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INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 1 (911) ● THURSDAY, JANUARY 6, 2022 ● WWW.SB.BY



At Christmas, nativity scenes appear in churches, symbolising the place where Jesus Christ was born. In St. Nicholas Garrison Cathedral in the Brest Fortress (photo from the archive)

Bright holiday of Christmas

Orthodox believers will celebrate tomorrow one of the most important Christian holidays — the Nativity of Christ. Today — on Christmas Eve — the services will last all night in Orthodox churches, and on the morning of January 7th, people will wish each other a Merry Christmas. The festive mood will gradually move from the temples to the streets. There will be mass Christmas celebrations with carols and round dances.



Plans for the future

Towards the end of the outgoing year, St. Petersburg became a venue for two informal summit meetings of the heads of state of the Commonwealth of Independent States and of the presidents of Belarus and Russia

Offline summit

The President of Belarus positively assessed the informal meeting with colleagues from the CIS, "It was a very good event, kind, warm. We saw once again that the leaders of the post-Soviet republics, including Belarus, perfectly understand the situation around us, and have sorted out all the intricacies of world politics. Thanks to Russia."

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that although the meeting of the leaders of the Commonwealth was of an informal nature, nevertheless, it was possible to discuss fundamental questions, especially in those areas where it was not previously possible.

The CIS summit was held at the Boris Yeltsin Presidential Library. The agenda included summing up the results of the Belarusian chairmanship in the Commonwealth in 2021, exchange of views on solving common pressing problems, discussion of further measures to increase the efficiency of co-operation and socio-economic development of the CIS countries. The meeting is also significant in that December marked the 30th anniversary of the founding of the Commonwealth of Independent States.

During the summit, the leaders of the CIS states also discussed in detail the development of the epidemiological situation and proposals for additional measures to combat the pandemic.

Belarusians are grateful to friends and partners

The Belarusian-Russian summit meeting, like a series of previous ones, has once again proved that the presidents of Belarus and Russia are strong friends, our countries are fraternal, and our states are solid partners. Aleksandr Lukashenko did not hide the fact that Belarusian economic successes in the face of tough sanctions pressure largely rely on Russian support and sincerely thanked his colleague for this,

"The fact that we have increased trade turnover and our GDP has grown during this sanction year against the backdrop of a pandemic in many aspects is due to the great support of the Russian Federation and our friends, albeit to a lesser extent, in the international arena."

In a conversation with Vladimir Putin, the Belarusian Head of State emphasised, "I am very grateful to you, to you personally, first of all, for what you have done for Belarus. And for the support you provide to us. I do not want to flatter you. It is not about flattery. And the fact is that any proposal that we make, or a request when you make an assignment to one or another person, and people respond. Russian companies, the Government and banks are meeting halfway, supporting us in this difficult time of sanctions. They continue to strangle us. There were introduced five packages, they are talking about a sixth package. Moreover, these sanctions are brainless and useless."

"You have always supported me in this regard. I have turned to you so that we do not stop our joint exercises. So that we continue to create centres for training our guys, first of all, new models of military equipment that we buy in Russia. We do it."

Regarding the joint exercises, the Head of State said, "I know that you and your military are considering my proposals for training exercises in the territory of Belarus. I would like these decisions to be taken by you. This will benefit the Belarusian-Russian relations."

Vladimir Putin, in turn, said, "As you suggested, we will hold it at the beginning of the year. The military will arrange everything. In March-February."

they are in demand for the Russian aircraft industry."

"Absolutely," agreed Vladimir Putin. "Based on the results of our meeting, this will be another task for the Government."

A significant step forward

Vladimir Putin gave this assessment to the development of the Union State in 2021,

"Indeed, this year we have made a significant step forward in coordinating positions in the main areas."

The President of Russia mentioned 28 Union State programmes on the development of integration, "Key things that may not be noticeable at first glance, but are essential from the point of view of



Key areas

The presidents confirmed plans to hold joint military exercises in Belarus in 2022. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that he had asked his Russian colleague for a long time that the countries did not stop their co-operation in the defence industry, the military-industrial complex,

Another breakthrough area of co-operation is interaction in aircraft construction. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted,

"We have agreed, you can already say. Thank you again for supporting co-operation in the aircraft industry. We have both civilian and military aircraft factories. We can do a lot in co-operation. Moreover,

building modern international, but at the same time close integration processes. This is primarily finance, tax, customs and fiscal legislation. This is very important and will create better conditions for the development of the economies of the two countries."

Vladimir Putin noted that if in 2020 due to the pandemic the level of Belarusian-Russian trade fell by almost 17 percent, in 2021, it has grown by 36 percent:

"We covered everything that we lost in the previous year and even gained," he added.

The Russian President stated that the parties have outlined serious plans for the implementation of interaction, and thanked Aleksandr Lukashenko for the fact that Belarus has consistently supported the development of integration with Russia, "I hope that we will co-operate as productively in the upcoming 2022."

Vladimir Putin also noted the good pace of development of the Belarusian economy,

"As for the economy, I would like to note that our experts believe that the economy of Belarus is in good condition."



One-on-one meeting between Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin took place in the Konstantinovsky Palace in Strelna

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

Live happily!

We lived through 2021, a very important and eventful year for the country. 2022 has been declared the Year of Historical Memory. Every woman who wants to have a child should have that chance. Details of the President's visit to the Mother and Child National Research Centre.



It is a good and long-term tradition that December 31st is always a business day in the schedule of the Head of State, and quite intense at that. In the morning, the President held a hockey training session and personally congratulated each of his companions in the ice squad. After that he went to the Mother and Child National Research Centre. It is very symbolic in the New Year to visit a place where a new life is being born. But even with this, the agenda of the outgoing year has not yet been fully exhausted.

A unique experience

Arriving at the National Research Centre, the President heard a detailed report on the organisation of perinatal care in the country. In particular, Healthcare Minister Dmitry Pinevich announced the following figures: in terms of infant mortality (2.6 per 1,000 live births in 2020), Belarus is ahead of many developed countries of the world. At the same time, every death of a child is a huge tragedy for parents. The Minister focused on the most important,

“For a family, it doesn't matter what the statistics are, for them it is a loss and grief of 100 percent. This is why we fight for every child.”

Dmitry Pinevich added that about 250 children with extremely low body weight are born in the country every year. At the same time, the survival rate of such babies (from 500 grams) in the first year of life is more than 80 percent, and the primary disability rate among this category does not exceed 17-18 percent, which is also a high indicator.

In turn, the Director of the Mother and Child National Research Centre, Sergei Vasiliev, told the President about one of the promising

areas of work of the centre, which is fetoscopic surgery. This is when surgeries are performed on the fetus right in the womb, “Currently, we are treating hemolytic disease of newborns: in fact, we are giving intravenous blood transfusions to children in utero. In case of the syndrome of fetofetal transfusion, when there is a network of pathological vessels between twins, we coagulate these vessels, as a result, 80 percent of these babies are born before the term. We have already been performing more serious surgeries on the fetus itself.”

By the way, two weeks ago, specialists of the centre, together with colleagues from the Republican Scientific and Practical Centre of Neurology and Neurosurgery, performed the first unique surgery in the

country, during which a spinal hernia was removed from a child at a gestational age of 26-27 weeks. The surgery was successful, the prognosis that the functions of the lower extremities will be preserved is favourable, and the pregnancy continues.

Joy of motherhood

The successes of the specialists of the Mother and Child National Research Centre are impressive. Indeed, until recently, children weighing a little more than half a kilogram had practically no chance of surviving. Today, these tiny patients are successfully nursed in most cases. However, there are also women who cannot get pregnant. In vitro fertilisation (IVF) is something that could help them. According

to Belarusian legislation, one such procedure is done free of charge. In general, the system works, but needs some improvement. The President touched on this topic, “Recently, literally two or three days ago, we discussed this issue with women. Accidentally. They say we have this system unfinished.”

In particular, according to the Head of State, we are talking about the absence of a data bank and genetic materials for IVF. The President ordered, “We have not developed it. Let's deal with this and do it at least no worse than in Russia. Let's do this very quickly. In the first half of next year. We will take all decisions so that it is no worse than in the most developed countries. Now that we agreed that we should develop IVF.

It is a tragedy for a specific family and for a woman if she cannot give birth herself. So let's resolve this issue. We have taken just half a step and stopped. Let's create this database. Let's advertise it. We will do everything so that a woman can give birth. A woman who wants to have a child, should have that chance.”

Well done! But there is no time to relax

Finally, the traditional exchange of gifts. Doctors presented the Head of State with a pre-revolutionary wooden stethoscope. It was found in the Kura outpatient clinic of a general practitioner in the Vitebsk Region, where a hospital operated before the revolution.

The Head of State, in turn, handed over an expert-class ultrasound apparatus to the centre. It is designed for a wide range of studies: obstetric-gynecological, urological, vascular and cardiological, as well as in pediatrics and neonatology. Patients and staff were not left without gifts. In particular, fruits from the colleagues of the President of Belarus in the CIS from southern countries. Aleksandr Lukashenko explained that his friends, the presidents, made him such a present during the recent informal summit of the CIS heads of state and he is happy to share with the doctors. Addressing them, the President said,

“Thank you. I came to you today because it is New Year, of course, but you and I will have a challenging next year. We are always at war. Therefore, I am grateful to you, first of all. And secondly, I ask you not to relax, because who knows how the situation will develop. And it's not about the pandemic, the coronavirus. We have already learned how to treat this. We will cure it. But we need to be on the alert, ready for all events. Especially negative.”

Meanwhile, in the remaining few hours before the New Year, you always want to believe in the best. Let us be optimists.

Aleksandr Lukashenko signed a decree declaring the Year of Historical Memory

President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko signed a decree declaring 2022 the Year of Historical Memory. The moment of signing was shown on TV as part of the broadcast of the New Year's Address of the Head of State to the Belarusian people, according to BelTA.

The President signed the document in his office at the Palace of Independence. The content of the decree also got

into the frame. It declares that the Year of Historical Memory is announced in order to form an objective attitude of society to the historical past, as well as to preserve and strengthen the unity of the Belarusian people.

The Council of Ministers with the participation of the General Prosecutor's Office, the National Academy of Sciences, regional executive committees, and the Minsk

City Executive Committee was instructed to develop and approve a Republican plan of measures to be implemented in the Year of Historical Memory in 2022. In addition, it was instructed to ensure the coordination of the activities of government agencies and other organisations in the implementation of the plan.

The decree comes into force after its official publication.



Historic moment

Draft amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus are announced for public discussion

According to BelTA, draft amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus were announced for public discussion on the website of the National Legal Internet Portal

The coordination of work on the collection and generalisation of citizens' responses on the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, submitted for public discussion, is carried out by the National Centre for Legal Information.

Citizens' opinions on the draft

amendments and additions to the Constitution of the Republic of Belarus, as well as possible proposals, shall be sent to the National Centre for Legal Information by e-mail to sbor@ncpi.gov.by; by filling out an electronic form located on the National Legal Internet Portal; or in writing to the address: 1a, Berson Str., Minsk,

220030, National Centre for Legal Information, marked 'Constitution'.

The draft amendments to the Constitution can also be found on the Internet portal of the President of the Republic of Belarus.



Everyone can contribute to the real state-building of Belarus

The draft amendments and additions to the Constitution, published on the National Legal Internet Portal for nationwide discussion, instantly attracted the attention of both legislators and experts. Together with the text of the draft itself, we offer you some opinions.

By Maksim Osipov, Yulia Demeshko

Recently, the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution for national discussion were published in the country's leading print media. As the **Head of the Belarus President Administration, Igor Sergeyenko**, told reporters the day before, the draft document had previously been posted on the President's website, the Internet portal of the National Centre for Legal Information, BelTA, "So that our people, citizens of our country, could familiarise themselves with the amendments and present their proposals.

The proposals will be accepted by any government agency in our country, as well as by the President Administration, and the Government, Parliament, regional executive committees..."

The Head of the Belarus President Administration specified that the National Centre for Legal Information will be engaged in generalising all incoming proposals in real time and with daily analysis, and will subsequently prepare the most striking proposals in a generalised form.

"These will be the opinions of experts, as well as of ordinary citizens, people who are not indifferent to the fate of our country", BelTA News Agency quotes Igor Sergeyenko.

The Head of the President Administration specifically noted that the amendments and additions to the Constitution did not appear out of nowhere, but were prepared taking into account the evolving situation, the dictates of the times, new challenges and threats, "Taking into account, again, the proposals of citizens, which were voiced at the dialogue platforms, in the expert environment."

According to him, the project maintains continuity with the current Constitution of Belarus, despite the fact that, to one degree or another, certain changes have occurred in all sections. The draft amendments and additions to the Basic Law retained a social orientation. Igor Sergeyenko underlined that,

"Our Belarusian state will continue to develop as a unitary, democratic, social, legal one."

When listing some changes and novelties of the published project, the Head of the Belarus President Administration



focused on the issues of preserving the historical memory and heroic deed of the Belarusian people during the war and in subsequent periods. Such social institutions as family and marriage are being further developed, provisions and guarantees regarding caring for elderly citizens, disabled people have been updated, provisions on youth have been added to a separate article.

In addition, certain changes have affected the political system of the Belarusian society, the electoral system, as well as the activities of the Constitutional Court. Naturally, much attention is paid to issues related to the Belarusian People's Congress, which is given

constitutional status.

"This is a new body. It was necessary to specify in more detail, to spell out the powers, the requirements, as well as how this body is formed," said Igor Sergeyenko.

He noted that in the draft Constitution all issues are reflected in a concentrated form, and in the future, certain amendments and additions will be reflected and developed in other legislative acts. The draft document also contains transitional provisions, which, among other things, regulate how changes will take place in the elements of the political system, if the updated Constitution is adopted.

EXPERT COMMENTS



Igor Marzalyuk, Chairman of the Standing Commission on Education, Culture and Science at the House of Representatives, corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences, Doctor of Historical Sciences, PhD:

The authorities are demonstrating their readiness to change, their readiness for further political mobilisation and, in a positive sense, for changes throughout the country. Belarus demonstrates that it was, is and will remain a dynamic organism, the political power of which clearly responds to the demands of the constructive part of society.

Let me remind you once again that the issue of upgrading the political system to improve the constitutional process had been discussed long before all those dramatic events took place in Belarus in 2020. And first

of all, this conversation took place at the initiative of the President. Now this initiative has been implemented, and there is a fundamental opportunity for everyone who wants to see a country independent and sovereign, with a national, historical, cultural tradition, to vote for these changes.

Read, compare, and you will see that this is the Constitution, which opens an even wider window of opportunities for those who think in national categories, for those who love their country and want to improve it even more. The amendments

to the draft Constitution are aimed precisely at ensuring that every citizen of the country who can and wants to reform the political system, take an active part in building the state and nation, could have such an opportunity.

The new draft Constitution is democratic, open, and takes into account all the important points on which the current government was criticised by its most constructive opponents. Therefore, I would like to repeat one old Polish slogan that I saw in Warsaw in the 90s before their upcoming elections: 'Nie bądź durny idź do

urny!' That is, don't be stupid, come to the ballot box, vote for your future, improve your country.

Anyone who believes that their homeland is here should take part in a constitutional referendum. And I am deeply convinced that we simply must support it! If you have a Belarusian heart, Belarusian soul. And if you see Belarus as a sovereign powerful country in the centre of the Eurasian continent, and not as a marginal colony, whose citizens earn money on other people's strawberry plantations and put their women out with outstretched hands on European highways.

Aleksei Dzermant, political analyst:

The President keeps all his promises: he said that the process of constitutional reform will be completed with a referendum, and we are now starting a nationwide discussion of the draft, which was carefully prepared by both the Constitutional Commission and the working group.



Diana Mikhalovich

That is, everything that the President spoke about is reflected in practice. And now it is important for citizens to participate in this process, to express their opinion before the final draft of the Basic Law is submitted to a referendum.

This is the only right and possible way, not 'on the streets', but through a civilised discussion, through the maximum involvement of our citizens in the preparation process, this is the normal evolutionary path of development. And this is the path chosen by our state. We go through all its stages, which we have designated for ourselves, and calmly, systematically carry out what we have planned. Not to please anyone, but primarily for ourselves and our future. Therefore, it is very important that the work done is reaching the home stretch, we are ready to discuss essentially all the innovations proposed in the Constitution, the draft has been made public. Now it is important that those who would like to speak about their comments, suggestions, additions to it, take advantage of this opportunity.

At the same time, the alternative that the opposition proposed is rather an anti-national programme. It was not even a draft of the Constitution, it was a project of dismantling the state. I don't know how even the oppositionists themselves can take it seriously, because it essentially presupposes the surrender of the state, its destruction with their own hands. Therefore, I even doubt whether that programme should be considered seriously at all. If someone believes in it from the opposition side, it only speaks of the inadequacy of their ideas and views.

Our draft Constitution, which we will now discuss, is what comes from life, from the people themselves, from representatives of collectives and various social groups that were part of the Constitutional Commission and did a lot to prepare a draft that reflects the opinion of the majority of the Belarusian society. And what the opposition was or is preparing is complete obscurantism. In no case should such views be allowed to form the basis of public policy: this is simply a destructive programme.

Galina Lagunova, Deputy Chairperson of the Standing Commission on Economic Policy at the House of Representatives:

The cornerstone of all the innovations of the draft Constitution is the citizen of Belarus, all-round protection and support of citizens provided by the state.

And the proposed role and place of the Belarusian People's Congress is at all the 'aerobatics' of democracy and the rule of the people.

It is based on the Slavic roots of the veche (popular assembly). Even though Belarus is a small state, the maximum involvement of citizens in the process of governing the country will allow us to bear personal responsibility to society. At the same time, the concepts of sovereignty, territorial integrity, peace and stability laid down in the draft Basic Law are not just words, but a clear algorithm of actions to synchronise the mechanisms of state governance. Remember how not so long ago we were trying to build a comfortable future, expecting our children to live under communism. It did not happen. Today we, in consultation with all the people, are writing the Constitution and laws for ourselves. It is how we would like to live on our land, here and now. Given the popular enthusiasm of the proposals received, future generations will live better. Because they are not indifferent to the future of Belarus. Over the past months, I have received regular telephone calls from residents of the constituency with a request to get acquainted with the draft Constitution. This suggests that citizens want to become the rulers of their own destiny and take an effective part in both the creation of the Constitution and the planned referendum.

At the same time, I had a fair share of respect towards the constructive opposition that once existed in Belarus, which offered its own options for the development of the state, economy and society. But what the 'fugitives' are demonstrating today cannot be called anything other than treason. See what they are calling for. On the one hand, they create reasons for the imposition of sanctions by the collective West against their own compatriots, participate in the disclosure of official secrets and confidential information about the citizens of Belarus. On the other hand, they urge us to renounce fraternal relations with Russia, withdraw from the Union State, the EAEU, the CSTO, close the Belarusian nuclear power plant, renounce the Russian language as the state language... Therefore, there can be no analogies with their programmes in terms of lawmaking... Our people, not a bunch of 'fugitive' criminals, will vote for amendments to the Constitution.



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NEWS IN BRIEF

52 companies become new HTP residents



The Supervisory Board of the Hi-Tech Park made a decision to register 52 companies as HTP residents.

More than 20 of these companies plan to develop their own products. The newcomers are representatives of various fields, including financial technology, medical technology, development of mobile applications and web platforms, e-commerce, gaming, mining, etc.

The pool of the Hi-Tech Park was replenished with 4 development centres.

14 companies with foreign capital, which were established by representatives of Australia, Latvia, USA, Switzerland, became HTP residents.

The companies that have come to the HTP work according to both custom and product business models. At the same time, there is still a trend in the development of startups: more than half of newcomers were registered in 2021.

BUCE accredited first Pakistani company

The arrival of the Pakistani trading enterprise Sakafat Forever to the exchange was the result of close co-operation between BUCE (Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange) and the



Pakistani Embassy in Belarus, which assisted in organising a visit to the exchange by a delegation of Pakistani business representatives in October 2021.

According to the Head of Sakafat Forever Moeez ur Rehman, as a bidder, his company intends to work in both directions: to import goods from Belarus and to export Pakistani products to the Belarusian market.

More than 27.5 thousand business entities from 69 countries are accredited at BUCE. Russia, Lithuania, Latvia, Poland and Ukraine are in the lead in terms of the number of companies operating on the commodity exchange, with China taking the first place in terms of the growth dynamics of new bidders.

Agreement on the opening of the Consulate General of Belarus in Hong Kong entered into force

The agreement between the governments of Belarus and China on the opening of the Consulate General of Belarus in the Chinese Special Administrative Region of Hong Kong (Xianggang) entered into force on December 29th.



The new consular district will cover two special administrative regions of China: Hong Kong (Xianggang) and Macao (Aomen).

In addition to the Belarusian Embassy in Beijing, there are also consulates general of the Republic in Shanghai, Guangzhou and Chongqing in China. Now four Belarusian consulates general will work in the PRC.

Diplomatic relations between the Republic of Belarus and the PRC were established on January 20th, 1992, and the anniversary date of their establishment will be celebrated next year.

Christmas Fashion Show held at National Beauty School

Together with models of different ages, children of ambassadors and consuls from Armenia, Georgia, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Moldova, Russia, Serbia, Tajikistan, Ukraine, as well as employees of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Belarus, took part in the festive show.

Winter and festive collections of well-known and developing Belarusian brands were presented on the podium. The guests of the show were pleased



with the performances of world-class Christmas and New Year hits by young musicians from Belarus, Russia and the People's Republic of China.

The event is aimed at uniting peoples, popularising friendship between ethnic groups, learning about cultures and developing fashion. It is held with the support of the Foreign Ministry of Belarus under the sign of the unity of peoples.



Decomposing into atoms



Global nuclear energy trends: total installed capacity of operating reactors grows every year

On December 22nd, on Power Engineer's Day, the first fuel assembly with fresh nuclear fuel was loaded into the reactor core of the second power unit at the Belarusian nuclear power plant. Thus, the beginning of an important stage of the project has begun: the physical start-up of the unit, now estimated at 95 percent readiness. In total, since the start of the Belarusian nuclear power plant (BelNPP), 5.7 billion kWh of energy have already been generated.

Meanwhile, global trends in the development of nuclear power indicate that the installed capacity of operating reactors is increasing annually. It is also obvious that nuclear power plants are much safer for the environment. Therefore, as much as they like, our enemies can criticise our country for the construction of a nuclear power plant, in fact, it is clear that we have chosen the right decision and are keeping pace with the times.

By Ulyana Bushui

On a planetary scale

Experts draw attention to the fact that the development of nuclear energy is acquiring special significance in the context of the implementation of the Paris Agreement, which sets the goal of reducing emissions into the atmosphere. Today, many countries, including the EU, the United States, China and Japan, are adopting different strategies to achieve carbon neutrality by 2030-2060. At the same time, industry experts emphasise that nuclear power is a low-carbon source of energy generation, and direct CO2 emissions from nuclear power plants are practically zero.

Deputy Prime Minister of the Russian Federation Alexander Novak in the article, entitled *The Development of Nuclear Energy is a Necessary Condition for the Global Climate Agenda* for the *Energy Policy* public and business scientific journal, gives interesting figures. Thus, according to the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change (IPCC), greenhouse gas emissions from nuclear energy throughout the entire life cycle are equal to 12 tonnes of CO2 equivalent per GWh.

Mr. Novak points out in the article,

"If we evaluate the planetary scale, then the operation of all nuclear power plants in the world gives savings in greenhouse gas emissions at the level of 2 billion tonnes of CO2 equivalent per year, which is proportional to the absorbing capacity of the entire forest area of the planet."

The key conclusion of the study by the Joint Research Centre of the European Commission, which was released in April 2021, is that **nuclear energy is comparable in terms of environmental impact to other traditionally green types of electricity. Moreover, nuclear power has the lowest material consumption compared to other low-carbon types of generation.**

Discussions around the atom

In the European Union, since 2018, as part of the development of the European Green Deal climate strategy, discussions have continued on the place of nuclear energy in a low-carbon future.

In March 2021, the heads of seven EU countries (France, Poland, Hungary, Romania, Czech Republic,



FOR COMPARISON: wind power plants

11 TONNES of CO2 equivalent per GWh



hydroelectric power plants

24 TONNES of CO2 equivalent per GWh



solar plants

48 TONNES of CO2 equivalent per GWh



490 TONNES of CO2 equivalent per GWh



coal

820 TONNES of CO2 equivalent per GWh



President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko:

The first unit of the nuclear power plant is successfully operating in Belarus, with the network infrastructure being constantly modernised. As a result, all our enterprises, social facilities and housing stock are fully provided with heat and electricity and the

country is its reliable exporter.

(December 22nd, 2021, from the congratulations to workers and veterans of the power industry on their professional holiday: Power Engineer's Day.)



During the loading of the first batch of nuclear fuel into the reactor of the second power unit of the Belarusian NPP

Slovakia and Slovenia) wrote to the European Commission with a statement that nuclear energy makes an irreplaceable contribution to the fight against climate change, therefore this source of generation should be on the list of approved measures to achieve carbon neutrality. However, this issue has not yet been resolved. One of the most ardent opponents of the idea is Germany, which has not used nuclear energy since 2011. Incidentally, it's Germany that has one of the highest electricity tariffs in Europe today.

According to the International Energy Agency, a complete rejection of nuclear energy and its replacement with renewable energy sources (RES) in Europe will be \$500 billion more expensive than making a decision to extend the life of existing nuclear power plants. And a hypothetical rejection of nuclear energy could lead to additional emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere in the amount of 4 billion tonnes in the period up to 2040.

Meanwhile, the same Germany cannot today cover all energy needs with the help of renewable energy sources, therefore for many years the country has been using thermal power plants operating on coal. And this, according to research by scientists, leads to emissions of carbon dioxide in amount of tens of millions tons. It turns out that all the advantages of RES are offset by huge CO2 emissions due to coal combustion.

Effective approach

France, the leading nuclear energy producer in Europe, occupies a completely different position. In November, during a TV address to the nation, Emmanuel Macron said the country would resume building nuclear

FIGURES

There are currently 442 operating nuclear reactors in 34 countries of the world, with 51 more reactors being under construction. Five states — the United States, France, Russia, China and South Korea — account for about 70 percent of nuclear power plants.

The total installed capacity of the operating reactors is 394,177 MWe.

FROM HISTORY

The first chain reactions of nuclear fission were produced back in the 1940s and the first electricity was obtained in 1951. In 1954, the world's first nuclear power plant — Obninsk NPP — was launched in the USSR. In 1955, Switzerland hosted the First International Conference on Peaceful Uses of Atomic Energy, where nuclear power was officially recognised as a new direction in the industry.

reactors on its territory to achieve energy sovereignty and carbon neutrality goals by 2050.

However, Greenpeace assessed the French leader's words as 'unrealistic' and anti-democratic.

Poland, by the way, is also going to actively build a nuclear power plant. The country is often criticised for its outdated coal-fired power plants, which are harmful to the environment, which is why the country plans to build six nuclear power plants by 2040.

DIRECT SPEECH

Roman Golovchenko, Prime Minister of Belarus:

We are continuing according to plan and by summer 2022 we plan to commission the second power unit. Thus, the BelNPP will reach its nominal capacity and generate about 40 percent of the country's total electricity. This is very important from an economic point of view, enabling us to replace approximately 4.5 billion cubic metres of natural gas. Last year, we generated 6 billion kilowatts of energy at the station. We have already saved about \$250 million by saving natural gas.

There is an order from the President to study the issue of building a second station in another region of Belarus. This is not a very simple question, as it is necessary to carry out a large amount of economic calculations, as well as scientific research based on a comprehensive programme for the country's development. This work is currently underway as planned under the leadership of the National Academy of Sciences and with the participation of our Russian partners. We expect to complete it by autumn 2022 and will submit a proposal to the President.





Intelligent living environment



The presence of the Internet and digital technologies today will surprise few people. We are accustomed to many services, as if we have been using them all our lives. However, digital technology goes further, making our apartments, houses, streets and even cities smarter. Some are already lucky enough to live in a smart city while others are still dreaming of it. Residents of Krichev, for example, were lucky, becoming the first residents of an intellectual territorial unit, albeit a pilot one. However, the progress did not stop there. *The MT* reporter learned about the prospects for digitalisation in the country from Sergei Kruglikov, Giprosvyaz Deputy Director for Science and Development.

By Vera Arteaga

First in Europe and in the region

— Is it true that our country is almost ahead of the rest of the planet in laying fibre?

— Over the past five years, Belarus has really created a serious infrastructure reserve in the field of digitalisation. It is a data transmission network that meets international standards. RUE Beltelecom occupies a leading position in Europe in fibre-optic laying. Our country can be proud of this. Of course, Belarusian geography is partly contributing to the construction since no destruction of rocks is required for laying cables. The ultimate goal for us is to provide each customer in Belarus with a high-quality access to a single network of all electronic services. Reliable centres for storing and processing information, identification mechanisms, an online payment system, modern electronic means and information security tools have been created. The country has everything for the development of the digitalisation sphere.

— How does digitalisation affect the country's economy?

— There are positive trends in the influence of digitalisation. For example, in H1 2021, the value added totalled \$2.4 billion in the information and communication sector. The growth rate is about 107 percent. Moreover, the share of digitalisation in GDP is already about 8 percent. It's a good start, which is marked in numerous ratings. Thus, according to the index of development of information and communication technologies of the International Telecommunication Union, we are ranked 32nd in the world and first in the Eastern European region. This is an indicator of high prospects for the creation of e-government.

Smart cities in the Belarusian way

— How is this related to the development of the direction of smart cities?

— We have built a system related to the implementation of modern digital technologies in everyday life. Not only at our enterprises, but also in the social sphere: medicine, education, transport, industry and in general, improving the quality of life of the population. To implement the plans, the 2021-2025 Digital Development of Belarus state programme was launched.

Of course, the first year of its implementation is the most difficult, because at the beginning of the journey, it's necessary to develop a number of documents so that the projects can be carried out according to agreed rules. In general, the task of the Digital Development of Belarus programme for 2021-2025

is the transition to the formation of state and industry digital platforms.

Moreover, this is also the active development of electronic services for our citizens and business.

Our organisation is currently developing about 11 standards for smart cities. Here we use world experience and the experience of Russia, while also taking into account the adaptation to the realities of the Belarusian economy and our peculiarities.

— What are these peculiarities?

— Globally, smart cities are usually in highly urbanised areas with a high degree of readiness to implement such technologies. Speaking about the introduction of digitalisation in our regions, we are faced with the need to increase the digital literacy of both the population and administrations and management of enterprises. But today the situation is changing. The administrations of many cities are ready to implement ideas aimed at improving the quality of life in the regions. Another peculiarity is financing. Elsewhere in the world, private capital is primarily used for the implementation of smart city technologies. In our country, the programme was formed with a high share of state support. This does not mean that partnership with private capital is impossible, but it is obvious that personal data issues are under the control of the state.

Next station is Orsha

— Today, many elements of a smart city have been implemented in Minsk. What's next?

— We have serious ideas about Orsha. We are planning to create a whole smart quarter here as an element of a smart city. The area has been determined: a very young development. We want to lay down a number of aspects on the basis of the prototype of the software, which will later form the basis of situational centres and awareness centres of administrations and services of cities and districts.

This is due to the complex use of many areas, for example, smart energy consumption. It is planned to equip houses in this area with meters for remote data collection. This refers to water supply, heating, gas and electricity consumption.

— Earlier, RUE Beltelecom announced the creation of a control system for intelligent buildings.

What will it control?



— Indeed, the universal intelligent building control system is the brainchild of our organisation. This is a planned hardware and software complex that will link together energy suppliers and residents, that is, consumers will automatically make all payments and maintain an analytics system for the rational use of energy resources.

— Will the Orsha innovations affect the social sphere?

— Without a doubt. They will affect transport and garbage disposal, and many other things. Orsha is a rather big city, which means that there is a problem with places for cars. Therefore, we are planning to introduce an intelligent parking system. Moreover, we are planning to organise smart container sites, which — thanks to special sensors — will inform people about the filling of the tanks. They will also give information about fire. We will not ignore street lighting either. Here, as the Belarusian experience shows, there is a colossal savings reserve. Cost savings can range from 56 to 68 percent depending on the season.

— Where do you plan to buy such equipment?

— This is another reason for pride, since the equipment will be domestically-manufactured. We have enough producers to be able to replicate these solutions. But you can't replicate without checking. It is worth noting that the smart quarter of Orsha is located near two educational institutions: secondary school No. 13 and nursery-kindergarten No. 52. A video surveillance and video analytics system will be implemented here. We are currently preparing design estimates for the implementation of the project.

— Will a smart city not only bring comfort, but also save money?

— Preliminary calculations show that there will be cost savings for each device. This is clearly demonstrated by the projects already implemented. For example, just 400 economical streetlights installed in Novopolotsk have saved about 12 percent on the city's street lighting system. In conclusion, I would like to note that one of the goals of the smart quarter implementation in Orsha will be to develop proposals for replicating smart city solutions in other regions of the country.



Harm set, harm get

Lithuania will lose billions of Euros because of conflicts with Belarus and China

The losses of the Lithuanian economy from China's sanctions in 2022 may reach up to 5bn Euros. Another blow to the Baltic state will be the refusal to tranship Belarusian fertilisers, which will bring additional losses to Lithuania worth hundreds of millions of Euros, writes the analytical portal RuBaltic.

No one in Lithuania is trying to calculate the exact amount of losses that the country will suffer as a result of an undeclared trade war with China. The Minister of the Economy and Innovation of Lithuania, Aušrinė Armonaitė, announced that no one is still dealing with this issue. "We have information on investors' concerns, but no investor has left [Lithuania] or has real plans to do so in the near future. We are signing major agreements with new

investors. We have at least 30 such agreements," said Ms. Armonaitė.

Meanwhile, Lithuanian business representatives do not share her optimism. Initially, Ingrida Šimonytė's government assured that there was no cause for concern, because the PRC is not an important trading partner of Lithuania. "Looking at Lithuania's ties with China, our exports to China account for around 1 percent of Lithuania's total exports. So, it's not our major trade partner, therefore, we don't expect major impact on Lithuania's economy and businesses," said Finance Minister Gintarė Skaistė.

One percent of exports are goods worth 300m Euros per year. In the scale of the entire economic complex of Lithuania, the amount is small. But who knew

that Beijing would want to punish Lithuania in the American style?

Another test for the Lithuanian economy will be the loss of transit of Belarusian fertilisers. According to the President of the Association of Lithuanian Stevedoring Companies, Vaidotas Šileika, in a 'rather pessimistic scenario', the Lithuanian port's cargo volume could drop by 30 to 40 percent this year.

"Such sanctions can cause serious and long-term negative consequences for the Lithuanian economy. Now about 30 percent of all cargo in Klaipėda is transit cargo from Belarus, fertilisers make up 26 percent of all cargo in the port. This will damage the Lithuanian economy in the amount of 300m Euros per year," explained Mr. Šileika.

UK energy market crisis

Britain's energy sector faces a crisis similar to the 2008 financial crash, as is stated in the publication of the British newspaper *The Telegraph*, which conducted a survey among top managers of energy companies and government officials

Stephen Fitzpatrick, CEO at OVO Energy, Britain's second-largest energy provider, compared the present scenario with the period between the collapse of Northern Rock in 2007, and the downfall of Lehman Brothers a year later.

"I don't think we are at the end of the energy crisis right now," he told *The Telegraph*, warning ministers and regulators have simply weeks to act to keep away from additional company failures.

According to Mr. Fitzpatrick, the government needs to show more urgency in curbing rising gas and electricity prices to avoid a national emergency. He said that the impact of soaring wholesale gas prices will be 'an enormous crisis for 2022'.

Fears of soaring household bills in 2022 have been raised since escalating gas prices began bankrupting suppliers in September. Since then, costs have risen from 54p per therm of gas to £4.50.



"From where they were April 2021 to April 2022 it looks almost certain now that bills are going to reach £2,000 per household, which is going to be double what they were paying in 2020," he said.

Rising energy costs are also likely to spell trouble for British factories and businesses.



Kingdom of ice and snow

The 2022 Harbin Ice Festival is officially called the 38th Harbin International Ice and Snow Sculpture Festival, with the opening ceremony taking place on January 5th

Every New Year in Harbin, China's north-eastern 'Oriental Paris', begins with a festival of ice, as fabled as it is majestic. This city is home to the Harbin Ice and Snow Festival, the largest such festival in the world. The iconic event draws millions of people to Harbin's freezing climes, with temperatures nearing -40 degrees Fahrenheit. But the harsh weather is worth it when one witnesses the skilful, massive decoration of ice sculptures, colourfully lit to glow ethereally under the inky sky.

The annual festival forms an essential part of the Chinese culture and creativity, as well as Harbin's local customs. While the theme changes every year, some sculptures are recreated over the years following resounding fanfare.

During the festival, local people also celebrate it along with four important traditional Chinese winter festivals, including New Year's Day, Spring Festival, the Lantern Festival and Skiing Festival.

The theme parks and main events of the festival include Sun International Snow Sculpture Art Expo, known for its incredible ice sculptures that are on display for several months; Harbin Ice and Snow World, where there are winter activities, ice sculptures, shows and light displays; Harbin Wanda Ice Lantern World, renowned for its snow-themed lanterns; Zhaolin Park Ice Lantern Fair, also known for its winter-themed lanterns; and Songhua River Ice and Snow Carnival, which holds winter activities on the frozen Songhua River.

Rising migrant deaths

The International Organisation for Migration (IOM) has said that over 4,470 migrants have died in 2021 on their way across borders, exceeding the figures of 2020 by more than 200

"Despite repeated calls for concrete action to reduce the tragic loss of life during migration journeys worldwide every year, the death toll in 2021 has surpassed 4,470," the UN-affiliated agency said in a statement.

"COVID-19 has meant an unprecedented decrease in human mobility, but the Missing Migrants Project still documents deaths almost every day," said Frank Laczko, Director of IOM's Global Migration Data Analysis Centre, where the project is based.

Dozens of states have committed to

the Global Compact for Migration but very few have engaged on Objective 8 to 'save lives and establish coordinated international efforts on missing migrants'. The number of deaths and disappearances has increased on many migratory routes across the world in 2021, including in Europe and the Americas.

Moreover, asylum seekers and refugees from the Middle East stranded along the Belarusian-Polish and Belarusian-Lithuanian border, are experiencing distress and suffering in anticipation of a humanitarian corridor to move to Germany.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



Precious metal

Belarusian commemorative coins, one of the symbols of statehood, are 25!

On December 27th, 1996, the National Bank of Belarus issued the first commemorative coins. However, a few years before that, our country did not even have its own currency... The presence of our own Belarusian Rouble and the further issue of commemorative coins into circulation is the result of the formation of a sovereign state and its issuing institution. Over the years, Belarusian commemorative coins have won not only the love of collectors around the world (a real hunt is taking place for some of them), but also the recognition of the highest-level experts.

By Polina Konoga

Creative approach

The process of creating commemorative coins includes several stages: choosing a theme, collecting materials, creating a sketch. Then the mint is determined, where they will be minted, an agreement is concluded with it. Belarusian coins were minted in Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, Poland, Lithuania, Russia, Kazakhstan. After the batch of coins is ready, it is delivered to the National Bank.

The obverse of our commemorative coins depicts the state emblem, the inscription 'Republic of Belarus', the year of issue and the denomination. Commemorative coins made of precious metals may contain additional details: the fineness of the alloy and the pure weight. The reverse of the coins features motifs and drawings related to the theme of this coin. Belaru-

more than one iconic series of Belarusian commemorative coins.

The creation of a sketch of a future coin can be compared to writing a thesis: contracts are concluded with various institutions for the development of a scientific basis for a series of commemorative coins and the preparation of analytical illustrative materials for their manufacture. Artists carry out a huge and many-day work in museums, libraries and archives, if necessary, they take pictures of objects on the ground. In total, it takes two months to create a sketch.

When creating a sketch, artists use various tools and methods: they draw with a pencil or paints, model on a computer, work with graphic programmes, sculpt individual parts from plasticine... When the draft designs are ready, they are evaluated by the working group for the issue and circulation of commemorative coins, which

at the end of 2015, the first coin of the series was released, 'Skaryna's Way. Polatsk'. Subsequently, coins were issued dedicated to other significant cities in the life of Francysk Skaryna, such as Krakow, Padua, Venice, Prague and Vilna.

"It was a unique work in every sense. By the way, for the first time in our entire practice, our coins were published in the papal edition of the Vatican Apostolic Library Historia Mundi ('History of the World'), published in April 2019. Mod-

memorative coin with an effort from 6 thousand to 9 thousand kg/cm2. Interestingly, the deeper the surface relief of the coin, the more times it is necessary to hit the workpiece.

Each coin is minted individually. The entire process of minting the circulation of commemorative coins is given at least 60 days. After that, they are subjected to piecewise output control for compliance with the technical parameters specified when placing the order.

FIRST BELARUSIAN COMMEMORATIVE COIN

It was issued on December 27th, 1996, and was dedicated to the 50th anniversary of the founding of the United Nations.

- Coins were minted at the Royal Mint (Great Britain) as part of the international coin programme, which was implemented in 1995-1999.
- A total of 5,000 gold, 20,000 silver and 40,000 copper-nickel coins were produced at the request of the National Bank of Belarus for the UN anniversary — all in denomination of 1 Rouble.
- In accordance with the terms of the international coin programme, only a tenth of the total circulation of commemorative coins arrived in Belarus. The rest were sold on the international numismatic market.



INTERESTING FACTS ABOUT BELARUSIAN COINS



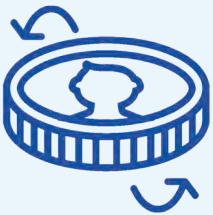
102 TONNES
345 KILOGRAMS

is the total weight of gold, silver and copper-nickel commemorative coins issued by the National Bank over the past 25 years. (The weight equivalent to approximately 186 bisons or 25,586 bunnies).



1,589 KILOMETRES
746 METRES

will be the total length of the line of commemorative coins issued by the National Bank over the past 25 years laid out in one row. This is three times the length of Belarus from north to south (560 km).



The smallest commemorative coin is 'Belarusian Ballet. 2013' with a denomination of 5 Roubles (made of gold). Its diameter is 11 millimetres, it weighs 0.5 grams. The largest commemorative coin is 'The Cross of Euphrasyne of Polatsk' with a denomination of 1,000 Roubles (made of silver). Its diameter is 100 millimetres, its weight is 1 kilogram 83.8 grams.



13 MINTS

from ten countries of the world minted Belarusian commemorative coins in 1996-2021.



800 THOUSAND

commemorative coins were sold in foreign markets in 1996-2021.

sian commemorative coins are issued on four main themes: Belarus and the world community; history and culture of Belarus; sport; environment protection.

The team that creates commemorative coins is doing a tremendous job. The nuances of the profession are revealed by the chief specialist, the artist of the National Bank Svetlana Nekrasova, whose talented hands and magic touch helped to create

also makes a collegial decision.

As an example of such painstaking work, Svetlana Nekrasova cites the famous series 'Skaryna's Way'. In 2014, the National Bank invited Irina Zvariko, a leading researcher at the State Historical Museum, to develop a scientific concept for a series of coins 'Skaryna's Way', dedicated to the 500th anniversary of Belarusian book printing. The work began in 2014, and at



FIGURES

For 25 years, the National Bank has issued **4,613,076** commemorative coins, including **339,499** gold coins, more than **2.6 million** silver coins, more than **1.6 million** coins from copper-nickel and other alloys.

ern coins are not published on the pages of a luxuriously illustrated album, but the 'Skaryna's Way' series has become an exception to the rule," says the artist.

Thus, the Belarusian series was put on a par with the best samples of medals, coins and collectibles in the world. By the way, Belarusian commemorative coins have won 42 awards at international numismatic competitions in 25 years.

Technical solutions

In order to work out in detail the relief of the commemorative coin and display on it all the nuances of the draft design, a plaster model is made at the mint. Such a model is several times larger than the size of the future coin and takes more than 30 days to make. Then the plaster 'coin' is agreed upon and approved by the National Bank, and (if there are no issued regarding execution) the production of the minting tool begins at the mint. This takes at least 45 days.

The very minting of commemorative coins is carried out on special coining presses, which press the blank of a com-

At the final stage, commemorative coins are packed in individual capsules, which protect them from external influences, and are prepared for sending to the National Bank.

Thus, the entire technological process of making commemorative coins from the idea and concept to the final delivery to the National Bank takes at least nine months.

Coins are delivered to the Central Storage of the National Bank as a valuable cargo. Specialists accept valuables, check the integrity of the seals, then the packed coins are sent to the storage room. The temperature here is maintained at the level of 20-25 degrees all year round, and the humidity is 45-60 percent.

By the way, each coin received from the manufacturer is additionally checked manually, which is a quality control procedure. Together with the circulation, a sample of a commemorative coin is also received: it is with it that the laboratory staff check each coin. Defects are extremely rare, but if any flaws are found, the coin is returned to the manufacturer, who makes a new one at its own expense.



Christmas fairs in Belarus

Getting lost in the looking glass

You can't go past the main Christmas tree of Belarus which is more than thirty metres high and has four thousand red, silver and golden balls, alongside a kilometre of garlands and a high-tech pixel veil — a nano-tree in all its glory! You can get to it through numerous light installations: fairy tale characters, tunnels and huge balls. The lights are already switched on while the traditional *Kalyadny Kirmash* has started working around the green beauty. Unusual glass pavilions offer fragrant mulled wine, medovukha (Slavic honey-based alcoholic beverage very similar to mead) and herbal teas, as well as pancakes, potato pancakes, hotdogs and cakes from Minsk bakeries. Everything costs a penny and the taste is delicious.

In addition, two years ago, the holiday winter fair on Oktyabrskaya Square was recognised as one of the best in the CIS.

When: until January 15th

Where: Minsk, Oktyabrskaya Square

Choosing an outfit for a green beauty

If you don't feel like freezing at street fairs, then you are welcome to the winter fairy tale of the National Historical Museum. Every year the museum organises an exhibition and sale of unique Christmas tree decorations from 75 countries of the world. Characters made of glass,

There's nothing quite like a festive market to bring out the Christmas spirit in people, so it is time to stroll through the elegant squares



cotton wool, pressed paper, rare balls and icicles with a story, gingerbread and houses — children plunge into magic while adults recollect their childhood. The collection includes toys from Congo, Peru, Indonesia, New Zealand and even North Korea.

From mid-December, the museum launched master classes on making and painting Christmas tree decorations while the laziest are offered the chance to buy ready-made copies from Belarusian producers.

When: until January 23rd

Where: Minsk, 12 Karl Marx Str.

Starting a round dance

This year, a holiday in ethnic style is held on the banks of the Mukhavets River with old fun, round dances and horses with

bells. The first festival-fair *Beresteiskiye Sani* offers a rich three-day programme. It will be possible to stock up on wooden, clay and forged souvenirs from hereditary masters from all over the Brest Region while also tasting national dishes from the oven in the cold. Moreover, they promise to organise official swims in the winter river for the most daring. For this purpose, a field bath is equipped near the Tashkent restaurant.

Nadezhda Babkina and her *Russkaya Pesnya* ensemble will be the headliner at the event.

"I wish everyone to be well prepared for the holiday and be sure to take care of their health.



After all, the festivities should be joyful, rather than a burden," said the People's Artiste in her recorded video message to the Brest residents.

When: January 7th-9th

Where: Brest, F. Skaryna embankment

Winter Fest in old Grodno

The central square of the westernmost city of Belarus creates the atmosphere of traditional European Christmas markets, with majestic churches, dolls' houses with balconies and millions of festive lights on Christmas trees: this is the *Winter Fest* in Grodno. Prepare your smartphones for memorable photos. The main feature of this fair is the cuisine of the peoples of the world. Azerbaijani

Qutab (dish made from thinly rolled dough that is cooked briefly on a convex griddle), Georgian barbecue, Czech trdelník (a sweet, fire cooked, cylindrical cake), German Berliner (doughnut) and, of course, all kinds of Belarusian potato dishes. Entertainment for adults is a bar serv-

ing warm cocktails, including grog this year. They also took care of entertainment for the children and installed a Christmas carousel.

When: until January 9th

Where: Grodno, Sovetskaya Square

Drinking tea with Gogol's characters

"How beautifully the moon shines! It would be difficult to describe the charm one feels in sauntering along on such a night among the crowds of maidens who laugh and sing, and of lads who are ready to adopt every trick and invention suggested by the smiling night," Nikolai Gogol wrote in the immortal story *The Night Before Christmas*.

They tried to recreate the festive atmosphere in Brest along the street, named in honour of the writer. Next to the sculptures of characters from his works people are already crowding in lines for treats: gingerbreads, soft rolls and new langosta (with cheese and without, served with sauce). From early morning to late evening a four-hundred-litre pot-bellied samovar is working here. They say that it can prepare tea for 1,500 people at once.

When: until January 15th

Where: Brest, Gogol Str.





Ivan Litvinovich



Iryna Kurachkina



Alina Harnasko

From each according to his ability, to each according to his work

Celebrating the main heroes of the past sports year

Saying goodbye to another year that has flown into history, we put together pieces of our memories. There is nothing you can do: the year, like a patchwork quilt, is always woven of victories, joys and disappointments, and reflection and empathy are two friends walking next to anyone who considers themselves to be reasonable and warm-hearted people.

By Sergei Kanashits

When determining the main triumphs of the season in the Olympic year, everyone, of course, looks at the results of the Games, replaying their sweetest and juiciest moments in their heads. This time, however, the circumstances around the Olympics itself and its holding emerge a huge submarine from the abyss of memory: it was not clear whether it would be possible to gather in Tokyo and whether this festival would be canceled altogether until the very last moment. Whatever the limitations, difficulties and adventures were, it was made possible, the athletes prepared, competed, and everyone got what they deserved.

Only one of our representatives returned from Japan with gold, and therefore the question of the best athlete-2021 looks rhetorical: of course it's Ivan Litvinovich! Our trampoline players were generally great: Uladzislau Hancharou has returned as a champion from Rio 2016, Litvinovich has now grown up, and at the World Championship in Baku, which took place in November, Aleh Rabtsau took the lead role and Andrei Builou, who was still quite young, had a great breakthrough. You can move mountains with such a brave battalion, and they are all nestling (no not nestlings, eagles!) of Olga Vlasova, a true master and wizard in the field of cutting talents, giving them the shape and shine of the most expensive diamonds. So the answer to the puzzle about who to call the best coach of the year is also obvious. By the way, it was Vlasova who once spotted Ivan from Vileika, who was not particularly distinguished, and invited him to the gathering of the national team in Vitebsk. By that time, the future Olympic champion Litvinovich had already taken the documents to the local college planning to become an

auto mechanic and to say goodbye to the trampoline forever. Here is such a wonderful fairy tale.

Speaking about the competitors for Vanya Litvinovich in the fight for the title of the best athlete, one cannot fail to mention Maksim Nedasekau, who is charismatic and bright. His final showdown in the high jump sector with the recognised aces Mutaz Barshim and Gianmarco Tamperi is an epic tale that is still breathtaking. By the end, all three showed the same result, 2.37, Maksim made a champion run with the result of 2.39, but he missed just a little, the bar trembled and fell, that is why bronze. But there will be gold, Maksim will definitely gain it.

Iryna Kurachkina can rightfully try on the crown of the best sportswoman of Belarus-2021. Her way to the Olympic podium was not all roses, she came to wrestling at the age of 15, then she recovered for a long time after a difficult surgery, but fought and searched. That is why she found it — the silver of Tokyo-2020, a well-deserved award. She is an example to others.

Alina Harnasko is also a worthy contender for the prima of the year. Her bronze in Japan was only an advance, followed by another brilliant success in the Land of the Rising Sun. This time at the World Championship, Harnasko returned home from Kitakyushu with a gold medal, two silver and one bronze. Having won the ribbon exercises, Alina became the first non-Russian in eight years to win the individual title of world champion in rhythmic gymnastics! And one more noteworthy fact that speaks of the originality of Harnasko and the significance of her current success: Belarusian gymnasts have not risen to the highest step of the podium at the World Championships since 1996, when Larisa Lukyanenko excelled in exercises with a rope. And in competitions with a ribbon, our girls have

never won at all! Such a small feat was a success for our beautiful Alina.

Traditionally, the best in Belarus were determined not only in individual nominations, but also in team ones. In team sports, of course, the girls from the basketball team are beyond comparison. At the European Championships in June, our young ladies were great! It will just suffice to mention the starting victory over the Spaniards with the score of 53:51! And the two defeats of the Swedish national team (first in the group stage, then in the quarterfinals) — 78:54 and 58:46?! It's a pity, they were just a little short of the medals (we stopped at one step — in fourth place), but we played with passion as always. And two recent victories in the qualifying tournament for Euro 2023 speak of the highest potential of Natalya Trofimova's wards.

Among the non-game disciplines, our canoe squad is again marching together in a row: Maryna Litvinchuk, Volha Khudzenka, Marharyta Makhneva and Nadzeya Papok returned from Tokyo with silver, and then exchanged it for gold, having won the recent World Championship. We will also once again remember and rejoice at the unexpectedly successful performance in Tokyo of our archery team consisting of Karyna Dziominskaya, Karyna Kazlouskaya and Hanna Marusava, who just barely missed the podium at the Tokyo Olympics. It was a pleasant surprise that made us look at this sport differently and look forward to the continuation.

But all this will come later. In the meantime, we are waiting for the Winter Games in Beijing-2022 and, of course, dreaming. We are dreaming that the new year will turn out to be at least no worse than the past and will bring us many magical moments, which it will be very pleasant to remember later.



Silver crew of the canoe four



Girls from the basketball team have no rivals in team sports

The Minsk Times
Thursday
January 6
2022



Aleksandr Kulevsky

Photo of the week

The white Bengal tiger Simon from the Minsk Zoo personifies the symbol of 2022

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



On January 6th, 1952, Professor Yuri Ostrovsky was born — a Belarusian scientist in the field of cardiovascular surgery, doctor of medical sciences, corresponding member of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus.

He is the author of scientific works on the development of aggressive methods for the treatment of acute coronary syndrome and heart failure. He is also Honoured Doctor of the Republic of Belarus and laureate of the State Prize of Belarus (1996, 2016).

January 7th marks the Orthodox holiday of Christmas. It is one of the most important Christian holidays and a public holiday in more than 100 countries around the world. It is set to commemorate the birth of Jesus Christ. On this day, an unprecedented event took place in the small town of Bethlehem — the Infant God, the Son of God, was born into the world. The Nativity of Christ ends the forty-day Nativity Fast. On the night of January 6th-7th, Christmas services are held in Orthodox churches. After Christmas comes Christmastide, holy days or 12 days, during which the holiday is celebrated.



On January 7th, 1610, Galileo Galilei discovered the four largest moons of Jupiter, which are now called 'Galilean'. Thanks to his discovery, which he described in the *Starry Messenger*, Galileo soon became the most famous scientist in Europe. To

date, scientists know 79 moons of Jupiter, among which the Galilean ones are the largest.

On January 9th, 2017, Aleksandr Lukashenko signed Decree No. 8 'On the Introduction of the Visa-free Entry and Departure for Foreign Citizens.' The document introduced a visa-free procedure for entering Belarus for a period not exceeding 5 days through the Minsk National Airport for citizens of 80 countries.



January 9th marks International Choreographers Day. The term 'choreography', which came into circulation in the 18th century, which is of Greek origin and which literally means 'dance-writing', is the art of composing and staging a dance. In a broad sense,



choreography today generally refers to all dance art, perceived as a combination of two areas: the art of ballet and the art of dance. The choreographer is engaged in staging the dance of an individual performer or a group.

On January 9th, 1769, the first paper money, bank notes, was introduced in Russia. Until the beginning of the reign of Yekaterina II, copper coins were in use in Russia. Gold and silver, which were valued abroad, went mainly to cover the annually growing military and palace expenses. The share of copper money grew alarmingly. In Russia, it was decided to introduce paper money. Yekaterina II signed a manifesto on the introduction of banknotes in denominations of 25, 50, 75 and 100 roubles in Russia.



On January 10th, 49 BC, Gaius Julius Caesar crossed the Rubicon. While still a commander and governor in Gaul, Julius Caesar, returning from the conquered Gaul, approached the border river of Rome, the Rubicon. By law, at the borders of Rome, Caesar had to disband the army. In crossing the Rubicon, Caesar deliberately cut off his path to retreat, deciding to become



the sole ruler of Rome. The expression 'to cross the Rubicon' has since become proverbial, meaning the point of no return...

On January 10th, 1863, the world's first metro line opened in London. The London Underground is the oldest and one of the largest in the world. The entire metro is divided into tariff zones, there are six of them. Depending on the number of areas crossed, the ticket price also varies. The London Underground today carries over a billion passengers a year. The London Underground network consists of 11 lines, the underground has 270 stations, and the length of the tracks exceeds 250 miles.



January 11th is one of the most 'polite' dates of the year, International Thank You Day. Words of gratitude have magical properties, with them people give joy to each other, express attention and convey positive emotions. It is believed that the Russian word for 'thank you (spasibo)' originated in the 16th century from the often pronounced phrase 'God save you'. Interestingly, the roots of the English counterpart, thank you, also go much deeper than simple gratitude.

