-country race for the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House prizes

The team from the Mogilev Region won the final of the all-Belarusian cross-country race for the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House prizes. The competitions, held in Mogilev, gathered the strongest runners in the country and they enjoyed the serious competition.

By Dmitry Komashko

In fact, three tournaments were held on the banks of the Dubrovenka River in Mogilev: the final of the all-Belarusian cross-country, the Cup of Belarus — which had moved from the beginning of May to the middle of October — and, finally, the relay race for the prizes of the honoured coach of the country, Aleksandr Kitsenko. Such a complex programme was easily explained: the pandemic confused plans and shortened the season, forcing the organisers and athletes to seek compromises. In the end, everything worked out. Even the weather took pity on the athletes, which made it possible to carry out all the races, albeit on wet grass, but with almost no rain. It was not the month of May, but, taking into account all the circumstances, it was an excellent alternative to the usual calendar. According to senior endurance trainer Andrei Gordeev, such a test of strength turned out to be very useful, “The cross-country competitions have an important function, becoming a test of functional readiness. The athletes worked all summer, held training camps, prepared first for the Olympics, then for the European Championship. As a result, many were unable to take part in international tournaments. It was very important for them to test themselves and draw conclusions for the next season.”

The May final of the All-Belarusian cross-country race — which has become a tradition over twenty-two years — was interesting not only for the sports component in previous years. Firstly, it covered almost all regions of the country. During the preliminary stages — at regional competitions — thousands of athletes of various ages took to the tracks in villages and small towns. For many, it was these events that gave them their start in life, enabling the coaches to see future stars. Secondly, for almost ten years now, the final of the all-Belarusian cross-country race for the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House prizes has been named the ‘Victory’ competition. This time, the competitions — traditionally held on the eve of Victory Day — were forced to move to October, but the ‘victorious’ component was not lost. According

to one of the organisers, the head coach for the Mogilev Region Dmitry Sivov, the ambitious initial plans had to be abandoned (it was planned to organise a large-scale interactive town race around the track), but the tradition was preserved while all the new ideas were simply transferred to the future.

However, the athletes this time hardly experienced any inconvenience. This year, the track turned out to be even more difficult than usual but it was more interesting. All the usual attributes — pits, bumps, hills and slopes — were present, as were the fight and challenge for endurance and willpower. As a result, Sergei Platonov and Nina Savina emerged victorious from this battle with themselves, the track and rivals in the main races: 5,000m for men and women respectively. After the finish, the athletes assured us that it wasn’t easy. This success means a lot even for Savina, who, under a different set of circumstances, would have had to run a



Those from Mogilev have won

marathon in Olympic Tokyo in August. So far, they have only managed to register another victory in the country cup and bring success to the team of her region in the dispute over the Cup — established by the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House. The emotions, of course, are incomparable, but at the finish line she didn’t look upset at all. Rivalry on cross-country tracks has its own principles.



Vitaly Pivovarchik



Nina Savina

for it. So, it is necessary to win everywhere. Moreover, it is important for the team as well,” notes Nina Savina.

Sergei Platonov recently managed to reach the start of an international tournament and won the Lithuanian Open Championship. In Mogilev, he won twice: firstly, in a personal dispute with Vyacheslav Skudny at a distance of 5,000m and a little later as part of a relay team. After the finish, he explained that due to the fact that he was preparing to participate in the IAAF World Half Marathon Championships, he had managed to get to the end of the season in excellent shape.

“The result was not as good as a year ago, but I was saving my energy for the relay. It was important to win, and I’m glad I managed to do it. Even the weather didn’t hinder me. Cross is my favourite kind of programme, and the harder the better. Moreover, we managed to win the Cup,” he said.

The Cup, by the way, is another story. The previous trophy — which the editorial office established fifteen years ago for the winners of the all-Belarusian cross-country final — went for ‘eternal safekeeping’ to the residents of Mogilev, who managed to become winners three times in a row. Now there is a new story and a new Cup, which looks even more impressive. The example of the national team of the Mogilev Region, which has received the right to be considered the best in cross-country running for the fourth year in a row, looks like a serious irritant for the opponents. It will be very prestigious to interrupt this series. Speaking about their prospects, Dmitry Sivov can’t hide his satisfaction: to receive the Cup for the fourth time in a row for the Mogilev Region is an indicator of the quality of the coaches’ work and the sports system built in the region.

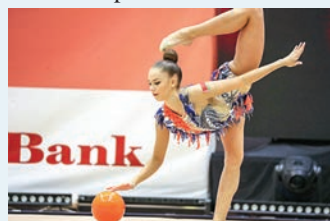
ARENA

● **Anastasia Salos won bronze at international rhythmic gymnastics tournament in Moscow**

The event took place during the Russian Cup at the Irina Viner-USmanova Gymnastics Palace. After exercises with the hoop and the ball, Anastasia Salos was ranked fourth. Another Belarusian — Alina Gornosko — took third place. However, the native of Barnaul did better in the clubs and ribbon sections. As a result, Anastasia Salos claimed bronze with 98.45 points while Alina Gornosko earned 97.9. Dina Averina won the all-around

(104.1 points), followed by Arina Averina (102.65 points).

Next for the Belarusian gymnasts is the training camp in Sochi, and then participation in the international tournament for the prizes of the Olympic champion, Marina Lobach. It is planned that athletes from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine, Poland and Israel will perform in Minsk.



● **Belarusian Yevgeny Dolgolevets won professional boxing evening in Minsk**

The native of the Minsk Region faced the Ukrainian athlete, Vladislav Baranov, and defeated him by technical knockout in the first round.

Other representatives of Belarus were less fortunate. Ruslan Rodzivich, after a knockout in the first round, was forced to admit defeat from Askar Zhantursunov of Kazakhstan. His fellow countryman — Zhandos Kydyraliev — ended the fight with Arseniy Kobzev in the second round in his favour, with a technical knockout.

● **Sobolenko and Azarenko retained their positions in the WTA ranking, with Sasnovich climbing three places**

Belarusian Arina Sobolenko retained her 12th place in the ranking of the Women’s Tennis Association (WTA). The French Open is over. As a result, Arina Sobolenko reached 3,675 points. However, Victoria Azarenko scored 3,122 points and still remains in 14th position. In turn, Aleksandra Sasnovich moved up from 96th to 93rd place with 798 points.



● **Belarusian boxers won six gold medals at EUBC International Tournament in the Memory of Vladimir Botvinnik**

Irina Vinogradova (54kg) of Gornel, Marina Mulyachik (57kg) of Grodno, as well as Karina Antipina of Minsk (75kg) celebrated victory in the girls’ events. Among the young boys, gold medals were won by Vladislav Smolovsky (49kg) and Aleksandr Dovnar (64kg) of Bobruisk, as well as Kirill Levankov of Minsk (56kg).

The tournament was attended by 98 athletes from 6 countries.

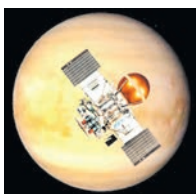


Photo of the week

Autumn gifts in Nalibokskaya Pushcha

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On October 22nd and October 25th, 1975, Soviet automatic stations 'Venera-9' and 'Venera-10' for the first time in the history of space exploration made a controlled landing on the surface of Venus and transmitted panoramic television images from another planet to Earth.



On October 24th, 1795, a convention on the third partition of Rzecz Pospolita was signed in St. Petersburg. The western part of Belarus, part of Lithuania (up to Kovno) and Courland joined the Russian Empire while the southwestern part of the Brest Voivodeship went to Austria and the north-western part of the Grodno Region — to Prussia.

October 24th in the Republic of Belarus is the Day of Special Intelligence. The anniversary of the special forces is considered to be October 24th, 1950, when the corresponding Directive



of the USSR Military Minister was adopted. Servicemen of the special forces of sovereign Belarus are worthy successors of the traditions of the legendary special forces and successfully solve the tasks they face. Their work includes anti-terrorist actions, actions for the search and detention of especially dangerous and armed criminals, the elimination of criminal groups, the release of hostages and other special operations.



October 24th is World Development Information Day. It is celebrated by the decision of the UN General Assembly (1972) in order to draw the attention

of the world's public opinion to development problems and the need to strengthen international interaction in resolving them.

October 24th is United Nations Day, celebrated since 1948. On October 24th, 1945, the UN Charter entered into force. The UN is an international organisation of states, established to maintain and strengthen international peace and security, while developing co-operation between countries. Currently, the UN unites 193 states.



On October 25th, 1825, Johann Strauss (son) (1825–1899) was born — an Austrian composer, violinist and conductor, creator of the classical type of Viennese waltz. His famous works include *On the Beautiful, Blue Danube, Tales from the Vienna Woods,* and *Voices of Spring.* He was a master of the Viennese operetta. Among the works of this genre are *The Bat* and *Gypsy Baron.*

October 25th in the Republic of Belarus is the Day of the Motorist and Road Builder. It is celebrated on the last Sunday in October. This is a professional holiday not only for drivers, but also for repair workers, engineers and technicians, as well as heads of road transport enterprises and everyone who works conscientiously, fulfilling their professional duty.



On October 26th, 1880, Dmitry Karbyshev was born (1880–1945) — a Russian military engineer, Lieutenant General of engineering troops (1940), Professor (1938), Doctor of Military Sciences (1941), and Hero of the Soviet Union (1946, posthumously). In 1911–1914, he supervised the

reconstruction of the Brest Fortress. At the beginning of the Great Patriotic War he took part in defensive battles for Grodno. He was captured in battles near Mogilev. He was tortured to death by the Nazis in the Mauthausen camp (Austria) in 1945. A monument to Karbyshev was erected in Grodno while streets in many cities of Belarus bear his name.



October 26th is International School Library Day, celebrated in many countries annually on the fourth Monday in October since 1999 at the initiative of UNESCO. Each year the event is dedicated to a specific theme.



On October 28th, 1945, Pobedy [Victory] Park was founded in Minsk near Komsomolskoye Lake. On an area of about 60 hectares, 58,000 trees and shrubs were planted. It functioned as an urban recreation area; since 1975, this has been the Victory Park of Culture and Rest.

