



What is currently happening in the Belarusian linen clothing market?



Secrets of the Chancery exhibition hosted by National Library of Belarus



INTERNATIONAL

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BSMU students Yevgeny Sergievich and Viktoria Fedorova help doctors cope with the coronavirus pandemic

## That's the kind of youth we have!

More than 2,500 senior students of medical universities in our country are working at the forefront, fighting COVID-19. They are working in medical positions in accordance with the level of theoretical training and practical skills. For work with coronavirus infection — like their senior colleagues — medical students receive bonuses. However, the most important thing, they say, is not the money, but giving timely help to people. → **6**



# In the interests of national security

## Arena for competing with other people's interests

The leap year has thrown up a lot of trouble around the world, and it's not just the pandemic and associated economic problems.

"There was another flare-up in the region of the former Soviet Union. This time in Nagorno-Karabakh. The armed conflict between our close partners Armenia and Azerbaijan, which came to an end, will most likely continue in the diplomatic field," suggested Aleksandr Lukashenko.

In addition, the wars in the Middle East and North Africa, where we have our own economic interests, have not stopped. Against the backdrop of restrictive measures in the fight against coronavirus and terrorist attacks by Islamists, protest moods are growing in European countries.

The US Presidential elections, which have left a question mark over the future policy of Washington, also contribute to uncertainty in the international situation. However, the most important thing for us now is the situation around Belarus. The Head of State emphasised, *"After the election campaign, our country unwillingly turned into an arena for competing interests. During my visits to various regions of the country, I warned everyone that we might become a theatre of war, and it will not be our war. It will have nothing to do with our interests. There is an ongoing confrontation."*

## Decent answer

We are always ready to be friends and liaise with those who respect us, honour us and our interests. Alas, some of our so-called partners suddenly turned out to be not ready to work in such conditions, said Aleksandr Lukashenko. In this case, we are talking about those western states with which Belarus has been progressively and persistently building mutually beneficial contacts in recent years, and especially about its closest neighbours: Poland and Lithuania.

"The position they have taken in relation to Belarus can cross out, if not all, then much

The situation in the world and around Belarus, relations with neighbours and allies, an appropriate response towards western sanctions and the main tasks for diplomats for the future: the President set a clear focus regarding the country's foreign policy during the meeting

**The Prime Minister, heads of both chambers of the Parliament, the Presidential Administration, the State Security Committee and the Foreign Ministry were invited to the conversation at the Palace of Independence. Such a solid line-up of participants is understandable. After all, today it is not just about the tactics and strategy of our foreign policy. At stake is actually the national security and independence of our state. However, Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised the main thing, "Our country today has practically become an object of blatant aggression, until there is a war. But even in these conditions, we — as before — are aimed at strengthening mutually beneficial ties with all our foreign partners... Belarus is always ready to co-operate with those who observe the principles of mutual respect, sincerity and decency."**



of what has been achieved," noted the Head of State.

Aleksandr Lukashenko reminded people that sanctions were imposed on Belarus again. And how will we respond?

A little later, in an interview with reporters, Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei expressed regret that some of our partners agreed to impose restrictions on Belarus and expand personal sanctions lists, "Of course, we cannot leave such things unanswered. Therefore, from our side, the corresponding sanctions lists have also been expanded to include persons from all countries of the European Union."

Vladimir Makei also said that it was proposed to suspend the work of the Belarus-EU Co-ordination Group, in the format of which various issues of

our interaction were discussed, including on issues in the field of human rights protection.

"We have never refused to discuss sensitive issues. However, today we see that these issues are absolutely politicised. Therefore, it makes no sense to continue the dialogue on human rights with the EU. We are suspending this dialogue. We see that there are also attempts to politicise the implementation of a number of infrastructural interregional projects within the framework of the *Eastern Partnership* initiative. Therefore, it was decided to lower the level of Belarus' participation in this initiative to expert level."

Vladimir Makei stressed that the Belarusian side has always been disposed and will continue to work to ensure that

the sanctions rhetoric left the agenda. The actions of our partners leave us nothing else but to respond appropriately to unfriendly steps towards Belarus, *"We were not the initiators of these steps. We only respond to those negative statements and concrete actions of our western partners, which are associated with interference in the internal affairs of Belarus.* Believe us, we are interested in the Belarusian region being a region of peace, tranquillity and goodwill. But if some want to further escalate the situation (and you see that there are calls for the imposition of economic sanctions), be sure that these initiatives, if adopted, will not go unanswered. The reaction will be very sensitive for our European partners."

## How true friends are known

Given the unprecedented external pressure, the support rendered to Belarus by our traditional allies — Russia, China and other countries — is especially valuable, once again confirming the unshakable principle of how one's real friends are known... But, apparently, not everyone likes the allied character of Belarusian-Russian relations. Hence the criticism of Belarus for its multi-vector policy, which has been heard recently in some media, particularly in Russia. This surprises the Belarusian leader, "I do not quite understand why some forces in the Russian Federation are against our multi-vector policy? We would like to hear their grievances in this regard? After all, we have made it clear that our closest ally, our kindred country and people are Russia and the Russians. Once again, we have never turned our backs on Russia. Never!"

Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that today half of our exports are sold on foreign markets far from us and from Russia, and this export must be ensured politically and diplomatically. *"Any state would pursue such a policy. We are forced to pursue a multi-vector policy due to the fact that we are in the centre of Europe, we are a sovereign, independent state, the economy and the well-being of our people are pushing us towards this."*

Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei also touched on the topic of multi-vector in an interview with journalists, "Such states as Belarus — medium in scale and potential — are forced to take into account their interests in all areas. Russia is definitely our main strategic partner and ally, just like China. But this does not mean that we should lock ourselves into only two directions, no matter how anyone reproaches us for trying to pursue a multi-vector policy. How can we refuse mutually beneficial areas of co-operation with countries of the long-range arc, European countries, where more than 50 percent of our exports go? Russia is our main partner and ally, we intend to further deepen our co-operation, but we will not abandon other vectors."

# Better for people, more efficient for the system

**From details to the bigger picture: last week, the Palace of Independence hosted a meeting to discuss improvements in the road toll system, also defining a new mechanism for the state authorities' work in general**

The routine meeting on improving the collection of toll fees for traffic began unexpectedly: with the refusal of the Head of State to consider the approaches put on the agenda. Aleksandr Lukashenko immediately made it clear that all such issues of concern to Belarusians should rest not only on his decisions, but also be worked out by the Government, taking into account the circumstances and budget possibilities. He said, "People and the society want changes, they are focused on the President and his activities. Constitutional amendments are a way out. We have recently

agreed with the Parliament leaders that 70-80 percent of the President's authority will be handed over to Parliament, the Government and other agencies. We do not need to destroy the Constitution."

The Head of State immediately brought the topic of road tolls to a political level — as an example. However, he believes the mechanism for discussing such issues should be as follows, "With the assistance of the Interior Ministry, governors, local authorities, please discuss them in the Parliament, work out laws and submit them to the President for signing"

When defining a new mechanism for the state authorities' work, the Head of State recalled the meaning of the word 'Parliament' which comes from the French 'parler' [to speak]. This is the function that the Government and the National Assembly should assume: debates, discussions and, ultimately, the formation of a concept, a law.

Aleksandr Lukashenko added, "The President will then sign the law that you pass. This is how the distribution of authority in the field will look. Then we will do more. I promise to distribute authority honestly and fairly without avoiding responsibility by the All-Belarus People's Congress. There are not many topical issues for society. We have already made many decisions. You know very well that

those decisions were made by the President, and that he was heavily criticised by the society for that. However, I realised that the country cannot exist without them."

As for the issue of road tolls, various options were discussed at the meeting with the President who listened to all the opinions very carefully and expressed his own view. However, this time, the decision is not made by him: the final decision will be made at the level of the ministerial and deputy corps. The only thing the President asked for is that it should be better for the people and more efficient for the system.

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

# Ready to dispatch a mission

**State of the Armed Forces, patriotic education, participation in peacekeeping missions reported on to Aleksandr Lukashenko by Defence Minister Viktor Khrenin**



BELTA

The Head of State mainly asked about the situation in the Armed Forces, “You have been working as Defence Minister for a long period of time. In this period, we have gone through a serious stage: we had to redeploy military units, deploy and move them to more dangerous areas, as we saw it back then and still now. After all our events, the transfer to the military reserve and the conscription to the army, what is the current state of affairs in the Armed Forces? What are the major issues?”

Another topic on the agenda — outlined by Aleksandr Lukashenko — was the measures to counteract destructive forces which have been trying to destabilise the country. “Or not only to destabilise, but to overthrow it,” he said. “We see, as one of the major drawbacks in this situation, the absence of true patriotism, especially among our men — primarily, among those (we can see it among our students) who did not serve in the Armed Forces, who did not have this experience. However, there are people [like that] among former soldiers as well, although only a few. There is a serious gap in patriotic education, and we must eradicate it. How will we do

this?” the President asked Mr. Khrenin. Aleksandr Lukashenko also raised the issue of participation in peacekeep-

ing missions, stressing that an increasing number of tension points have been recently emerging worldwide. “The

demand for peacekeeping operations is rising. We are members of United Nations peacekeeping missions. What is the state of affairs here? We visited Vitebsk in the past — watching the actions of our peacekeeping unit. What is the situation there? Where might we have to participate in as peacemakers — in line with the UN mission? What is the moral, technical and financial state? After all, these involve certain expenditures, though the UN compensates us for it. In fact, the morale of our Armed Forces and those who are called to participate in these peacekeeping missions is the key,” he stressed.

The President also asked Mr. Khrenin about personnel issues and the financial state of our Armed Forces. In response, the Minister noted that the situation is currently controlled and manageable, and the Armed Forces are ready to perform their tasks as intended. In addition, he noted that — despite all the difficulties — the planned activities have been 100 per cent completed.

## Patriots in their sphere of activity and the country

Among the results of the President’s personnel-related day are the appointment of the Culture Minister, new ambassadors for Belarus and a reshuffle of internal affairs heads

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew special attention to the responsibility of the new Culture Minister and the important tasks he faces. The order of the Head of State is — figuratively speaking — to return the true face to culture, “It should really be the face of the nation. *We’ve created sovereign and independent Belarus, but then we failed to keep it and prove to others that it is really ours and that it should be loved and cherished... Culture should serve the people, it should represent our state — which is first sovereign and independent in our history.*”

### Belarus advocates peace and dialogue

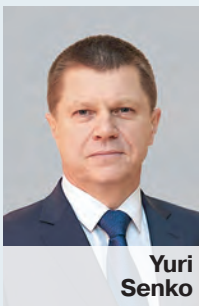
The Chairman of the State Customs Committee, Yuri Senko, will head the Belarusian diplomatic mission in China, while the former Defence Minister and State Secretary of the Security Council — Andrei Ravkov — is appointed the Ambassador to Azerbaijan. The former Prosecutor General, Aleksandr Konyuk, will represent the interests of Belarus in Armenia.

Belarus has good close relations with Azerbaijan. The new head of the diplomatic mission, Andrei Ravkov, knows this well: he was in charge of this area in the past. As Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, these relations should be maintained. The President set the Ambassador the task to expand and improve co-operation in the economic sphere in order to have the maximum effect, in particular, in Belarusian exports to Azerbaijan.

The Head of State emphasised, “We have excellent relations with Armenia. *These are two republics that should live peacefully in the future. We have maintained and will continue to maintain*



Anatoly Markevich



Yuri Senko

*very good relations with Yerevan and Baku. Well, it’s happened, so it can’t be helped... We sympathise with what happened there. People died. Thank God that the war is over.*”

Belarus has always advocated peace and dialogue. Now, thanks to former colleagues from related departments, our country will be able to contribute to the successful resolution of the conflict in Nagorno-Karabakh.

With this attitude, the new ambassadors are preparing to leave. In an interview with journalists, Aleksandr Konyuk, who was appointed Ambassador to Armenia, reminded that Belarusians and Armenians have long-standing friendly ties, “Of course, this is an honorary appointment, but also a serious and responsible mission at the moment — as it is also for my colleague, Andrei Ravkov. We will have to work very closely together in this regard.”

In his work, Aleksandr Konyuk will certainly pay attention to bilateral relations in terms of the possibility of supplying Belarusian products. However, something else is more important for him, “It’s to stop people dying. This is the key. Our Russian friends helped restore relative order in this regard. This will also be the task of the ambassadors. We need to ensure that people live in peace, without children, women, or civilians suffering.”

### Aleksandr Lukashenko reviewed personnel-related issues last week, making new appointments:

Anatoly Markevich — Culture Minister;

Yuri Senko — Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to China;

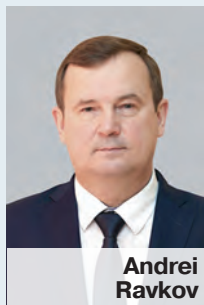
Andrei Ravkov — Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Azerbaijan;

Aleksandr Konyuk — Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Armenia;

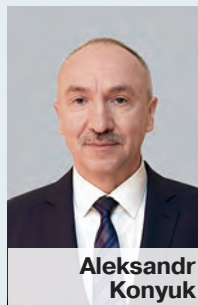
Andrei Metelitsa — Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Pakistan;

Pavel Vzyatkin — Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of the Republic of

Belarus to the Republic of Kenya with concurrent accreditation to the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of Uganda, the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia; Permanent Representative of Belarus to the African Union, the UN Environment Programme (UNEP) and the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-Habitat).



Andrei Ravkov

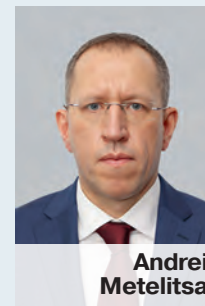


Aleksandr Konyuk

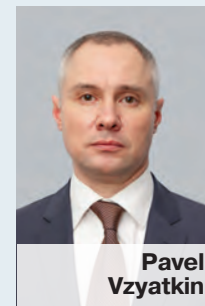
### Exports in focus

Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei, who was present at the meeting, informed Aleksandr Lukashenko that some of the appointed ambassadors are leaving for countries with a total population of 1.7bn people. “If we make a little progress in the trade turnover there, first of all in exports, it will be a great thing. Exports are the key, guys. *Politics is politics. Clearly, there will be a lot of it in Azerbaijan, Armenia and China. Meanwhile, we need to make progress in trade and economic relations there,*” the Head of State concluded.

The new Ambassador to China, Yuri Senko, shares the same view on the development of bilateral relations. According to the President, the Chinese appreciate that ‘a heavyweight’ is being sent to them. “Belarusian businesses can trade, but sometimes they are wary of distant



Andrei Metelitsa



Pavel Vzyatkin

markets. At the same time, our business is gradually increasing its presence in the Chinese market with very good progress. The work of the Belarusian Embassy in China will make it easier for Belarusian businessmen to look at this market and be able to quickly adapt to all the nuances that exist in terms of entering the market,” the diplomat told journalists.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

# Mega-project in action



Aleksandr Kulevsky

## Exports account for a third of all revenue

The revenue from the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park residents from exports of goods, works and services totalled Br36.8m (about \$15m equivalent) — up 8.7 times, accounting for 29.2 percent of total revenue. By the end of the reporting period, 65 residents were registered in the Park — against 55 a year earlier. The average number of employees was 970 (596 last year). The net loss was Br45.6m (about \$19m). In 2019, this figure stood at Br9.4m (about \$4.5m).

Foreign direct investments on a net basis totalled \$36.6m — down 7.3 per-

cent. Investments in fixed assets were formed at the level of Br57.8m (about \$24m) — up 2.7 percent.

The Great Stone administration has announced that the main companies ensuring production and sales of services over the reporting period were MAZ-Weichai JSC, Hess Great Stone JSC, Asomedica JSC, Miran CJSC, Ruhtech JSC, China Merchants Group CJSC, and Chengdu Xinju Silk Road Development.

The Great Stone is the largest international project that is being created in Belarus. Residents of the zone with special preferential treatment are mainly the advanced high-tech industries of the fifth

## Revenue from Great Stone Industrial Park residents up more than 3 times over the year

According to the National Statistical Committee, the revenue of residents of the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park has increased 3.4 times from January-September 2020 against the same period of last year — making Br126.2m (around \$50m in equivalent). The turnover of project participants from exports of goods and services also increased significantly over this time.

**The revenue from the Chinese-Belarusian Great Stone Industrial Park residents from exports of goods, works and services totalled Br36.8m (about \$15m equivalent) — up 8.7 times**

## Infrastructure development ensured

The Industrial Park Development Company has recently signed a \$2.5m loan agreement with Fransabank. The parties agreed to raise a loan to refinance the funds spent by the joint company on the construction of standard production buildings.

Seven production blocks with a total area of 62,911.7 square metres have already been built for investors in the Great Stone; 14 companies are operating there at the moment. Another 10,800 square metres will be commissioned by the end of the year.

Next year, given the growing demand for modern production facilities, the joint company plans to continue construction, and an additional 10,800 square metres will be available to those interested in buying or renting.

The production areas meet the most modern requirements, are provided with the necessary infrastructure and are fully ready for companies to start operation.

and sixth technological orders which work in the field of mechanical engineering, electronics and telecommunications, biotechnology, pharmaceuticals, logistics, e-commerce and big data.

The Park now has 67 residents from 14 countries. The level of declared investments exceeds \$1.2bn and more than \$600m has already been invested in project development.

## Reaching for heaven

### Vitebsk enterprise has produced a hoist — unique for Europe

Vitebskiye Podyemniki company has mastered the production of a new product for itself — VIPO-45 hoist with a telescopic boom. The experts at the company have worked on the equipment for about six months: from design to creation of a prototype.

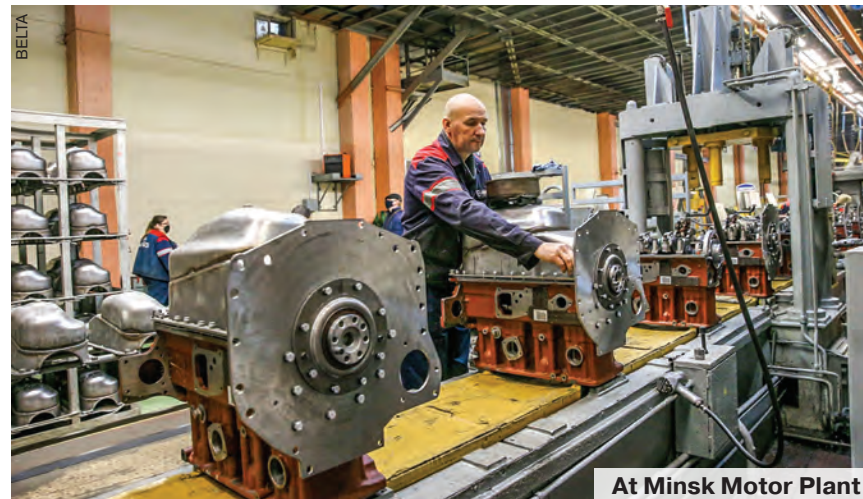
The boom lifting height is 45m while its outreach is 28m. Lifting capacity amounts to 450kg. For the plant, this is the tallest hoist equipped with a telescopic boom. It works on the principle of a fishing rod: the pieces slide out one after the other. “This feature is very helpful in work. A car will be able to drive up close to the object and lift the worker up. The equipment is multifunctional, it can be used by power engineers, oil workers, rescuers and builders,” said the plant’s Technical Director, Andrei Garafonov. The equipment can be installed on the chassis of any manufacturer. In the world, only one state produces such

machines — the Republic of Korea.

This hoist is an import substitution product for the country. Orders for it have already been received from Belarus, Russia, Ukraine and Kazakhstan. “It’s good that, in recent months, many shipments of our goods are going to Belarus. The equipment is taken by power engineers from different regions,” noted Mr. Garafonov.

The Vitebsk enterprise started producing garbage trucks at the beginning of the year. The line of municipal vehicles will be expanded, so they plan to start building a new workshop for the assembly of machines at the end of this year, added the official.

Vitebskiye Podyemniki machine-building private company (trademark VIPO) was founded in 2004. The plant has mastered the production of more than 80 models of equipment, including drilling and manipulator cranes and tail lifts. The enterprise annually produces about 450 machines of various types. It supplies part of its products for export.



At Minsk Motor Plant

## Diesel for UAZ

### Minsk Motor Plant develops new diesel engine for UAZ cars refit

“The idea of equipping such cars as GAZelle and UAZ with Minsk Motor Plant engines was born long ago and, finally, it has been implemented: the UAZ-469 car now has a MMZ-4DTI diesel. Our factory staff worked on this project with great pleasure,” the company’s press service has announced.

The four-cylinder 2.1-litre MMZ-4DTI is an independent development of the Minsk Motor Plant. The first prototypes appeared in 2015, but the production version was released only this summer. The MMZ-4DTI engine is three-quarters unified with the MMZ-3LD three-cylinder 1.6-litre engine designed for agricultural machinery. “Of course, the MMZ-4DTI has an original cylinder block, camshaft, crankshaft, cylinder head, valve cover, intake and exhaust manifolds, and oil sump; these components are made at the plant. The block and cylinder head, as well as the exhaust manifold, will be included in the products made by the new foundry that recently opened in Stolbtsy. Among the imported elements, we can name the fuel

system supplied by Czech Motorpal, although some parts of the high-pressure fuel pump, in particular, the case covers and the cases themselves are cast at the Belarusian facility,” the company explained.

Due to the simplicity of the basic design, the 4DTI can be produced with several versions and power characteristics. The kit is made so that its replacement practically does not require complex work.

As for the market prospects of the new engine in general and its version for the UAZ, much depends on how quickly it will be possible to organise batch production. Presumably, the process will be put on stream in early 2021. “We are currently registering a strong interest from Russia and the secondary market of Cuba. The list of interested countries includes Mongolia, Egypt, Hungary, Ecuador, Indonesia, Iraq and even China. There are a lot of Russian SUVs around the world, and not everyone is satisfied with a gasoline engine,” the press service added.

Based on materials of belta.by



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# Subject to exchange

## First legal cryptocurrency exchange service launched in Belarus

**The process of buying and selling cryptocurrencies is completely legal and transparent for all its participants**

and their liquidity, as well as the actual supply and demand for them. In particular, at the time of this article, the service offered to exchange one Bitcoin at the rate of 40,209.84 Belarusian Roubles.

In addition, in the near future, there will be support for other payment systems, as commented by the Director of the Internet payment provider — Vyacheslav Senin, “The new service will certainly contribute to the development of e-commerce. The process of buying and selling cryptocurrencies is completely legal and transparent for all its participants. Import-



Hi-Tech Park

By Vladislav Sychevich

### Favourable climate

Belarus has created the most comfortable conditions for IT. Exports for this sector last year amounted to \$2.5bn and, in just one year, more new residents were registered than in all the previous 12 years of the Hi-Tech Park's existence. Even despite the pandemic, they didn't lose profit but continued expanding rapidly.

Recently, the HTP Supervisory Board decided to register 83 companies as residents. Two-thirds of newcomers are companies registered in 2019-2020 which indicates the active development of start-ups. The HTP includes residents with foreign capital established by representatives of Germany, Israel, Latvia and the United States. Six development centres for foreign corporations have also joined. Today, the Hi-Tech Park unites 969 companies.

Adopted in December 2017, Decree No. 8 ‘On the Development of the Digital Economy’ has provided, among other things, a fully-fledged legal framework for the work of the cryptosphere, which is gaining momentum every day. To implement the provisions of the decree, a package of documents regulating the activities of HTP residents with digital currencies was approved.

### Profitable exchange

Until recently, it was possible to exchange cryptocurrencies for other currencies or for real money only on specialised exchanges. This is much easier to do now. The first legal cryptocurrency exchange service has been launched in the country — on the basis of Belarusbank. Now citizens of Belarus and Russia can buy and sell cryptocurrencies using VISA payment cards.

So far, the service performs financial transactions with the Bitcoin cryptocurrency, which is exchanged for Belarusian and Russian Roubles, as well as Dollars. Transactions for the purchase and sale of digital signs with residents of the Republic of Belarus are made in Belarusian Roubles.

A few years ago, the country's largest bank announced

a programme for the financial institution's digital transformation which included strategic partnership in the implementation of a cryptocurrency exchange service. Viktor Bezrukov, the Head of the Digital Transformation Department at Belarusbank, explains, “The concept of digital transformation consisted of three areas: digitalisation, digital transformation, and ecosystem creation. We saw that the cryptocurrency market was actively developing. At present, the world cryptocurrency market is estimated at \$300bn, the Russian market — about \$1bn. The new exchange service is the first such solution in our country that makes it possible to quickly exchange cryptocurrency in real time.”

### Minimum and maximum

The minimum amount of a one-off exchange is \$50 equivalent. The maximum is indicated on the course calculator for the verified user. In turn, the maximum volume of operations per month is no more than \$10,000 equivalent. Vasily Kulesh, the Communications Director of the cryptocurrency exchange operator, explains, “If you need to make a transaction for an amount exceeding this limit, you should apply to the support service and provide the source of origin of funds or digital signs.”

The service operates in online mode, the purchase-and-sale procedure is performed using VISA payment cards with 3D-Secure technology. The rate is set depending on the type of transaction, currency, volume of tokens

and, the maximum security of transactions is ensured. At the moment, the project works with the VISA payment system, but there are all prerequisites for other payment systems to be connected in the foreseeable future.”

Accordingly, citizens of the Republic of Belarus and the Russian Federation can carry out the exchange at present and, in the future, it is planned to expand the list of countries whose citizens will be able to exchange cryptocurrencies for Belarusian and Russian Roubles, US Dollars and Euros. It's also planned to increase the list of jurisdictions covered and add support for additional cryptocurrencies. A number of additional services at the intersection of traditional economy and innovative financial technologies are likely to be introduced.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Kupala film project wins prize at the international festival in Moscow



The national film project — *Kupala* — directed by Vladimir Yankovsky, received the ‘Cinematographic Event of the Year’ prize at the 2nd Moscow Premiere CIS International Film Festival. The film was screened at the Moscow House of Cinema.

The *Kupala* historical drama tells of the fate of the national poet of Belarus, Yanka Kupala. The picture reveals the main milestones of his life and creative path, which coincided with the most tragic events of the 20th century. The trailer for the film is available in English, Russian, Belarusian and Chinese. The script was written by Alena Kalyunova, Aleksandra Borisova and Vladimir Yankovsky. The duration is 155 minutes. The premiere took place in the original language.

### About fifty deer will settle in the spring in the forests of the Shumilino District in the Vitebsk Region

The entire batch of animals, including 19 females, 4 males and 23 of this year's brood, was delivered to the enclosure of the Shumilino forestry enterprise. With an



area of 13 hectares, there is a deep stream and wooded areas on the site. Salt licks and feeding grounds are equipped for feeding animals. Newcomers will spend the winter months here, adapting to their new habitat. They will be released in spring. It is planned that, by this time, they will already have a feeling of home and the radius of settlement of the animals will be about 2-3km.

Since 2016, a five-year state programme *Belarusian Forest* has been operating in the country, according to which hunting species of animals are purchased annually.

### Belarus improved its position in the ranking of English proficiency

This year, Belarus took 40th place in the world's largest ranking of the level of English proficiency — the EF English Proficiency Index (EPI), showing a moderate level (EF EPI 513). A year earlier, our country was ranked 47th. This year, Russia is placed 41st (512), Ukraine — 44th (506), while Georgia is ranked 47th (503). Tajikistan is on the last line of the rating (381). In Europe, English proficiency remains consistently high, with 27 out of 33



countries improving their position since last year. The top five in the ratings include the Netherlands, Denmark, Finland, Sweden and Norway. China also continues to improve its position.

The ranking was compiled on the basis of data obtained from 2.2m people in 100 countries and regions for which English is not a native language.

### New Minsk Tractor Works model presented at China's exhibition

Minsk Tractor Works has demonstrated its new machinery at the *China International Agricultural Machinery* show and its ‘BELARUS 3523’ model attracted much attention. The 350HP tractor was presented at the stand of China First Heavy Industries, a partner of the Belarusian plant. It was possible not only to visually appreciate the vehicle but also have a test drive. The stand featuring the ‘BELARUS’ tractor was attended by over 2,000 people, most of them were experts in the sphere. Chinese acknowledged several advantages of the new model: i.e. its innovative electromechanical transmission system and lifting device that significantly



increases the functionality of the tractor. Visitors liked the high quality and reliability of materials used for production of mechanical equipment.

# That's the kind of youth we have!

By Olga Kosyakova

## Dreams and reality

A fifth-year student of the General Medicine Department of the Belarusian State Medical University, Viktoria Fedorova, dreams of becoming an ophthalmic surgeon. The work is graceful, neat and aesthetic. She says she really likes to work with her hands and to improvise. But so far, the dreams of the student, like of many others, have been pushed aside by coronavirus. She is now working as a nurse. Nowadays, Viktoria also improvises and works a lot with her hands, but in conditions far from sophisticated — sometimes people get extremely sick. The second wave of coronavirus brought her back to patients with COVID-19, whom Viktoria had already saved when working in the summer. Then she even quarrelled with her parents, who were very worried and didn't want their daughter to go into the 'red zone'. However, Viktoria is a stubborn girl. And the desire to become a real specialist exceeded her fear.

"I worked every other day. It was scary to think that I might get infected myself and infect my relatives. It's hard to work physically. It's stuffy in the suit. At first, I didn't know how or what to do. Now I feel much more confident, even though you don't sit down for a shift. New patients arrive, they require attention, we change people on oxygen — every minute is busy with work."

## Both work and study

Vika admits that sometimes she has no strength at all after a shift, but the thought of giving up everything and sit-

**More than 2,500 senior students of medical universities in our country are working at the forefront, fighting COVID-19. They are working in medical positions in accordance with the level of theoretical training and practical skills. For work with coronavirus infection — like their senior colleagues — medical students receive bonuses. However, the most important thing, they say, is not the money, but giving timely help to people. The MT reporter met with the fifth-year students at the Belarusian State Medical University to learn more.**

ting out the epidemic in the classroom never arose.

"I'm a super-responsible person. I go out to replace colleagues wherever I'm asked. I'm young and healthy, so why should I study when my older colleagues are working, one might say, on the front line?"

Feelings and emotions are overwhelming in the infectious diseases ward, "You empathise with every patient and try to help with all your might. There is a lot of work. We deal with patients during the day, and documentation at night."

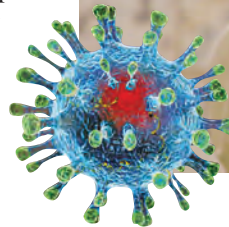
The 'heroine', as her parents and boyfriend see her, has communicated with them for a long time only by Skype and phone, as COVID has divided many.

Students don't work for show. Not even all the teachers know that in the morning the young people come to the classroom after an exhausting night shift in the infectious diseases department. I ask Viktoria if her studies suffer from such a busy schedule.

"There are no special concessions, I study two topics in advance — on the bus and during breaks at the university. It is difficult, but we adapt. I also go to German courses. I have shifts during all the weekends and several night shifts during the week. While young, you have to work. There are many students like us."



Student Viktoria Fedorova works as a nurse



## A conscious choice to help people

Viktoria's classmate — Yevgeny Sergievich — works as a paramedic on a mobile team at the fifth substation of the Minsk City Ambulance Station. He deliberately came to work in an ambulance in July.

"When people began to get sick with COVID-19 in February and March, we didn't know what kind of disease it was. Then it was emphasised that mostly elderly people are sick. Everyone has elderly relatives and was afraid to bring the coronavirus home. But the incidence increased. I realised that in my profession I go hand in hand with risk. But you need to help older colleagues. I deliberately went to work in an ambulance, where you get

more practical skills, learn to act urgently, and make quick decisions."

After a twelve-hour shift, Yevgeny goes to lectures. "When it's exciting, I try to listen. I also tell my fellow students how it was at work. In the evening I come home and my one desire is to fall asleep to recuperate. There's no question of meeting friends."

Relatives supported Yevgeny's choice to go to work as a medical assistant at such a difficult time. He knew what profession he was choosing. In the future, he dreams of becoming a cardiologist and improving in his chosen profession.

The press service of the Health Ministry said that the practice of attracting medical students to participate in the provision of medical care is traditional.



By Sergei Grudnitsky

## Young people share common interests

As Marina Tsives, the Director of the Confucius Institute on Science and Technology at the Belarusian National Technical University, said, the forum featured six sections on various topics. The 'Digital Socialisation: Media Space, Trends and Platforms, Youth and Society (Environment, Communications)' section was organised for the first time — arousing great interest among participants and speakers. Its reports covered the topic of media space and social networks, their interaction and possible conflicts of interest.

"We can state with confidence now that our forum really opens up new horizons," said the BNTU Rector, Sergei Kharitonchik. "We are opening up new forms of interaction and co-operation. This shows that the interest in science is mutually high, and that we are working in the right direction. It's good to note that the forum is being held on the eve of the University's centenary, demonstrating friendship and interaction with our Chinese partners."

According to Aleksei Aldoshin, who heads the Belarusian Centre for Sci-Tech Co-operation with China, the event aims to actively inspire and develop outstanding scientific talents, offer opportunities for exchange and mutual learning at world level, promote international cul-

# New shared horizons

## BNTU Sci-Tech Park hosts 7th Belarusian-Chinese Youth Innovation Forum: *New Horizons 2020*



Sergei Mitskevich

**Belarusian and Chinese technoparks have broad common interests — including mechanical engineering, information and communication technologies and medical instrumentation**

tural and educational exchanges, and the internationalisation of scientific talents in China and Belarus.

"This multidimensional event demonstrates intellectual and creative abilities of the modern youth of Belarus and China, reflecting the diversity of the scientific and technical interests and achievements of youth in various fields of science and technology and prospects of the youth innovative, original programmes in the framework of a single educational and sci-

tech space of Belarus and China," concluded Mr. Aldoshin.

## Researchers' talent in demand

Aleksandr Shumilin, the Chairman of the State Committee for Science and Technology, attended the *New Horizons 2020* opening. "This is the seventh forum organised jointly with our Chinese colleagues," he said. "All the most creative people are young. They set ambitious goals and successfully achieve them, so it's important to involve the youth in scientific research and in the imple-

mentation of joint projects. We see that this is in demand both in Belarus and China."

"The technologies developed by Chinese partners with Polytechnic are in demand and are used in the production of various medical instruments and prostheses," added Mr. Shumilin. "The devices — used in mechanical engineering for spraying on various parts — have also been developed. In fact, everything starts with an exchange of ideas, with meetings, reports and setting new tasks."

The Belarusian and Chinese technoparks have broad common interests — including mechanical engineering, information and communication technologies and medical instrumentation. Recent successful projects include equipment for dental prosthetics and developments in the field of cardiology. The necessary prostheses and stent grafts developed at Polytechnic are used all over the world.

A video message to the participants was also recorded by the Science Advisor of the Embassy of the People's Republic of China in the Republic of Belarus, Mr. Zhang Jishan. He said, "China and Belarus have a long history of successful mutual understanding in all spheres of public life. The two countries have established strong ties of trust-based partnership and developed reliable co-operation mechanisms. It is pleasant to note that Belarus is actively involved in the *One Belt — One Road* large-scale project and is consistently implementing it — as confirmed by the event. This forum is a unique and effective discussion platform for young people, an opportunity to demonstrate their talent in research activities. The scientific potential of our two countries is huge, and the initiative in research is inexhaustible. The future of our states is in safe hands."

# A linen shirt for more comfort

It cools in the heat and warms in the cold. Every Belarusian and every foreigner who's ever visited the country knows that all the talk is of linen and clothes made of it. Strong stereotypes exist in society: people believe that clothing made of this fabric has a seasonal character. However, the latest trend shows that large and small manufacturers aim to make customers fall in love with ecologically friendly fashion in the off-season as well. To succeed, they produce collections that perfectly complement the stylish image in autumn and winter. After all, our ancestors wore these national clothes all year round and knew from their own experience: in a linen shirt, it is cool in summer and warm in winter. What is currently happening in the Belarusian linen clothing market?

By Tatiana Bizyuk, Natalia Ostapchuk

## Collections are being sewn but raw materials are in short supply

The Orsha Linen Mill is known for its natural fabrics and products made from them domestically and abroad. Tourists always buy a locally produced linen towel, a tablecloth or a doll symbolising the Belarusian girl. Everyone knows that linen is a brand, a symbol and a calling card of Belarus.

Interestingly, until 2016, Orsha specialised exclusively in household items: bed linen, tablecloths, towels, blankets... Clothes were made in small batches only. Speaking of the reason for large scale production, the Head of the Foreign Co-operation Department — Svetlana Orlova — explains: clothing manufacturers have begun to buy less Orsha fabric. Although market analysis shows that the demand for clothing items made of natural fabrics is growing. The specialist believes such clothing has a great future, “We understand that we know the fabric and its high quality. It all started in 2016 when a garment factory was allocated a site for tailoring; 13 seamstresses were employed. In the first year, 15,000 sundresses, dresses, tunics, tops were made and the volumes doubled every year. In 2020, the factory launched its own line for tailoring which is actually a design bureau. At present, many customers know our brand, love it and often visit the ‘Belarusian Linen’ brand stores. There are already 19 of them countrywide: in the capital, in all regional centres, Pinsk and Bobruisk. Four more will open in the near future. 15 percent of our products are sold to the Russian market through trading houses in Moscow and Ivanovo.”

As regards customers, these are

Mill has innovative equipment: its almost chemical-free linen fabric undergoes additional finishing — so-called ‘dry washing’ when fabrics rub against each other and become softer — acquiring a natural crumple. As a result,



Deputy Director Tatiana Lagun demonstrates products made from Belarusian linen sold at the ‘Lyanok’ shop



primarily female. It's no secret that articles made of linen need special care: immediately after washing, they should be ironed. However, many men prefer to simply put them on and go out. Nina Baranova, the Head of the Marketing Department, tells us that the Linen

collections feature many models that can be worn all year round: these are basic trousers, jackets, vests and shirts.”

Speaking about raw materials, Natalia Velyugina — the Deputy Director for Production and Raw Materials at the Orsha Linen Mill — notes that

no ironing is needed.

“So far, we have focused mainly on women but, in the future, we'll achieve a balance between women's and men's clothing,” she adds. “For example, we are developing a line of men's shirts. We are also working to dispel the myth that linen is exclusively a summer fabric. Our

more than five years. The rest of the crop has a much lower fibre number and, accordingly, the fabrics are rough and suitable mainly for tablecloths, curtains or shoes. It's impossible to make a man's shirt out of it. That's why raw materials are also bought from European farmers and not always on the basis of samples: the latter may be perfect, while a batch would be of a poorer quality. The coronavirus pandemic has added to the difficulties: borders are opening and closing, and it is a problem to personally travel for shipments. However, a solution was found: the mill bought Turkish viscose and will combine flax with this raw material. The company assures that their products will not be less eco-friendly, while viscose — also a natural product — will give a shine and a flowing effect to the clothes.



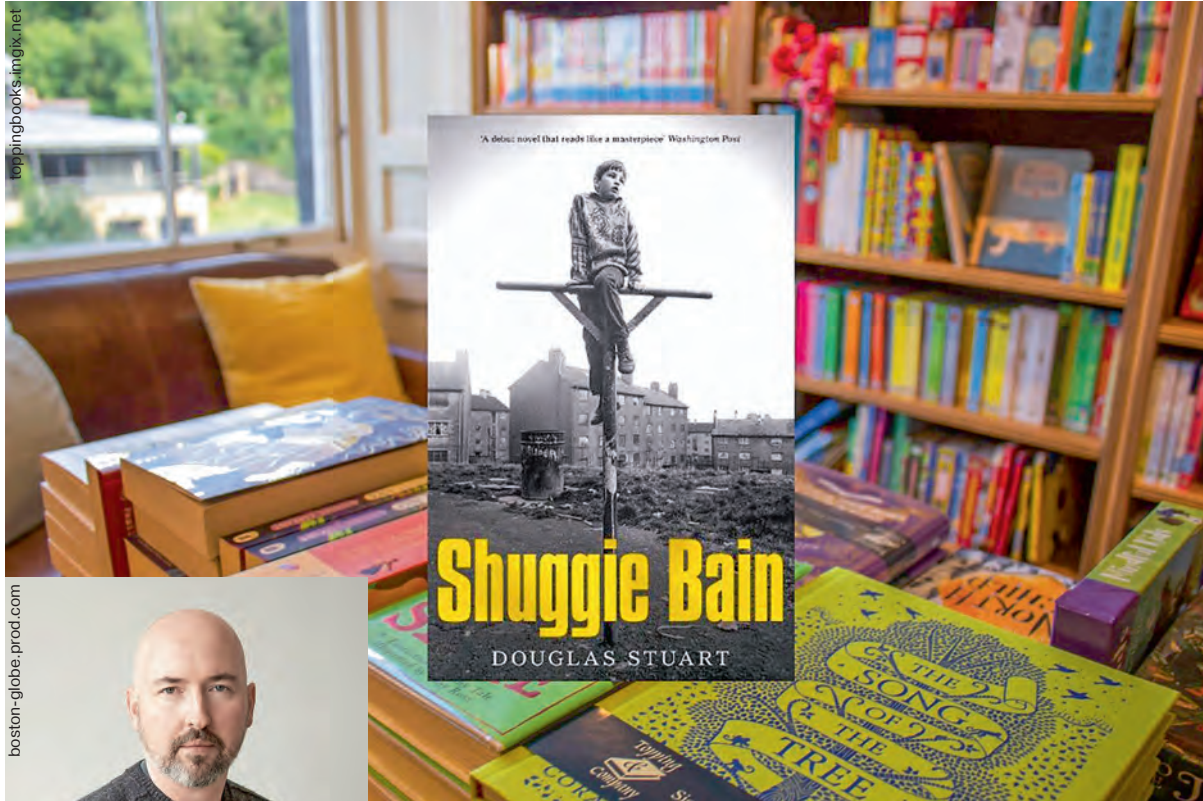
## Eco-goods on shelves

The ‘Lyanok’ retail outlet in Minsk's Nezavisimosti Avenue is popular among tourists and celebrities. Natalia Myakshina, a commodity expert and former head of the store, shook hands with Silvio Berlusconi and served the wife of Turkish President Recep Erdogan. Some Italian tourists interested in linen products were previously seen in the store three or four times a year; nobody was surprised to welcome top ranking delegations. The pandemic has altered the work: visitors rarely come, while Belarusians have a low interest in finished products. The situation is saved by fashion designers who regularly buy Orsha fabric and make clothes. After all, the store offers the richest range of linen.

A famous craftswoman from Kobrin, Marina Bonifatieva, confirms that, in recent times, customers' tastes are getting more diverse. People understand the value of natural materials. “Linen is trending. Although clothes made of it crease, this is a kind of status indicator. Some manufacturers from other countries specially steam such clothes to make them look even more natural,” she explains, adding, “An increasing number of people prefer linen clothing not only in summer, but also in winter. The material is unique: it helps the skin breathe in the heat, and keeps it warm in the cold. Therefore, among the orders we can find insulated coats made of linen.”

Speaking about the most popular models, the craftswoman — who works not only with national costumes — comments that there are dresses, sundresses with embroidery, tunics, blouses, bags and backpacks. She sews dresses from Orsha linen. Wedding and christening outfits are still appreciated — being the eternal trends. Among Marina's buyers are some celebrities. Many people remember the unique dress of the wife of Foreign Minister Vladimir Makei — Vera Polyakova; she put on her unique outfit with embroidery in the form of a village hut for a reception. Many of Marina's dresses are made in a single copy. She presented some of them at the *Dozhinki* Festival in Divin and keeps some at home.

“A person should come, look and touch,” says the lady. “Linen clothing is not a spontaneous purchase. However, if a piece appears in one's wardrobe, linen becomes the love of a lifetime.”



## Douglas Stuart wins Booker Prize

Douglas Stuart has won this year's Booker Prize for *Shuggie Bain*, his debut novel about a boy in 1980s Glasgow trying to support his mother as she struggles with addiction and poverty

Chair of judges Margaret Busby said the judges' decision was unanimous and they 'took an hour to decide'. The book is 'challenging, intimate and gripping... anyone who reads it will never feel the same', she said.

Stuart, 44, dedicated it to his mother, who died of alcoholism when he was 16. The novel follows the life of Agnes Bain, who is descending into despair and struggling with alcohol after the breakdown of her marriage. All but one of her children have been driven away by her deterioration, and that child, Shuggie, struggles to help Agnes while suffering huge personal problems of his own.

The novel is 'destined to be a

classic' and is 'full of such emotional rage, book that can make you laugh as well as make you cry', Ms. Busby said.

The writer, who made New York his home to start a career in fashion design, said that *Shuggie Bain* was 'a love story looking at that unconditional, often tested love that children can have for flawed parents'.

"I'm sorry if I make it sound like a bleak book, it's actually very funny, it's tender and there's a lot of intimacy and love. I think that's the Glaswegian spirit. Growing up in Glasgow was, I think, probably one of the greatest inspirations of my life," he said.

The ceremony, broadcast from

London's Roundhouse, included contributions from the Duchess of Cornwall and former US President Barack Obama.

Sir Kazuo Ishiguro, who won the 1989 Booker for *The Remains of the Day*, was also part of the socially distanced proceedings, along with last year's joint winners Margaret Atwood and Bernardine Evaristo.

Gaby Wood, the Literary Director of the Booker Prize Foundation, said the judges were under strict instructions not to have more than one winner for this year's £50,000 prize.

She added that under new guidelines, if they could not agree on a winner, a majority vote would be honoured.

## High-tech helmets for COVID protection

For the past two months inventor Yezin Al-Qaysi has been riding the Toronto subway in Canada wearing a huge black 'mad helmet'

The 'hazmat' (hazardous materials) helmet completely encloses his head and upper torso and has a visor that extends all the way down to his chest. On the back is a battery-powered fan and filter respirator system that purifies air that is sucked in, and pushes 'stale' air out. Looking like a dystopian figure straight out of an apocalyptic movie, the 32-year-old unsurprisingly gets some strong reactions.

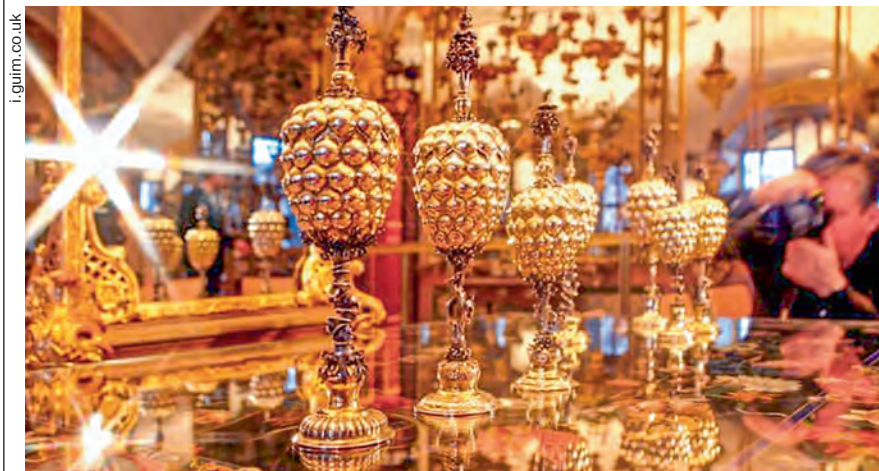
Mr. Al-Qaysi is one of a number of designers and entrepreneurs around the world who have rushed to release 'hazmat', or PAPR (powered air purifying respirator), helmets this year, aimed at people looking for more protection against coronavirus than just wearing a face mask.

His is called the BioVYZR, and the battery is said to last for up to 12 hours. The Canadian says that his business — VZYR Technologies — now has sales in the 'tens of thousands' mark.

US Navy veteran Chris Ehlinger is another 'hazmat' helmet creator. "These helmets in a sense psychologically prepare us for the future destiny of our species," says the 35-year-old. His company,



Valhalla Medical Design, has launched a product called NE-1, which looks similar to a motorcycle helmet. In addition to a powered air filtration system, it has internal and external microphones and speakers, so that the wearer can more easily speak to people around him or her. It even has Bluetooth audio built in.



## Three arrested over German diamond heist

Three people arrested over a dramatic diamond heist in Germany last year that targeted one of Europe's largest treasure collections

The suspects are accused of stealing more than a dozen diamond-encrusted items, including rubies, emeralds and sapphires, from the Dresden Green Vault in the east of the country, police said. Other items that were stolen included a diamond-encrusted sword and a shoulder-piece containing a famous 49-carat Dresden white diamond.

Saxony's ruler, Augustus the Strong, created the collection in 1723 in what is

one of the world's oldest museums.

Police raided homes in Berlin as part of the investigation. Some 1,600 officers were involved in raids across several German states.

The three suspects are said to be members of one so-called 'clan' — families with Arab roots responsible for major organised crime including, in recent years, a raid on a department store and the robbery of a bank.

## Balloon festival goes online

The sky above the Mexican city of León filled with hot air balloons of all shapes, sizes, and colours to mark the start of the International Balloon Festival

Unlike in normal years, there were few to watch the spectacle, with the COVID-19 pandemic forcing the bulk of spectators to observe the event online. Huge figures of animated characters such as SpongeBob Squarepants and La Gallina Pintadita floated across the sky above the 400 people, including pilots, organisation members and a few attendees.

Due to sanitary restrictions, organisers moved the venue of the festival from the Metropolitan Park to a nearby golf club, where masks, antibacterial gel and temperature measurement was mandatory.

The International Balloon Festival this year brought together hot air balloons piloted by professionals from Mexico, France, Canada, the United States, and Brazil, among others.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Touching portraits

## Five top exhibits at Vladimir Likhodedov's *Secrets of the Chancery* show hosted by National Library of Belarus

In modern times, a ballpoint, a gel or a fountain pen is enough to make a record on paper. In addition, electronic and even 3D pens were also recently invented. However, centuries ago, writing instruments were made of cane, later — from bird feathers, and then from metal. Those wishing to learn more about writing sets from the late 18th-early 20th centuries, simply need to visit the *Secrets of the Chancery* exhibition.

By Marina Kuzmich, Vladimir Likhodedov

While looking at the early 20th century accessories of the Radziwills, one can guess that they belonged to an avid hunter.

The case for a stationery knife, a pencil and a fountain pen were made in the form of a wooden hunting quiver, while the tips are in the form of figures of dogs. Centuries ago, writing instruments were not simply a necessity; they emphasised the status of their owner. It is known that Michal Kazimir, nicknamed Rybonka, was fond of hunting. For his ability to shoot accurately, the prince was respected even by King Louis XV of France whom Radziwill often visited. Panie Kochanku was also a fan of hunting.

The exhibition draws attention to the unusual shape of office knives. In the past, they were an integral part of writing sets and were used to open envelopes, cut paper and for self-defence. Their prototype is the knife which was invented in the Stone Age and became the first man-made tool. The first knives were made of stone, bone and even wood. Elongated knives became sabres and swords. Later, decorations were applied and knives eventually turned into works of art.

The exhibition presents a set of writing tools from the family of a famous Belarusian and Polish composer — Stanislaw Moniuszko.

A fountain pen and a knife for opening mail are placed in a beautiful rectangular pencil case with metal fasteners. The box itself is made of tortoiseshell with gold flecks. Perhaps these writing tools were used by Stanislaw himself — as indicated by a seal with a monogram of the family on one of the items. A monogram is a sign made up of the initial letters of the first and last names connected to each other, placed side by side, or intertwined, or from an abbreviation of a name.

The personal seals for letters — used to extrude a relief image on molten wax or sealing wax — also attract attention. The handles of such seals were made of ivory, silver or gilded steel, and the working part was made of gems, glass, basalt or jasper. It was engraved with a monogram, a family coat of arms or a personal symbol. Seals with the coats of arms of nobles also have a historical value.

The set of writing tools of General Semen Timoshenko is monumental in its form — containing a pencil case, a paperweight, a



A writing set of the Stanislaw Moniuszko family. Gold. Late 19th century.



A writing set of Marshal S. Timoshenko. 20th century.



A 'Hunter' writing set. Late 19th-early 20th century. Wood, amber.

The invention of a metal pen played a huge role in the history of writing and in the process of literacy education



A pencil stand of historian and ethnographer Otto Hedeman

A writing set presented by Lieutenant-General Mikhail Kaigorodov, the commandant of the Grodno fortress, to his nephew — artist Anatoly Kaigorodov. Silver, enamel, gilding. Late 19th-early 20th century.



fountain pen and an inkwell. The five-pointed star stand is made of brass and ruby glass.

A metal fountain pen was invented in the early 19th century, supposedly by a clever servant. In order not to have to keep sharpening the stylus for his master who liked to write a lot, he fixed a pointed metal tip on a goose quill. The discovery eased his worries. Metal feathers began to gradually replace goose and swan feathers. Apart from iron, alloys based on gold, osmium and iridium were used for the pen tip. They were resistant to wear and practically didn't blunt. The handle cases were made of ebony, silver, gold, ivory and mahogany. Only wealthy people could afford to use them. Simpler pens were, however, introduced later. The invention of a metal pen played a huge role in the history of writing and in the process of literacy education.

A silver pen and an inkwell in the form of a swan — which belonged to the Russian painter Anatoly Kaigorodov — fascinate visitors with their beauty.

Inkwells, long out of use by modern people, were common in the late 20th century. Flasks for storing ink used to be called 'kalakar' — from the Greek 'kalam': sharpened writing sticks used in ancient times. They were made of stone, leather, horn, clay, glass, cast from tin, copper, bronze, silver and gold. Inkwells were decorated with patterns and stories from myths and fairy tales.

Writing sets took the form of desk tidies and to make them easy to carry or take on a trip, special holders were fixed to them. Often, a jar of sand was placed next to the set; sand was dispersed over the ink so that it would dry faster. Inkwells and stands for pens and pencils were painted with figures of people and animals. Later, the ink flask was placed into the case of writing tools and, as a result, inkwells were relegated to the background.

A wooden pencil pot by Belarusian and Polish historian, ethnographer and teacher — Otto Hedeman — takes the form of the fire-breathing Chimera: a mythological creature with the head of a monkey and a lion's body.

The original pencil stand is an example of cabinet interiors from the early 19th century. Unlike inkwells, they haven't disappeared from our desks and modern craftsmen continue producing them in amazing shapes.



BELTA

“The doll is not a simple phenomenon in the culture of different peoples: being a toy or a plaything is its secondary role,” explains the Head of the Office-Museum, a Doctor of Philology, Professor Irina Kazakova. “They were primarily made for ritual purposes.”

Dolls were produced mainly in autumn when village women finished all their field work, notes Irina, showing one of the most popular: ‘zernovushka’ [grain keeper]. Grain was placed inside this doll which was kept in the house for a whole year: to ensure well-being, health and rich future harvests. Other exhibits are the wedding amulets: two figurines in white suits connected in a pair. These were presented to newlyweds by close relatives. It was believed that the amulet helps keep the family happy.

The most common are ‘zhelannitsa’ [wish keeper] dolls. “They were made, for example, by mothers for their children; the latter whispered their wishes to the dolls and put them under the pillow — believing that they would come true. Young girls, for example, wished for a happy marriage, while older women — if they were infertile or unhappy in their marriage — could ask their happier friends to make such a doll for them, with their best wishes.

Irina Kazakova adds that the department has repeatedly held master classes for students on doll



making and some of their works are also on show. These are ‘loskutnitsa’ [patchworks] — made from scraps. In fact, the process was not so simple: it was believed that the scraps can’t be cut with scissors but must be torn by hand. Mothers and housewives, when making a doll, passed through their hands the energy

# Both amulet and fun at the same time

More than 50 dolls made using a variety of techniques are presented at the *Belarusian Doll Show* at the Office-Museum of Belarusian Traditional Culture at the Belarusian State University’s Philology Department. Its opening was timed to coincide with Belarusian Doll Day celebrated in our country in November since 2010.

of love, kindness and care to their children and their family. There is also an answer to the question of why all ritual dolls are without a face. This is to avoid evil spirits from penetrating into them.

The exhibition also features ‘nitinki’ [dolls made from thread], ‘motanki’ [rag dolls], dolls from linen, wood and ceramic. Irina picks up a bell-doll; it was believed that its sound made evil forces escape.

“Do you know why many dolls were made from straw? People believed that, after harvesting, straw retains the energy of the sun and the soil. Figurines made of this material were considered a very powerful amulet for the house, which protected the whole family,” the lady says.

As the Chair of the BSU Women’s Union, Irina Kazakova notes that the image of a mother with a child in her arms plays a very important role in the Belarusian doll tradition. Also, while studying dolls, it’s possible to trace the main features of the national character: hospitality, respect for elders and hard work. Along with girl-dolls, the show features male dolls who are always at work: these are shepherds, artisans, musicians...

The exhibition is also available in a virtual format on the website of the BSU Women’s Union.

# Universal harmony

**The *Far is Near* exhibition project at Vitebsk’s Centre of Contemporary Art reveals amazing landscapes and mysterious worlds**

The exhibition features about 100 watercolours and graphic pieces — authored by a well-known Vitebsk artist, a member of the Belarusian Union of Artists, Igor Shkuratov, who recently celebrated his 75th birthday.

The master’s creativity is extremely diverse. He is a genius of watercolours, a poet and a romantic. Igor’s works — painted with bright colours and sweeping strokes — are filled with musicality and light, radiating a strong positive energy. His cities, amazing landscapes and seasons come to life, giving us an opportunity to feel their depth and energy.

The mysterious planet of Niberu — invented by the artist — has been the subject of his scientific research for years. The images of its inhabitants, alien intelligence, captured on canvas and paper, draw the viewer deep into a new dimension, making us philosophise, fantasise, think that we are not alone in this vast cosmos. Space graphics in Igor Shkuratov’s works began to appear in 1993 and the extra-terrestrial alien world, mysterious and intriguing, has become the theme for several series of works; some of them are on show at the jubilee exhibition which will run until December 14th.



BELTA

# New facets of painting

**Vitebsk Art Museum presents Aleksandr Vyshka’s *Lightvolume. 13th Wonder of the World* exhibition of light dynamic painting**

Works in the author’s lightvolume style express the life of the artist’s soul — with all its unpredictability, alogism, wonderful transformations and unexpected turns. The world created by the artist combines the sudden and inexplicable in the formation and development of images within and between works, including the entire space of the exhibition and the worldview of those present.

Aleksandr Vyshka creates a magical world of art, revealing new facets

of painting through different levels of light. “The technique is based on light dynamics created by combining ordinary and luminous colours in various combinations. The ‘silver thread’ (light) connects different spaces and reinforces what has already been seen, while filling the elements and the whole with a new emotional and semantic sound, changing the volume of perception,” museum staff note.

The exhibition will run until January 17th, 2021.



vitebski.by

# Working mood reigns

## Belarusian athletes continue preparing for Tokyo Games

Last week, the National Olympic Committee held a working meeting with the participation of Belarus' Deputy Prime Minister — Igor Petrishenko, the NOC First Vice-President — Viktor Lukashenko, the Minister of Sports and Tourism — Sergei Kovalchuk, as well as heads, head coaches and athletes of 37 sports federations. They discussed preparations for the 2021 Olympics in Tokyo and Beijing in 2022. Prior to the major conversation, Viktor Lukashenko noted that one of the main goals in high-performance sports is to participate in international competitions, especially in the Olympic Games, and definitely winning them. The Tokyo event will be held in just over six months, while only one competitive season separates us from the Winter Olympics in Beijing. There is no time to relax.

Our athletes have already gained 71 qualification places for Tokyo and there will be more: due to the coronavirus pandemic, many qualifying competitions have been postponed to a later date. No one wants to miss an opportunity to expand their representation in Japan. On the eve of the meeting, the Chair of the Belarusian Swimming Federation — Ella Selitskaya — focused on the issue, "The Belarusian swimmers have so far won five Olympic places: three in individual disciplines (Anastasia Shkurdai, Ilya Shimanovich and Nikita Tsmysga) and two in the combined relay. Today, 12 athletes, including from the reserve team, are preparing for the Olympics. The plans that were outlined to win additional qualifications are postponed to next year. For swimmers, we see about five tournaments where our sportsmen can try winning another 2-4 places. Speaking about the near future, we hope to hold the short course championship of Belarus in December, in Brest. It will be a qualifier for next year's European and world championships. We are keen to hold these competitions as there are very few events this year."

The Belarusian national rowing and canoeing team is currently training outside the country. The Deputy Chairman of the Belarusian Canoeing Association, team head Yuri Kilkov, said that the athletes will soon return home and, after special training, start purposeful preparation for the season. The official admitted that the rowers were psychologically prepared to perform at the Games this summer but haven't lost heart due to the postponement of the main start. "So far, we have won 12 places. The first qualifying competitions in the new season will be held in late April, as part of Belarus' Cup. The coaching staff will be able to select the crews to perform at the World Cup. These will be European qualifying events and we'll compete for winning places in the programmes where we lack representation so far. After that, the national team will compete at the European Championships in Duisburg in June. Then the national championship will take place, followed by the Tokyo Games," he commented.

Another sport in which Belarusians always play leading roles is athletics. Head coach Yuri Moiseevich explained, "The situation is not easy at the moment, but I explain to the athletes that it is difficult for everyone. Everyone is suffering because of the pandemic, and we



BELTA



First Vice-President of National Olympic Committee, Viktor Lukashenko, hands the NOC certificate of honour to discus thrower Ellina Zvereva

### ACCENT

**The famous Belarusian athletes — Olympic champions of different years — were awarded by the National Olympic Committee. Cyclist Vladimir Kaminsky and handball player Andrei Barbashinsky received 'For Merits in Development of the Olympic Movement in the Republic of Belarus' medals, while discus thrower Ellina Zvereva was awarded the NOC certificate of honour. The First Vice-President of the National Olympic Committee, Viktor Lukashenko, presented the awards before the meeting on preparations for the Olympic Games. Vladimir Kaminsky triumphed at the 1976 Montreal Olympics, Andrei Barbashinsky won an Olympic gold in Barcelona in 1992, and Ellina Zvereva became a champion at the 2000 Sydney Olympics.**

mustn't lose heart. Actually, we are managing to cope and are now gradually starting our basic training. As shown by the competitions held last season, our sportsmen are quite well prepared. Five national records were set, and about 50 athletes posted their best personal results. I think the starting line-up of the national team is on a good run.



Belarusian biathletes completing their preparations for the new season in Obertilliach, Austria

We actively use the training grounds in Staiki, Raubichi and Tomashovka which have good conditions."

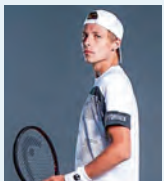
Winter sports are also seriously preparing for the key event in four years. The biathlon state coach, Yuri Albers, said that the athletes began thinking about the Olympics in Beijing immediately after the Games in Pyeongchang. "Even in the face of a pandemic, we try to stick to the plan. After the Olympics in Pyeongchang, many athletes left the team. The end of Daria Domracheva's career was a big loss for us. However, that's life, and we've made every effort to form a new competitive team. Its line-up is young but the girls show decent results at many events. These should be consolidated. In the meantime, the team is completing preparations for the season in Austria: the biathletes will stay there until the first stages of the World Cup. It's hard to say what will happen next. The pandemic has left its mark on everything. However, we are preparing, and the International Biathlon Union is doing everything to make the World Cup stages take place. We hope for the best," he noted.

### ARENA

● **Belarusian tennis player Ilya Ivashko wins tournament in Italian Ortisei**

In the decisive bout of the competition with a prize fund of 44,800 Euros, the Belarusian defeated French tennis player Antoine Hoang (126) — 6:4, 3:6, 7:6 (7:3). The meeting lasted 2 hours and 20 minutes. On the way to the final match of this tournament, Ilya Ivashko defeated Italian Matteo Viola (222) — 6:1, 6:1, German tennis player Johannes Haerteis (311) — 7:6 (8:6), 6:3, Czech Tomas Machac (197) — 7:6 (7:4), 7:6 (7:5) and Russian Aslan Karatsev (111) — 6:4, 6:4.

This is Ivashko's second victory in the past few weeks: in October, he took the title at a similar competition in Istanbul.



In the updated version of the Association of Professional Tennis Players' rating, Ilya Ivashko has risen from 113th place to 107th.

● **UEFA approves 2022 UEFA European Futsal Championship qualifying calendar**

The national team of Belarus will play its opening match in the 5th qualification group on December 8th, visiting Israel. Earlier it was planned that this meeting would take place in Minsk. The rest of the qualifying matches of the Belarusians are scheduled to be held in 2021.

All the favourites of Belarus Football Championship claimed victories in the current matches of the penultimate round.



The fate of all prizes will be decided only after the matches of the 30th round, which will be held on November 28th.

● **All favourites of Belarus Football Championship claimed victories**

The leaders of the championship — the BATE footballers — defeated one of the outsiders of the tournament at the Borisov-Arena with a score of 5:0. After this defeat, the Bobruisk footballers lost their chances to retain their place in the major league.

The main competitor of BATE Borisov in the fight for gold — Shakhtyor Soligorsk — beat local team Rukh, in Brest — 2:1. Two more medal contenders achieved victories in their arenas. In Zhodino, Tor-



pedo-BelAZ players beat Isloch — 2:0 — and, in Grodno, the local Neman defeated the guests from Slutsk with a small margin — 1:0. The current champions of the country — Dinamo Brest — beat Gorodeya away — 4:1. Meanwhile, Dinamo Minsk in Molodechno turned out to be stronger than Energetik-BSU from Minsk — 3:2.

● **Handball players of Brest Berestie made it to the quarter finals of the EHF Cup**

In the second away match of the 1/16 finals, the Brest team defeated Kosovo's Istogu by four goals — 32:28. In the first match of the third most important continental tournament, Vasily Kozar's trainees lost with a three goal difference — 30:33 — and advanced to the next stage on aggregate.



Aleksy Stolyarov

## Photo of the week



Autumn fog over Lida Castle

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On November 26th, 1930**, famous Belarusian writer Vladimir Korotkevich was born (Orsha, Vitebsk Region). He is the author of the novels *Christ Has Landed in Gorodnya*, *Ears Under Your Sickle*, *Grey Legend* and others. In the historical detective

genre, he wrote *The Savage Hunt of King Stakh* and *The Black Castle of Olshany*. He is the author of poetry collections entitled *Evening Sails*, *Mother's Soul*, *I Was. I Am. I Will Be* and others. Feature films, television and radio plays, alongside operas have been staged based on his works. In prose, he raised wide layers of national history, created distinctive characters, revealed the rich spiritual light of the characters and linked their personal fate with the fate of the Motherland. He defended the Belarusian language, culture, monuments of architecture and nature. He was a laureate of the Ivan Melezh Literary Prize (1983) and the State Prize of Belarus (1984). He died in 1984.

**On November 26th, 2000**, a museum was opened in Orsha in connection with the 70th anniversary of



the birth of the Belarusian writer, Vladimir Korotkevich. It is housed in the building which is an architectural monument from the late 19th and early 20th centuries.



**November 26th** is World Information Day. It is held on the initiative of the participants of the World Informatology

Forum WIF-2000 and the International Informatisation Academy (IAA). Information has always played a very important role in the life of mankind. Since the middle of the 20th century, as a result of social progress and the rapid development of science and technology, the role of information has increased immeasurably.

**November 26th** — International Shoemaker Day — is a professional holiday of craftsmen and masters engaged in the design, manufacture and sewing of shoes, as well as workers employed in this production and shoe repair specialists. Shoe making and repairing is a very ancient craft.



**On November 27th, 1895**, Swedish engineer and entrepreneur Alfred Nobel signed a testament establishing international prizes, annually awarded from a percentage of his capital (Nobel Prizes).

**On November 28th, 1915**, Konstantin Simonov was born (1915-1979) — a Russian writer, a Hero of Socialist Labour (1974). During the Great Patriotic War, he was a war correspondent for the *Krasnaya Zvezda* (Red Star) newspaper and took part in the defence of Mogilev. He is the author of the trilogy *The Living and the Dead*, *Soldiers Are Not Born*, *The Last Summer* and the story *Days and Nights*, the novel *Comrades in Arms*, etc. Belarus is widely reflected in the lyrics, novels, and essays. The first two reports from the front were made near Borisov and Orsha, the third, near Mogilev. The defenders of Mogilev and other settlements of Belarus are prototypes of many images of K. Simonov's works. On the stages of Belarusian theatres, his plays *A Guy from Our City*, *Russian People*, *The Fourth* and others were staged. He was the



winner of the State Prize of the USSR (1942, 1943, 1946, 1949, 1950). At the request of Simonov, his ashes were scattered at the site of the fierce battles of 1941 near Mogilev. A memorial sign to K. Simonov is installed on the Buinichi Field.



**November 30th** is World Pet Day. It is dedicated to all animals domesticated by people and serves as a reminder to all mankind of the

responsibility for 'our smaller brothers'. It is not surprising that the motto of this day was the words of the Little Prince from the work of Antoine de Saint-Exupéry: 'You become responsible, forever, for what you have tamed' which are addressed to all of us.

**December 1st** is World AIDS Day, celebrated in accordance with the decision of the World Health Organisation and the decision of the UN General Assembly adopted in 1988. This international day serves to strengthen organised efforts to combat the HIV and AIDS pandemic spreading across all regions of the world.

