



High-speed  
'Lastochka' trains  
will connect Moscow  
and Minsk for the first  
time on April 30th

7



To go on a family  
trip around  
Belarus, you  
simply need to go...  
to a museum

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INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

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An avenue of family trees planted in Mogilev, near the Dnieper River, during the subbotnik

## Belarusians out for subbotnik

The subbotnik [a voluntary labour day] is a vivid example of the unity of countrymen and like-minded people, all those who sincerely love their native Belarus. This year, about 2.3 million people took part in the Republican subbotnik and about Br9,100,000 (over \$3.5m) was earned. 50 percent of the money accumulated on that day is to be directed to the Healthcare Ministry to strengthen the material and technical base of medical institutions — including the purchase of equipment for providing planned and emergency medical care to the population and partial financing of the purchase of the COVID-19 vaccine to ensure the availability of nationwide vaccination.

The remaining 50 percent of the money will remain at the disposal of the regional executive committees and the Minsk City Executive Committee. They will be allocated to repair, reconstruction, restoration of sites of historical and cultural value, memorial complexes and places of military glory from times of the Great Patriotic War.





**The news about an impending coup in Belarus, an attempted assassination of the President and his family has become a shocking sensation. After the August events of last year, the Head of State has repeatedly warned the public that there will be no quiet life and the country would continue to be rocked by attempts to overthrow it.**

By Yevgeny Kononovich

In his talk to journalists during the Republican subbotnik, Aleksandr Lukashenko shared the horrifying details about the plans of a group of individuals to arrange a mutiny in Belarus and about the joint work of Belarus' State Security Committee (KGB) and Russia's Federal Security Service (FSB) to neutralise this threat.

Journalists asked the President about the possible participation of foreign states in the events in Belarus, in particular, the details of the recent detentions in Moscow.

"This directly concerns me and my children. If you noticed, I have repeatedly said that they will continue destabilising the situation in Belarus; they will not leave us alone. We still do not know a great deal. Today we'll know more, but probably not everything. I expected such developments," the Head of State said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that an attempt to organise a mutiny first and then a 'creeping coup' failed. The opponents to the authorities state that everything in Belarus hinges on Lukashenko and that he needs to be removed. The President has a reply to this,

*"My task is to make sure they will still fail even if they manage to remove me from the post. That's my main task. I have made a decision; we are formalising it now and will announce it soon. This will be one of the most important decisions in the quarter of a century of my presidency. It's going to be very serious. So even if I'm not President — or as people say, over my dead body — I need to make sure they will still fail. I have made a decision. Now I need to formalise it. Most likely it will be the President's decree."*

"The second thing is unacceptable. I was silent because it was about me, my family, my children. I didn't

# Mutiny failed



want to talk about it. But they decided to take on the children. The plan was to capture one son, then another, as luck would have it, and hold them in a cellar. In fact, they had prepared a cellar in the Gomel Region. We've already detained a group, they showed what and how they were planning," continued the President. "Then we discovered the involvement of the apparently foreign intelligence services, most likely, the Central Intelligence Agency, the FBI. I do not know which of the American services worked here... We learned about their plans to come to Minsk and to organise an assassination against the President and his children."

Aleksandr Lukashenko said that Russia and others were briefed on the developments — for them to know of the situation.

As for the disclosure of the plot against the President and his family, Aleksandr Lukashenko instructed that the relevant information be shared with the media.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, a request was sent to the leadership of Russia and the FSB directly to assist in detaining these individuals in Moscow. "I asked the President of Russia, and [KGB Chair-

man Ivan] Tertel asked his counterpart, FSB Head Aleksandr Bortnikov. We had them arrested there. We sent our team of 11 to 12 people," said the President.

Aleksandr Lukashenko warned all ill-wishers, *"God forbid they hurt my children who have nothing to do with it at all! Not only mine, but yours as well! You see, I was patient, I kept waiting, I drew red lines for myself, redrew them. Now we are going to go hard on them. They will regret every single thing they planned."*

Aleksandr Lukashenko is also surprised by the behaviour of the Americans, "After all, no one, except the top political leadership, can authorise the elimination of the President. Only them, not special services. I will say more. I am grateful to Putin. When he spoke with [US President Joseph] Biden, he asked him this question. Putin heard nothing but some mumbling in response! Vladimir Vladimirovich called me and told me about it when I came back from Azerbaijan."

In conclusion, the Head of State apologised for his emotional reaction, explaining, "This has gone too far. This will not be tolerated any longer."

## 'Silence' as a codename

As the KGB Chairman, Ivan Tertel, told the ONT TV channel, the Committee had recently completed a special multi-stage operation to thwart attempts to stage an armed rebellion in Belarus and to eliminate government officials, including the Head of State. These events were to take place in June-July 2021.

"Members of this group had thoroughly planned and started implementing their plot to assassinate the Belarusian President, his family members, and to arrange a mutiny in order to seize power by force," Ivan Tertel said.

The group included Be-



Ivan Tertel

larusian and foreign citizens. According to the report, the codename for the mutiny was 'Silence'. The special report showed footage of meetings of the plotters who discussed the details of the conspiracy. They compared their plot to the assassination of the former Egyptian President, Anwar Sadat, by terrorists.

Aleksandr Kulevsky

Aleksandr Feduta was one of the participants in the meetings. "Some people know him as a literary scholar, political scientist and doctor of humanities. He was the one who masterminded the plot," the TV channel said.

Yuri Zenkovich was named as the main organiser of the coup. According to the TV channel, he had long lived in the United States. He claimed that the US Department of State would stand up for him if he failed.

Among the participants of the meeting were leader of the BPF opposition party Grigory Kostusev, emigre opposition activist Igor Makar and others.

The plot was financed from abroad. Money was used to bribe people. Lockers at a train station and even a cemetery were used as hiding places and foreign currency was also passed from hand to hand.

"Our main task is to eliminate the country's leader. The number two task is to close in on the internal troops, to block the riot police. The number three task is to seize several symbolic facilities in the city centre, including a radio station and television and communicate our address. It would be good if we shut down Minsk to make sure the external troops couldn't help," Yuri Zenkovich said at a personal

meeting with other suspects. The recording was shown in the special report.

The final stage of the special operation took place in Russia after the KGB received the information that Yuri Zenkovich intended to fly from the United States to Moscow via Poland to meet with his accomplices. The detention took place with the assistance of the FSB.

"The KGB opened criminal cases against those detained on the appropriate charges," the KGB Chairman said.

The TV channel added that the group maintained close ties with terrorist groups and had prepared at least three scenarios of seizing power by force.

# Presidents plan to meet in Moscow

Pre-scheduling of key Belarusian-Russian events and the integration of tax and customs systems were on the agenda of talks between Aleksandr Lukashenko and Russia's Prime Minister

By Dmitry Kryat

At the meeting of Belarus' Head of State with Mikhail Mishustin — the Chairman of the Government of the Russian Federation, many issues of bilateral and integration co-operation were discussed. In the presence of journalists, the President of Belarus spoke about his busy plans for this year, including joint events with his Russian counterpart, Vladimir Putin. The Belarusian leader has recently discussed his plans with the Head of the Russian Federation during a telephone conversation.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, "Putin

and I agreed on the schedule of work on many issues. In late April, most likely on April 22nd, we will meet in Moscow. It will be an official meeting to discuss certain issues. The Forum of Regions, in the Moscow Region, will then be held — followed later by a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State of Belarus and Russia. In September-October, a meeting of the Supreme State Council is planned. We should make good progress by this meeting of the Supreme State Council within the frameworks of the Union State."

Mikhail Mishustin spoke about the intensive co-operation between the govern-

ments of Belarus and Russia. The Prime Minister thanked the host country for the hospitable welcome and also conveyed warmest wishes from Vladimir Putin. "We discussed the details of our interaction the day before. I also want to tell you that we keep contact almost on a daily basis with Roman Golovchenko [Prime Minister of Belarus] and members of the Government of Belarus. All our ministers, deputy prime ministers and representatives of departments are constantly working to improve mutual relations, as well as on topical issues," said Mikhail Mishustin.

The Russian PM also drew attention

to a gradual restoration of the Belarusian-Russian trade turnover after a noticeable drop due to the coronavirus pandemic. In addition, air traffic is being restored and, on April 30th, the first high-speed 'Lastochka' [swallow] train will arrive in Minsk from Moscow.

The Prime Minister concluded, "It seems to me that our co-operation in the field of industry, energy, transport, infrastructure and construction is very active. 2021 is the Year of Russia in Belarus. The next year, respectively, will be the Year of Belarus in Russia. Our cultural ties and the exchange of cultural figures will be intensified."



# Minsk — Baku: dialogue between true friends

Real time visits are rare in the current global situation. COVID has left its mark: even at the highest level, communication between heads of state has shifted to the narrow framework of online conferences. With this in mind, live communication between the leaders of friendly countries is gaining increasing value. Against this background, the visit of the President of Belarus to Azerbaijan is important — both in content and symbolically. Minsk and Baku are bound by strong ties of true friendship and a mutually interested strategic partnership. The President of Belarus is the first foreign leader welcomed by Azerbaijan this year. At the start of the talks, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed, “True friends don’t postpone events that need to be held on time. No pandemic can prevent this.”

## Brilliant relationship

Last year, the trade turnover between Belarus and Azerbaijan approached \$500m and, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, this is a good result in terms of dynamics. As for the level of a political dialogue, Belarus’ Head of State said, “It’s hard to say what we’re missing. We have brilliant relations. I’m always proud of this. We have restored the warmest relations since Soviet times in all areas.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also offered Belarus’ support in restoring the territories affected by the recent conflict, “We talked about it a lot. I’m very glad that — being a true friend of Belarusian people — you realise that so much work lies ahead: hard and peaceful work. You should know that your reliable friends are in Belarus. You are aware of our possibilities. We will discuss this again with the ministers and experts. If we agree (as we have always done), we’ll always implement our agreements.”

The words of Azerbaijan’s President were also voiced in unison at the beginning of the meeting,

*“Our relationship is completely free of any problems. Our regular contacts enable us to sum up what has been done, plan the following steps and move forward as friends and partners.”*

## A new stage of co-operation

Belarus and Azerbaijan are linked by co-operation in a variety of areas and liaisons in the energy sector are particularly valuable. Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed special gratitude to his Azerbaijani counterpart for supporting Belarus in the supply of hydrocarbons. There are obvious prospects here. “We need to consider the enhancement of co-operation in this field. Of course, this is a very delicate and sensitive issue, for Belarus is in the midst of economic and political events. However, there are no unmanageable issues,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

According to the President, Belarus sincerely welcomes the agreements on the complete cessation of hostilities in the Nagorno-Karabakh conflict zone. “This is an important political decision that should be the basis for lasting peace in the region. I would like to congratulate the people of Azerbaijan and the people of Armenia on the end of this terrible tragedy that has lasted for 30 years,” he said.

The Head of State noted that his position is known both in Azerbaijan and in Armenia, “God willing the problem is resolved and the hearts of the Armenian



## BELARUS — AZERBAIJAN trade-economic co-operation



Diplomatic relations between Belarus and Azerbaijan were established on June 11th, 1993.

Since 1994, the Agreement on the Establishment of a Free Trade Area has been operational between the states.



### BELARUS EXPORTS TO AZERBAIJAN:

- rail and tram cars;
- machinery and mechanisms to harvest and thresh agricultural crops;
- wood processing products;
- dairy products;
- medicines;
- meat and its by-products;
- oil products;
- tractors and trucks.

### AZERBAIJAN EXPORTS TO BELARUS:

- petrochemicals;
- strong drinks and wine;
- nuts;
- electric transformers;
- juices;
- fruits;
- fabrics.

Source: Belarus’ Foreign Ministry, National Statistical Committee

© Infographics BELTA

Following the talks between the presidents of Belarus and Azerbaijan, several documents on the development of co-operation in various fields were signed. The Ministry of Agriculture and Food of Belarus has signed a memorandum of understanding with the Food Safety Agency of Azerbaijan on co-operation in the field of veterinary medicine. A memorandum of understanding on co-operation in the energy sector was signed by the heads of the energy ministries.

Another memorandum was signed between the Belarusian National Tourism Agency and the State Tourism Agency of Azerbaijan. In addition, a memorandum of understanding was signed remotely between the Belneftekhim Concern and the State Oil Company of Azerbaijan Republic (SOCAR).

and Azerbaijani peoples will heal. I’m convinced that there will be no settling of scores, no revenge on the part of my friend and brother.”

Ilham Aliyev, in turn, said that Azerbaijan is aimed at strengthening confidence-building measures in relations with Armenia,

*“We expect that Belarus, as our friend and reliable partner, will take an active part not only in the restoration of the territories. Belarus, as a partner of Armenia, a country that is also a member of the EAEU and the CSTO, a country that is a close friend of Azerbaijan, can also play an important role in establishing contacts between Armenia and Azerbaijan.”*

During the negotiations, much attention was paid to trade and economic co-operation. As a new stage of liaisons, the transfer of technologies and opening of new joint ventures in Azerbaijan to create the necessary production facilities and new jobs were discussed. “We are ready to put our shoulder to it and do it responsibly,” the President said.

The Belarusian side sees great potential for co-operation in industry, agriculture, woodworking, IT, healthcare, tourism and education. There are good prospects for deepening collaboration in the sci-tech and military-industrial spheres.

The sides also analysed how the pandemic situation in the world is developing. Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that mass vaccination of the population is beginning in Belarus and the drugs created in the country using Russian technologies will be used for this purpose. However, Belarus will not be able to consume the entire volume of the produced vaccines, so these are ready to be exported — including to Azerbaijan. “This was perceived not only positively, but also with a certain amount of hope,” the Head of State noted.

Aleksandr Lukashenko invited Ilham Aliyev to Belarus, adding that some points of the programme of his visit had already been planned. “We have always been and will remain reliable friends to your country,” the Belarusian leader stressed. “Belarusians are reliable people. Everything we’ve agreed on will be implemented. I told the ministers that everyone should leave here with a certain amount of work... Especially since the President has opened the door wide for Belarusians, for their work in this country — a country full of riches.”

Based on materials of belta.by

## Telephone conversation



### Belarus’ President Aleksandr Lukashenko had a telephone conversation with the President of Russia — Vladimir Putin

The heads of state focused on the development of Belarus-Russia relations. The presidents also shared opinions on issues on the international agenda and discussed the schedule for forthcoming meetings.

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin also discussed topical issues of bilateral co-operation in the run-up to the visit of the Russian government delegation led by the Prime Minister to Minsk.



### Belarus’ President Aleksandr Lukashenko had a telephone conversation with the first President of Kazakhstan — Nursultan Nazarbayev

The parties discussed the state of bilateral relations and the main areas of co-operation. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Nursultan Nazarbayev also touched on the international situation. The first President of Kazakhstan asked detailed questions about the situation around Belarus.

Among the main topics were the COVID-19 pandemic, methods to combat it, mass vaccination and production of the COVID-19 vaccine.

Nursultan Nazarbayev invited Aleksandr Lukashenko to Kazakhstan and was, in return, invited to visit Belarus.

Based on Presidential press service



# Uniting love for the Motherland

At the subbotnik in Alexandria, the President planted an avenue of trees, spoke about his favourite activity and commented on the third wave of coronavirus

By Dmitry Umpirovich,  
Yevgeny Kononovich

On the day of the nationwide subbotnik, the President worked in his small homeland. Alexandria has become even more beautiful. Belarusians and guests of our country will be able to see this for themselves on Kupala Night — during the traditional *Alexandria Gathers Friends* colourful festival.

The Belarusian leader came to his native place for a reason on that day. Aleksandr Lukashenko explained his choice to the Year of People's Unity, explaining,

*“Unity in the mid-1990s began here. The first President was born on this land. Then we managed to unite somehow. The country and people united around the man who was born on this land...”*

## Welcome home

To work side by side with the Head of State in his small homeland in the Shklov District is like seeing him in a domestic family environment. Next to him were his sons and a snow-white Pomeranian dog was running around on the lawn, trying to jump into his master's arms every now and then. Instead of business suits there were work clothes and shovels in the hands instead of diaries. Most importantly, there were no reports or statements. The atmosphere was warm and inviting — with jokes and talks about the daily routine...

Works were in full swing at a site on the picturesque river bank where the *Alexandria Gathers Friends* festival is held in summer. The task was to green and beautify it. On Saturday morning, the team of the Head of State had to plant about a hundred trees and shrubs. Having worked hard, Aleksandr Lukashenko said: it's his favourite activity to beautify the land. Those who were visiting the site for the first time enjoyed a day out, while, the President was very much at home there...

The Head of State paid attention to the restored church which he visited as

a child, recalled the construction of the bridge, and that it was from Kopyts in the modernisation of urban-type settlements in the country was launched, proceeding from the available funds.

The work was done in less than two hours. It's not the first time that the Head of State's team were greening the area. The newcomers, who were also shown how to plant trees and shrubs personally by the President, worked well.

## Vaccines enough for all

The topic of the coronavirus pandemic is once again on the radar. Belarus has announced the beginning of the third wave. How great is the danger and are we ready for a new stage in the fight against the pandemic? Journalists asked Aleksandr Lukashenko to speak on this topic and he assured those present: the situation is under control and the current wave is even lower than the

expected level, “We expected a rise of one and a half times higher. However, we are now registering 38-39 percent of the autumn-winter peak. That is, there is not as much increase as we expected. Most likely, we received this from Europe, because Russia has begun registering slightly higher figures. There's no such big wave there either. I'm not really worried.

*“We produce enough vaccines to keep people safe at least for a while, for six or eight months. We don't know how long the vaccine-induced protection will last. It is certain that it works and protects people for a period.”*

Aleksandr Lukashenko added: people die not from the virus itself; it simply activates the diseases that a person has — including those we don't even know about. Since this and other viruses won't go away, the President once again emphasised the importance of strengthening the immune system and follow a healthy lifestyle: to take an adequate level of physical activity, give up bad habits, eat healthily, giving preference to domestic food.

The President himself does not plan to be vaccinated yet. As he stated, there are many antibodies in his body after his previous illness.



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Pavel Bogush



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The subbotnik embraced all regions of the country. Belarusians worked in their workplaces, beautified settlements, memorial complexes, places of military glory. Where did the officials work?

During the Republican subbotnik, with the participation of employees of the President Administration, forest crops were planted on the territory of 1.7 hectares of the Logoisk Forestry.

The labour tradition was supported by employees of the secre-

tariat and members of the Presidium of the Council of the Republic, the administration and residents of the Moskovsky residential district. Led by the Chair of the Upper House of Parliament, Natalya Kochanova, they planted an avenue dedicated to the Year of People's Unity on Frantishkevich Bogushevich Square.

Deputies of the House of Representatives — headed by Chairman Vladimir Andreichenko — laid a memorial avenue: they planted 20 globe maples in Minsk's Loshitsa Park.

The Government joined the campaign: the deputy prime ministers, together with the staff of the Council of Ministers, planted a forest in the Uzda District. Pine and birch trees covered 4.7 hectares.

Employees of the State Secretariat of the Security Council and Suvorov Military School cadets planted poplars in the Trostenets Memorial Complex. Meanwhile, before the start of the labour day, the State Secretary of the Security Council — Aleksandr Volfovich — paid tribute to the victims of fascism and laid flowers at the Gates of Memory monument.

In Brest, the construction of a multidisciplinary medical centre became the key object of the subbotnik. The city residents also worked at the Brest Hero-Fortress Memorial Complex and the Mukhavets water zone.

In Vitebsk, attention was focused on the improvement of Gagarin Street, which is undergoing a large-scale reconstruction. A park of maples, lilacs and chestnuts was planted there.

In the Gomel Region, almost 400,000 residents took part in the

campaign — improving the streets of cities, towns and villages, planting trees and shrubs, beautifying parks, squares and industrial areas.

In the Grodno Region, the focus was on historical and cultural values, memorial complexes and places of military glory from the Great Patriotic War.

An avenue of family trees was planted in Mogilev's Pushkinsky Avenue; 12 families took part. Also, workers of the Mogilev Region's trade unions planted more than 3,000 saplings.



Alekssey Stolyarov





By Ilya Kryzhevich

As reported by PA Belorusneft, in January 2021, Malanka's network in Minsk exceeded 300 stations and, as planned, sixty more will join by the end of the year. Among them are electric complexes for six charging places.

There are no similar charging complexes, where six electric vehicles can be charged simultaneously at fast stations, anywhere in the CIS. For example, in Ukraine, the largest complex of four chargers was recently presented. Belorusneft's Deputy Director, Andrei Kotik, explains, "We install these complexes near shopping and administrative centres, as well as near the Minsk ring road. The choice of locations is no accident. Such systems will make it possible to simultaneously charge several electric vehicles in places where it is necessary. Arriving at a shopping centre or leaving the city, drivers don't need to wait in the parking lot until the only charging column is free. Rather they can quickly and without waiting in line recharge their cars in just half an hour."

This year, the first 6-in-1 charging

systems will also appear in all regional cities. Malanka also plans to cut the distance between neighbouring EV stations along highways to 80km (at present, it reaches up to 100-150km). Until this year, drivers travelling through Belarus have experienced difficulties on some highway sections as an available charging station could be occupied by another electric car. In 2021, Malanka has developed a plan according to which additional points will be installed on the country's leading highways. In Logoisk, Borisov, Luninets districts, near the settlement of Krasnoe (Gomel Region), charging stations with a capacity of 150-180kW — capable of fully charging the battery of electric vehicles in half an hour — will be launched.

"Electric car manufacturers around the world are now trying to reduce charging time. Tesla is abandoning fast electric stations and installing super-fast charging with a capacity of 250kW; it takes 20 minutes to recharge for another 450km. Malanka also strives to meet drivers' needs and, in 2022, we plan to launch a pilot complex with super-fast charging. The power of one station will be up to 350kW, making it possible to recharge an electric car for 340km in ten minutes. While many people are cautious

# A magnificent six and a charge

## Belorusneft launches the installation of charging systems for electric vehicles unique to the CIS

The EV charging network, Malanka, will install complexes of charging stations for electric cars throughout Minsk and the regions. They are unique, since they consist of six charging stations, each of which has a power output of 50kW — enabling electric car owners to charge for 30-40km in about ten minutes. In total, 18 such complexes will open countrywide.

of electric transport only because of the time spent on charging, it isn't always easy to find a charging station within walking distance. New charging complexes will become a kind of fuelling station for electric vehicles, since the charging time there will be comparable to the time spent filling the car with petrol. In the course of electric trans-

port development, this time will continue to decrease," adds Mr. Kotik.

In March 2021, more than 2,500 electric vehicles were registered in the country and the popularity of eco-friendly transport continues to grow. According to Malanka specialists' predictions, the number of such vehicles will triple during 2021 — to exceed 7,500.

In 2022, Belorusneft plans to launch a pilot complex with super-fast charging. The power of each station will be up to 350kW — making it possible to charge an electric car for 340km in ten minutes.



## NEWS IN BRIEF

### Vladimir Makei took part in the 69th session of the UN Economic Commission for Europe



The working visit of Belarus' Foreign Minister, Vladimir Makei, to the Swiss Confederation took place on April 19th-20th.

The programme of the visit included meetings of the Head of the Belarusian Foreign Ministry with the Director General of the World Health Organisation, Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus, the Director General of the World Intellectual Property Organisation, Darren Tang, the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights, Michelle Bachelet, and the President of the International Committee of the Red Cross, Peter Maurer. The meetings focused on topical issues on the international agenda in the areas of activity of our counterparts, the Belarusian approach to the problems within the area of responsibility of each of these organisations, as well as other topics of mutual interest.

### Healthcare Ministry approves the 'Sputnik V' vaccine produced at Belmedpreparaty

The decision was made based on the results of a comprehensive expert assessment of the registration dossier materials carried out by specialists from the Centre for Ex-



pertise and Testing in Healthcare at the Republican Research and Practical Centre for Microbiology and Epidemiology.

The semi-finished product of the vaccine is produced by the Generium JSC — which is part of the structure of Pharmstandard JSC. An early 'Sputnik V' vaccine produced at this Russian site has already been registered in Belarus and has been used for several months to vaccinate medical workers.

It is planned that the volume of the vaccine produced at the Belarusian enterprise will be up to 500,000 doses per month. This will significantly increase the availability of vaccination for Belarusian citizens.

### Clean Water Reservoir campaign taking place in Belarus

The promotion has been held annually since 2014. During this time, more than 30,000 people took part in it. The event is organised by the Belarusian Society of Hunters and Fishermen. By the efforts of its employees with representatives of other organisations and caring citizens, about 6,000 cubic metres of garbage were collected and taken out to solid municipal waste landfills.



The action is aimed at environmental education of the population, drawing attention to the problem of water pollution, as well as tidying up the coastal zone on the eve of the opening of the season for mass outdoor activities.

Anyone can participate. To do this, you need to contact the district offices of the Belarusian Society of Hunters and Fishermen at the place of your residence, where they will give out everything you need.

### BelAZ opens a research and education centre at St. Petersburg Mining University

BelAZ and St. Petersburg Mining University recently signed a co-operation agreement. Already in September, modern specialised auditoriums equipped with exclusive equipment will start working in one of the largest Russian mining universities.

In the centre, by the joint efforts of BelAZ and Tsifra Group of Companies, digital mining laboratories will be created with truly exclusive equipment: numerous stands, a dynamic auto-simulator and a workstation for an operator of remotely piloted and robotic quarry equipment.



Students and specialists of mining enterprises who will study here will have the opportunity directly from the centre's audience to control in real time the loading and unloading of robotic systems at mining enterprises and the BelAZ test site.





# Fruitful co-operation

## Exchange trade between Belarus and China reached \$7.5m in Q1 2021

Last week, the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, Xie Xiaoyong, visited the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE). According to the Chairman of the BUCE Board, Aleksandr Osmolovsky, the visit demonstrates that the Chinese Government and the Ambassador view commodity

exchange trade as important. “In the past two years, we have actively expanded exchange trading between Belarus and China. Sales of almost all Belarusian goods bound for China have increased. BUCE has developed several instruments to help Chinese companies access the Belarusian market in an easy, quick and effective way. Thanks to BUCE’s mech-



**Xie Xiaoyong – the Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of China to Belarus, and Aleksandr Osmolovsky – the Chairman of the Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange (BUCE) Board, visit the exchange**

that impressive yet, but we can already see that trade is growing. For example, in 2020, Belarus-China exchange trade totalled \$13.5m and, in Q1 2021, it reached \$7.5m. I believe that the exchange trade in 2021 will exceed last year’s results,” Mr. Osmolovsky stressed.

According to him, there are around 5,000 foreign companies from 63 countries registered at BUCE. “Unfortunately, we have started working with the Chinese market only recently. The EU countries traditionally top the list, accounting for 82 percent of export deliveries via BUCE. The visit of the Chinese Ambassador is a significant event as it shows that BUCE plays a special role in Belarus-China trade and that China is interested in exchange trading because BUCE enables Chinese economic entities to find partners in Belarus and make transactions quickly and effectively,” Mr. Osmolovsky noted.



**Belarusian Universal Commodity Exchange**

anisms, companies are able to find partners in the Belarusian market easier and sell and buy products faster,” he noted.

Belarusian companies not only sell their products to China, but also buy Chinese goods via BUCE. The most popular exports to China are sawn timber, rapeseed oil, and milk powder. There are plans to launch sales of Belarusian sugar to China on BUCE. In turn, Bel-

rusian companies import metal products from China.

“The presence of Chinese companies on BUCE is increasing, both in terms of the number of participants and sales. For example, there were no Chinese companies on BUCE in 2019 but, in Q1 2021, there were already 40 Chinese companies and two Chinese brokers. As for Belarus-China exchange trade, the results are not

## New transport corridor

### Over 220,000 tonnes of Belarusian oil products shipped via Russian seaports

The agreement on the supply of Belarusian oil products through the Russian seaports has resulted in the establishment of a new international transport corridor, through which more than 220,000 tonnes of cargo have already been shipped.

In early 2021, the Russian Government worked out and signed an intergovernmental agreement on the shipment of Belarusian oil products through the Russian seaports. The document is designed for three years and provides for automatic prolongation. It envisages the transportation of almost 10m tonnes of Belarusian oil products during the period.

Belarus began shipping oil products to the Russian seaports on March 5th.

“Active work in this area began a month ago. More than 220,000 tonnes have already been shipped through our seaports, which is almost a quarter more than was planned,” said Russian Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin. According to him, ‘not only a chain of exports has been formed within the Union State, but, in fact, a new international transport corridor has been established’.

According to the forecasts, April is also expected to see the targets exceeded by at least 100,000 tonnes.

# Modernisation continues

## The newest test bench to be installed at Minsk Motor Plant

Minsk Motor Plant (MMZ) continues to modernise production and introduce new technologies. In particular, the company is planning to install a state-of-the-art test bench.

“A modern high-tech test bench with an automated control system for testing engines with a capacity of up to 240kW will be installed at the Minsk Motor Plant. Development work and testing of engines of high environmental levels, including Euro-6 and Stage 5, will be carried out on the new equipment,” said the press service of MMZ.

The contract for the supply of equipment was concluded with an Austrian company that won the tender.

The new test bench will allow testing to determine the technical, economic and environmental indicators of engines. The test box will be equipped with systems for loading and



ensuring engine operation and measuring equipment to measure emissions of harmful substances in the exhaust gases.

Moreover, a large amount of auxiliary equipment will be installed in the box, enabling the

operators to set the required test conditions. An ideally thought-out engine testing system will enable control of the quality of production and test engines for compliance with the highest environmental standards, to the European level.

Installation of mechanical and electrical parts, as well as pre-commissioning activities will be carried out with the direct participation of Austrian specialists. They will also train our engineers and testers to work on this modern equipment.

In addition, another Austrian company has become interested in the new development of the Minsk Motor Plant: the MMZ-4DTI engine. “The Minsk development of small cylinder capacity aroused interest among foreign buyers. The Austrian

company — a manufacturer of municipal equipment — through a Russian partner offered to install the MMZ-4DTI engine on their vacuum sweeper instead of the Italian one,” noted the enterprise’s press service.

The machine was delivered to MMZ and installed in an experimental workshop, where work is underway to adapt the engine. Its features are a variety of electronic systems and the presence of a hydraulic system, which imposes additional requirements on the engine. Specialists from design bureaus for advanced design, automotive engines and electronic systems are currently looking for original solutions to a new problem.

**Based on materials of belta.by**





# Swallows will fly to Moscow

**Good news for those keen on travelling and those who cross the border on business: from April 30th, the Russian and Belarusian railways will launch a new joint project — a high-speed passenger service between Minsk and Moscow, enabling travellers to reach the Russian capital in less than seven hours**

By Sergei Gordeev

The Russian Railways Holding — as part of the development of passenger traffic between our two countries — has appointed four new high-speed international trains No. 717/722 and No. 721/718 Moscow — Minsk — Moscow. They will run daily and depart from initial points and arrive at final destinations on a mirrored schedule twice a day.

Trains 722 and 717 from Minsk and Moscow will depart at 6:20 and arrive in Moscow and Minsk at 13:10. On their way, they will make stops in Orsha and Smolensk. Meanwhile, trains 718 and 721 from Minsk and Moscow will depart at 16:00 and arrive at their final destinations at 22:55. As well as Orsha

and Smolensk, they will stay in Vyazma.

The newly introduced trains will complete the journey in less than 7 hours, which is 1-3 hours less than in ordinary trains currently running from the Belarusian capital to the Russian. On the first trip, which will take place on April 30th, trains Minsk — Moscow and Moscow — Minsk will depart at 16:00 and arrive at their final points at 22:55.

Another important point is the cost of the trip. Representatives of the railway will announce specific prices for tickets closer to the launch of 'Lastochka' [swallow]. However, it's assumed that first class will cost around Br80 (around \$30), and second — about Br55 (around \$21). For comparison: the cheapest trip from Minsk to Moscow



'Lastochka' high-speed train

in a reserved seat carriage now costs a Belarusian resident about Br90 (a little less than \$35).

"These trains will be serviced by the 'Lastochka' trains in the Premium configuration in a five-carriage version, where passengers can travel in business and economy class," notes the press service of the Russian Railways Holding. "For passengers with disabilities, wheelchair lifts are provided, as well as specialised seats with a wheelchair mount and a conductor call button."

The speed of these trains reaches 160km/h. For this, motor carriages are equipped with 4 electric motors with

a capacity of 320kW each. Each is about three times more powerful than the engine of a modern passenger car. All carriages are equipped with climate control systems, and the train itself can withstand even extreme temperatures.

In addition, travel by these trains is provided only for citizens of Belarus and Russia. Passengers travelling abroad by rail are required to have medical documents confirming a negative test for COVID-19 infection, performed no later than three days before the date of crossing the border. It's also necessary to observe the mask regime when you are at railway stations and on trains.

The country has hosted Forest Week — held for the fourteenth time. Its main goal is to draw public attention to the need for careful treatment of the forest and its replenishment. This year, volunteers planted more than 33m trees on a total area of about 7,150 hectares — much more than in 2020. They were mainly engaged in forest planting, waste collection and preparation of relaxation zones for the summer season. In addition, several dozen commemorative avenues have been planted countrywide.

By Oksana Nevmerzhtskaya

## The science of growing

Pine, spruce and birch traditionally remain the main forest-forming tree species in the country and much attention to their cultivation is paid in the forest nursery of the Berezinsky Forestry.

"We have two main areas of work: the cultivation of planting material for forestry, as well as ornamental trees and shrubs to provide the population and organisations with material for landscaping and beautification," says the nursery's head, Aleksandr Voitovich. "Preference is given to coniferous trees, but it is necessary to create mixed plantings. Therefore, for the restoration of forests, we grow not only pine and spruce, but also birch, ash, oak, black alder, linden, maple, larch. Thuja, juniper, cypress species that have already fully adapted to our climate, spirea, forsythia, jasmine, willow and much more grow in our decorative department."

The Berezinsky Forestry occupies an area of 27 hectares. For reforestation, about 9m seedlings of various trees have been grown here. The nursery fully meets the needs of forestry in planting material, and also supplies products to the domestic market.

"We ensure a full cycle of cultivation and even provide ourselves with seeds," adds Mr. Voitovich with pride. "We par-

# Our green wealth

**Getting to the root: how the country's nurseries grow seedlings to restore our forests**



Vitaly Pivovarchik

## Fir tree kindergarten

In anticipation of moving to a permanent place of residence, a whole plantation of three-year-old fir trees is sparkling with dew: there are over 5m of them. In the coming future, a tractor with a special bracket will come here, stand on the ridge and dig up these young plants — slightly pruning their roots. This will do the trees good as it stimulates the formation of the root system. They are then treated with a special solution which prevents branches from drying out and sent to forestries.

Deciduous trees are still difficult to distinguish: ash trees, oaks and birches look like pencils sticking out on the ridges. In one of the greenhouses, work is in full swing: workers dig up birch seedlings, clean the roots from the soil to treat them with a special absorbent composition that retains moisture in the root zone. On an area of 360 square metres, about 200,000 trees have grown.

A little further on, 500,000 tiny one-year-old pine trees cover the ground with a fluffy carpet in a larger greenhouse. There are no weeds to be seen: pines, although very small, don't tolerate strangers on their territory. By the way, for their planting, not ordinary soil is used, but a special substrate based on peat.

Mr. Voitovich notes that the nursery uses the most modern technologies of seedling care. An automatic irrigation system has been created throughout the territory,

and there is a special machine that connects to any of the hydrant

networks. For the mechanised care of plants in the sowing departments, special units are used that will loosen the soil, remove weeds, make mineral top dressing and fertilisers, and protect against diseases. Efforts are yielding good results: last year,

about 10m trees were raised here, of which 777,000 were planting stock, and more than 8.6m were seedlings.



Forests account for over 40 percent of Belarus' territory — covering 9.6m hectares.

## Natural structure of forests



tially collect them in the forest, but there are also our own, selective seeds. Do you see the pine trees there, near the forest? This is our wood-seed plantation. To create it, the best tree is selected in the forest, shoots are cut from it and rooted on the rootstock. These small trees inherit all the maternal properties and qualities. Then they are planted on certain areas, and from there they harvest improved seeds."

This year, 40 tonnes of pine seeds were collected, in addition to 20 tonnes of spruce. However, this year, there has been a bad acorn harvest: these can't be collected every year. This is a true science: before you start collecting seeds, phenological observations are conducted.

For planting, a special forest seeder

is used; it puts seeds into the soil. It's also possible to grow them in greenhouses. Areas are smaller, of course, but under cover, materials of the best quality are obtained.

From planting a seed to moving a seedling to the forest, different periods are needed. Pines, for example, need 1-2 years, while fir trees spend 3-4 years in the nursery. Veronika Stasevich, an engineer for reforestation and land reclamation, notes that, in our country, large-sized planting material is most common: such seedlings take roots better and it's easier to care for them after planting.







# Protests in Minneapolis

Police clashed with protesters in the Minneapolis suburb where an officer who authorities say apparently intended to fire a Taser, not a handgun, fatally shot a black man

Trouble broke out again during a second night of protests outside police headquarters in the Minneapolis suburb of Brooklyn Centre, a day after one of the city's officers shot and killed 20-year-old black man Daunte Wright during a traffic stop.

Brooklyn Centre Police Chief Tim Gannon said the officer who shot Wright meant to use her Taser but instead grabbed her gun. Kim Potter, a 26-year veteran of the force, has been placed on administrative leave.

The shooting happened in the midst of the Derek Chauvin trial for the killing of George Floyd.

A 7pm curfew in Hennepin Coun-

ty didn't deter hundreds of demonstrators as they chanted outside headquarters. The building was fenced off. Brooklyn Centre officers outside were buttressed by state troopers and Minnesota National Guard members.

After several dispersal orders were ignored, flashbangs and tear gas were deployed. Protesters countered with fireworks launched toward law enforcement. Tear gas fired every few minutes pushed many in the crowd away from the front of the building.

When the protesters wouldn't disperse, police began firing gas canisters and flash-bang grenades, send-

ing clouds wafting over the crowd and chasing some protesters away. A long line of police in riot gear, rhythmically pushing their clubs in front of them, began slowly forcing back the remaining crowds.

Soon after, law enforcement began advancing on the protesters and firing rubber bullets. At about the same time, the Brooklyn Centre City Council voted to ban its officers from using rubber bullets and chemical irritants for crowd control. Authorities said that approximately 40 people were arrested, some officers sustained minor injuries and there were a few instances of looting.

# Dexit is the new Brexit

Germany's far-right Alternative for Germany (AfD) vowed to campaign for an end to coronavirus restrictions, a tougher line on migration and an exit from the EU as it finalised its election manifesto

The populist, nationalist Alternative for Germany wrapped up its two-day party conference in the eastern city of Dresden. The members voted on the party's manifesto ahead of national elections scheduled for September 26th where its chosen campaign slogan is: 'Germany. But normal'. As during the session, organisers and the 570 delegates who attended in person disregarded coronavirus pandemic guidelines.

The AfD has yet to decide who will run for chancellor. The party did decide, however, that it would field two candidates as it did at previous elections in 2017. While German parties usually chose their leaders via a delegates' vote, the AfD decided that the question would be settled with a membership survey.

In a separate vote, the attendees endorsed Germany's leaving the European Union as part of their manifesto. Germany's exit was 'necessary', according to the initiative, but members also called for creating a 'new European community of economies and interests'.

Co-leader Tino Chrupalla, who is seen as a top contender for chancellor candidate, urged delegates to put the infighting of recent months behind them and go into the elections united.

Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

# Drainage into the sea is not as easy as it may seem

The Japanese Government has officially allowed water from the Fukushima-1 emergency nuclear power plant, which, according to the country's leadership, has been cleared of radioactive substances, to drain into the ocean. According to the Kyodo News Agency, for the next two years, the authorities will prepare to discharge the water and double-check its purity. China and South Korea have already announced their concerns about the news.

By Timofei Rokotov

The decision to discharge the water was made due to the fact that, by the summer of 2022, the radioactive water storage facilities at the station will be filled. "The treated water's discharge is an unavoidable issue in the process of decommissioning a nuclear power plant. The Government will ensure the safety of this process and will take all measures to avoid damage from the dissemination of false information," said Japanese

Prime Minister Yoshihide Suga.

The Fukushima-1 tanks currently contain more than 1.25m tonnes of water. The Japanese Cabinet of Ministers admitted that water contains tritium isotopes, which technically cannot be extracted. In this regard, the liquid will be diluted with clean water. Mr. Suga stressed that during the dumping into the ocean, the concentration of radioactive substances will comply with the standard set by the World Health Organisation for drinking water.



The fire at the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant in 2011



Fukushima-1. Modern times.

China and South Korea have already expressed their concern about the news from Tokyo, noting that the discharge of water containing toxic elements will be another blow to the environment and jeopardise the health of citizens of neighbouring countries. Both states intend to raise the issue of waste disposal among their international partners, including by contacting the International Atomic Energy Agency.

At the same time, the Director General of the International Atomic Energy Agency, Rafael Grossi, welcomed Japan's decision. "The decision of the Japanese Government is in line with world practice," said Mr. Grossi.

## The history of the issue

In March 2011, an earthquake hit the north-eastern coast of Japan, which triggered a tsunami. A giant wave hit the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant, leading to a large-scale accident. The water flooded four of the six power units of the Fukushima-1 nuclear power plant and disabled the reactor cooling system, which led to a series of hydrogen explosions and the melting of nuclear fuel in the core. It's estimated that the complete elimination of the consequences of the accident will take about 40 years.



# Passport to treasures

Six Minsk museums unite to come up with a quest; travelling round Belarus is named as its main prize

To go on a family trip around Belarus, you simply need to go... to a museum. To be more correct, six museums are now ready to welcome anyone who loves riddles and quests. The *Museum Mazes. The Time for Family Discoveries* collaboration game is actually a revival of a ten-year-old project which has simple rules: to visit certain points, complete tasks there, get the appropriate stamps in a 'passport' and — for those who are lucky — win a great prize.



The Great Patriotic War History Museum



By Yuliana Leonovich

The route passes through the Great Patriotic War History Museum, the Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum, the Museum of History of Theatrical and Musical Culture, Minsk History Museum, the Petrus Brovka Literary Museum and the 'Belarusian Hut' branch of the Maksim Bogdanovich Museum. You can begin with any of them. In the first location, a family (it's important!) will be provided with special passports that need to be taken on each subsequent museum trip. Six stamps indicating six visits give them a chance to take part in a super prize from the general partner of the project: the National Tourism Agency. Its Director Pavel Sapotko eagerly shares details.

"The tour will take place along the Gomel Region. We decided to combine a cultural and en-



The Petrus Brovka Literary Museum

tertainment programme with industrial tourism. This is a new and, I think, very interesting way of getting to know a particular region. Dobrush — where the famous porcelain factory and our equally famous paper factory are located — will be one of the destinations. Winners will also visit the Vetka Museum of Old Believers — one of the most interesting in our country," he explains.

A co-organiser of the project from the Yanka Kupala Museum, Olga Parkhimovich, adds that, in previous years, the project was quite a success: in 2012, almost 150 families took part in it.

"In fact, we have organised such quests twice. In 2011, it embraced literary museums and, the next year, all those who wished joined us. In the first case, the prize was a trip to Be-



The Museum of History of Theatrical and Musical Culture

lovezhskaya Pushcha, then to Vienna, where one of the largest museum districts in Europe is located. The project was forgotten



The Minsk History Museum

for a while but the pandemic inspired us to revive it. Museums really miss visitors and, moreover, trips of this kind are now among the safest: all wear masks, there is a lot of space and no crowds," she says.

Each museum has prepared its own programme for the quest but all are united by a single idea: all programmes are designed exclusively for cultural trips with the whole family. What can



The Yanka Kupala State Literary Museum



The 'Belarusian Hut' branch of the Maksim Bogdanovich Museum

children and their parents enjoy? This is an entertaining museum route, both in the search process and in the joy of discovery.

A co-organiser of the project from the Great Patriotic War History Museum, Sofia Gryadovkina, sets the scene, "The most important thing for us is that, during the project, the family will be united by a single aim: to find artefacts. This will unite representatives of different generations."

If wished, all six museums can be visited in one day. The programme in each of them lasts 40-90 minutes. However,

as Ms. Parkhimovich explains, the pleasure could last over two months. "When we go abroad, we always plan to visit local museums. However, for some reason, few people choose to spend a weekend in the museums of their native Belarus. It's better, they say, to go to a shopping or entertainment centre. This approach needs to be broken down, so we invite families to choose a museum for each weekend, so

that children can look forward to the next weekend, when there will be an opportunity to complete a new quest," she notes.

The Yanka Kupala Museum, for example, focuses not on the work or life of the poet but on his hobbies. Few people know that Kupala collected stones, loved fishing, enjoyed picking mushrooms and was fond of music. Ms. Parkhimovich continues, "In addition to searching for relevant artefacts, we'll invite participants to solve the life beliefs of Yanka Kupala in his poetic lines with the help of a code. Each room has a hint. Even in the poet's day, there was a popular literary game — Burime: to compose poems to a given rhyme. This task will also be part of the quest."

In each of the museums, all participants in the project will be accompanied by an employee who will not only help in completing the quest, but also tell a dozen interesting stories about certain artefacts. The first few visitors will receive additional gifts from the National Tourism Agency — backpacks with everything necessary for a long trip.



# The secret of big stones

At the end of the village, on a hill, there is a huge stone. When local children played noisy games near it, the old people warned that excessive fun can trigger a thunderstorm, and the children tried not to anger the centuries-old boulder. In the evening, the grandmothers told legends about the healing power of the stones and how they can think and communicate with each other and even with the world around them.

By Marina Kuzmich,  
Vladimir Likhodedov

## Voices of the past

How many boulders from pre-Christian times are there on the Belarusian land? They lie at crossroads, near water crossings, at places of battles, temples, entrances to villages and cities. Some have no names while others do: e.g. the Serpentine Stone, Adam's Stone, the Great Stone. There are two known revered stones nearby: Demyan and Marya. Moreover, there are boulders called Goose and Ram, Turs, Stone Walls. Many legends conceal the stones of love, stones with healing powers, stones with buried treasure.

The Borisov stones are shrouded in legend, with researchers still arguing over the puzzle of their origin. These boulders got their names thanks to the Polotsk Prince Boris. Among the people they were also called Boris-Khlebnik, Pisanik, Boris-Gleb. What made the son of Vseslav the Magician place these huge stones with inscriptions and crosses on the territory of the principality?

The first surviving mention of the Borisov stones is found in the *Chronicle of Lithuania and Zhemoitia* of the 16th century. It says, "Everyone will find a high stone in the Dvina River, a mile from the Disna River, and seven miles from Polotsk, between Dvina and Disna rivers, going to the bottom of the rapids, on which there is a stone cross bearing the inscription of Prince Boris under it: 'Help, Lord, your servant Boris'..."

One of the most ancient Borisov stones today can be seen on the territory of the Upper Castle in Polotsk. It was raised from the Zapadnaya Dvina in 1981. Since



The Rogvolod stone in the village of Dyatlovka. Lithograph (early 20th century)



The Dvina River near Polotsk (early 20th century)

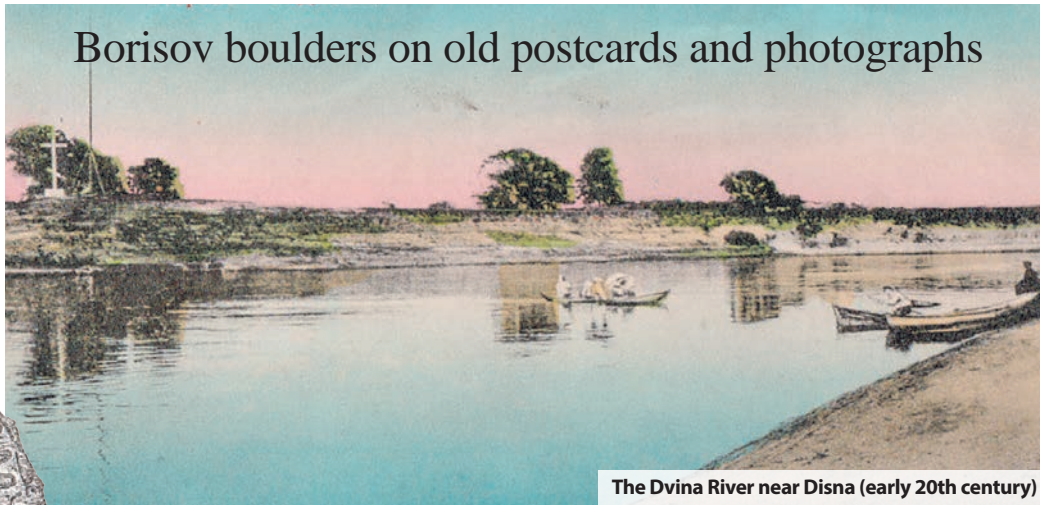
What are the centuries-old boulders silent about? To feel the connection to those times, it's enough just to touch them. Boulders will tell you about the past, about the experiences of our ancestors and give answers to questions about the future. The main thing is to be able to listen to their living voices.

then, the monument to epigraphy of the 12th century has become closer to the people. On it you can see a six-pointed cross and the inscription: 'XC. Nika. GI (Lord), help your servant Boris'. The stone is huge in size. It is eight metres in circumference and one and a half metres high, weighing seventy tonnes.

## The lips of stones are dumb, but not their souls

Local residents tell a tale about how, in the dry summer of 1128, several wanderers made their way through the forest to the borders of the Polotsk Principality. The times were hectic, with hunger and pestilence gripping the land. The chronicler recorded that snow lay on the ground until summer, the floods were great, 'and in autumn, the frost killed all the winter crops and there was famine...' People ate tree bark and moss, praying to the Lord to forgive their sins. Great sorrow gripped the Polotsk land. The strangers went out to the river. A huge rock jutting out of the water near the shore in shallow water. People prayed for a long time. Then, the eldest of them approached the stone, took

## Borisov boulders on old postcards and photographs



The Dvina River near Disna (early 20th century)

the instrument, touched the grey surface of the boulder and whispered, "Lord, help your servant Boris."

But there is another version of the origin of the stones. With the advent of Christianity to these lands,

sides of the cross' vertical bar.

"Four boulders of this kind are located in the Vitebsk Province and two within the boundaries of the Vilna Province," said the researcher. One of the stones in the Mogilev Province was found in 1816 in the village of Dyatlovka, Orsha District, on the road from

power to sew clothes. The surrounding population widely used this property. In the evening they brought fabrics to it and asked: 'Stepan, sew me 'zhupan' (a short kaftan)!' In the morning they received a ready-made dress. From this, the stone began to be called 'Kravets'. But one day a drunken woman decided to laugh at the stone. In the evening she brought a cloth, put it on the stone and said: 'Stepan, tailor me neither this nor that'. When she came for the dress the next morning, it turned out to be spoiled: one sleeve was made in the proper place while the other was sewn to the hem below. Since then, 'Kravets' has stopped sewing."

The story says that the legend, in which people endowed stones with certain properties, proves the antiquity of its origin. It belonged to the period when man inspired nature and idolised it.

The researcher describes how he found one of the Borisov stones in the village of Vysoki Gorodets, "The boulder was a block of red granite — almost square in shape — but with irregular angles. On the sides, the stone had strong horizontal cracks. The surface is smooth but covered with moss in some places. The northern part is cleaved obliquely. Perhaps it was made by a master mill-cutter who wanted to use the stone for milling."

The essay describes the surface of the stone as being badly damaged mainly by the fact that the village boys who came here laid fires on it, as if it was a ready-made hearth. "For this reason, the stone created several vertical cracks, but, fortunately, they are shallow. In any case, there is no doubt that the inscription was made by the Prince of Polotsk, Boris Vseslavich, who is also responsible for the inscriptions on the other Borisov stones. And since the prince died in 1128, then our monument should be attributed to the first quarter of the 12th century. In 1898, a chapel was built over the stone," explains Mr. Romanov.

Photo from Vladimir Likhodedov's personal collection

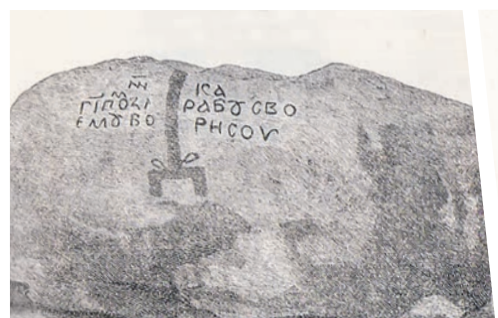


A Borisov stone in Vysoki Gorodets. Lithograph (late 19th century)

ancient Drutsk to Orsha. It has the following inscription in two lines around the stone: '...help your servant Vasily in baptism by the name of Rogvolod'.

Rogvolod-Vasily Borisovich was a Polotsk Prince until 1160, but after an unsuccessful campaign against Minsk he lost the Polotsk Principality in Drutsk. Mr. Romanov wrote, "During his stay 'the stone was taken'. The Borisov and Gleb Church was built over this stone in 1807, but it was destroyed by the French in 1812. Instead, another was built in the 1830s."

Another stone, more ancient, was found on April 25th, 1886 within the Senno District. The researcher describes the history of the boulder, "During the collection of materials for the publication of the *Belorusky Sbornik* (Belarusian Collection) I've learned that in the village of Vysoki Gorodets there is a stone with Latin letters, about which wonderful legends are circulated among the people and which was given the name of 'Kravets' (tailor). The name — strange at first glance — is explained by a legend: in times past, this stone had a wonderful



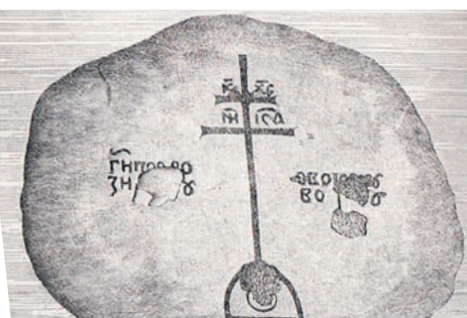
A Borisov stone around five kilometres from Disna (late 19th century)



A Borisov stone transported to the Moscow Archaeological Museum. Lithograph (late 19th century)



A Borisov stone in the Dvina River near Polotsk (late 19th century)



A Borisov stone near Disna. Lithograph (late 19th century)



# Control trial before Tokyo

Belarusians are bringing home awards from the European championships. Among them is a sensational return for Arman-Marshall Silla and five medals for our weightlifters.

**The sports world is coming out of its coronavirus hibernation. European championships in various sports are in full swing, and on the eve of the Olympic Games in Tokyo, special attention is being paid to their results. Recently, the strongest athletes in taekwondo and weightlifting were rewarded at the continental forums and our sportsmen have brought home medals from both events.**

By Tatiana Pastushenko

## Silla's strength

Arman-Marshall Silla is back in triumph! To appreciate the significance of the gold medal he won at the European Championship, we recall the summer of 2016. The taekwondo athlete, who won the first Olympic place for Belarus in this sport, was preparing to compete at the Games in Rio de Janeiro but, just before flying to Brazil, his doping test gave a positive result. Silla and his coaches tried to prove that there was no deliberate intake of a prohibited drug, even taking a polygraph test, but everything was in vain: the athlete received a four-year disqualification...

The European Championship, which recently ended in Sofia, became the first major tournament for Arman-Marshall Silla after such a long break. "We follow the principle: if you are not ready and have no intention to fight for a medal, it's better not to go to the tournament," the sportsman's personal coach, Yulia Sukhovitskaya, explains. "So, of course, we expected to be among the winners, but, honestly, after studying the competition, we didn't dream of gold. However, appetite comes with eating!"

Silla and his coach admit there was excitement before the start but the desire for victory was stronger. On the way to the finals, Arman-Marshall Silla defeated Emre Kutalmis Atesli of Turkey and British Mahama Cho. In the semi-finals, our taekwondo fighter defeated Spain's Ivan Garcia and, in the decisive match, he got the upper hand over the leader of the Olympic ratings, Russian Vladislav Larin. As a result, he became a three-time European champion and proclaimed, "I'm definitely back now."

Our team has just arrived from Bulgaria and all attention is now focused on the Olympics. Arman-Marshall Silla will also try to qualify as, due to the pandemic, the qualification period for the Tokyo Games was extended. The European qual-

ifying tournament will be held on May 7th-8th, and Yulia Sukhovitskaya shares their plans, "We'll do everything possible for the qualification and, of course, we believe that the place will be ours."

## Weight taken

The European Weightlifting Championship, held in Moscow, was the first major international event for weightlifters in almost eighteen months. Its results for our team are as follows: Piotr Asaenok is a silver medallist in the clean-and-jerk combination and a silver winner in the snatch. Gennady Laptev and Sergei Sharenkov are bronze medallists in the snatch, while Daria Naumova is a bronze holder in the clean and jerk.

The state coach of the national weightlifting team, Mikhail Zakharenko, says: although the team won five medals and was placed fifth in the team standings, feelings are mixed, "Some performed well, some not so



Arman-Marshall Silla

well. As part of the women's team at the European Championship, many young athletes started. We needed to test them at international competitions at this level. As for the athletes competing for the Tokyo Games, they have fulfilled their tasks."

In the women's team, Daria Naumova is the main and — if there is no force majeure — only contender for the performance

in Tokyo. At the Olympics, the weightlifter will face medal challenges. So far, her best result at the European Championship in the double event is fourth place.

"I would like Daria to perform better, but it's as it is. In Tokyo, perhaps, there won't be too many strong competitors; it all depends on how many athletes from each country will compete at the Olympics. Therefore, I think Naumova will fight for a medal. We are now considering Dina Sazanovets. At the European Championship, she was a little unlucky. We have been expecting high results from Dina for a long time, but after the birth of her child, she still can't reach them," says the coach.

In the men's team, the range of candidates for the performance in Tokyo is much wider: Andrei Aryamnov, Yevgeny Tikhontsov, Piotr Asaenok, Gennady Laptev and Eduard Zezyulin. Mikhail Zakharenko continues, "Gennady Laptev was close to winning a medal in the double event: only a kilogram separated him from it. Andrei Aryamnov was out of shape before the tournament. Since he's a candidate for Tokyo, we decided that it wasn't worth chasing the weight, and declared him in the category of over 109kg in Group B. His task was simply to perform in Moscow and score points: the selection system for the Olympic Games is such that athletes need to perform at six qualifying events dur-

ing the period, and the results are taken into account at only four of them. We hope that Andrei Aryamnov will now return to his weight category. I think it will be very difficult for him in the over 109kg weight. Aryamnov can be unpredictable."

Piotr Asaenok also performed in an unusual weight category at the European Championship. As his state coach says, the sportsman performed in the under 81kg weight category in the first half of the qualifying period but — over a year and a half when major tournaments weren't held due to the pandemic — moved to the under 96kg category. "It worked well for him but it's not a given that he will go to the Olympics," adds the coach. "Speaking of Eduard Zezyulin, he is fourth now. He was also fourth two years ago at the World Championship as well. Yevgeny Tikhontsov missed the European Championship but we plan that he'll perform at the tournament in Colombia in May. To get to Tokyo, he has enough events and points, but after a year and a half of a break in major competitions, the sportsman needs to feel the atmosphere of an international event."

The team has just returned from Moscow and our weightlifters plan to take a short break. Afterwards, they'll go to Staiki to start preparing directly for the Olympics. Meanwhile, in late May, the Belarusian Championship will be held in Grodno, after which the coaching staff will decide who will perform in Tokyo.

## ADDITION

The European Rowing Championship ended in Varese, Italy. Yelena Furman won the non-Olympic lightweight women's single sculls. Tatiana Klimovich was also close to capturing a medal — finishing fourth in the singles.



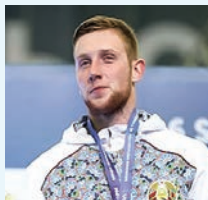
Daria Naumova

## ARENA

### ● Ilya Polozkov of Belarus earned silver at UIPM 2021 Modern Pentathlon World Cup in Sofia

Ilya Polozkov scored 1,427 points — behind only the British Joseph Choong. In the final form of the programme, the winner was just eight seconds ahead of the Mogilev athlete, scoring a total of 1,435 points in the final.

The Belarusian team won two awards



in Sofia. On the eve of the event, Anastasia Prokopenko claimed bronze in the women's competition.

### ● Belarusians won eight medals at the Rhythmic Gymnastics FIG World Cup in Uzbekistan

Anastasia Salos won bronze in the women's individual all-around, with another bronze medal in the all-around claimed by the Belarusian gymnast who performed in the group exercises.

In the finals of the individual events, the gold medal was earned by Alina Gor-



nosko, who beat her rivals in the ribbon exercise. In the exercise with the clubs, Alina Gornosko finished third. Anastasia Salos also came third in the hoop event. Alongside bronze in the all-around, the national team of Belarus also claimed gold and silver in the group events, particularly in the exercises with hoops and clubs. In the event with five balls, the Belarusians were silver medallists.

nosko, who beat her rivals in the ribbon exercise. In the exercise with the clubs, Alina Gornosko finished third. Anastasia Salos also came third in the hoop event.

### ● Andrei Orlovsky of Belarus defeated American Chase Sherman at the UFC in Las Vegas

The first round was won by the American; however, in the other two five-minute periods, the Belarusian was better. This victory was the 31st in Andrei Orlovsky's professional career with 20 defeats (including 20 wins and 14 defeats in the UFC). This was the last fight of the Belarusian MMA veteran under the current agreement with the UFC.





## Photo of the week



BELTA

The sowing campaign in regions is often accompanied by the 'Zasevki' folk rite

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**On April 23rd, 1886**, Byadulya Zmitrok was born (real name Plavnik Samuil Yefimovich) in the village of Posadets, Logoisk District, Minsk Region — a Belarusian writer. He actively supported the ideas of the Belarusian revival and was a member of the literary associations Maladnyak and Uzvyshsha. He is the author of *The Windfall*, *Poems* collections of poetry and the *Yazep Krushinsky* novel, as well as the autobiographical stories *The Front is Approaching* and *In the Dense Forests*. He also wrote works for children and critical literary articles while also researching ethnographical and folklore issues. He died in 1941.

**On April 23rd, 1586**, on the initiative of Mikolaj Krzysztof Radziwiłł (Sierotka), the town of Nesvizh was granted self-government according to Magdeburg Law. In June of the same year, the coat of arms was approved — a shield, divided into two parts, with half a black eagle being depicted on the right in gold, and 10 oblique stripes of blue, red and yellow on the other side.



**On April 23rd, 2006**, an official unveiling of a memorial plaque took place, in

Germany, at the Ravensbrück Memorial Site, created on the site of the former concentration camp, dedicated to the prisoners from Belarus who were held in the concentration camp and who died there during the Great Patriotic War.



**April 23rd** is World Book and Copyright Day, proclaimed at the 28th session of the UNESCO General Conference

on November 15th, 1995, in memory of the three geniuses of world literature: W. Shakespeare (1564-1616), M. Cervantes (1547-1616) and Inca Garcilaso de la Vega (1539-1616).

**April 23rd** is English Language Day. It is a commemorative date for the UN, founded during the UNESCO General Conference in 1995. The date of the celebration was the birthday of William Shakespeare — the great English poet, writer and the most famous



playwright in the world. Today, English is considered to be the 'world language', being spoken by more than a billion people in several dozen countries.

**April 24th** is International Youth Solidarity Day, celebrated annually by a decision of the World Federation of Democratic Youth on the day when, at the final meeting of the Bandung Conference of Asia and Africa, it was decided to declare April 24th the International Day of Solidarity of Youth in the Struggle against Colonialism and for Peaceful Coexistence.



**April 25th** is World Day of Twin Cities. It is held annually on the last Sunday of April by the decision of the World Federation of United Cities, founded in 1957. There are 31 cities in Belarus with 335 twin cities across 35 countries of the world.

**April 26th** is the Day of Chernobyl Tragedy in the Republic of Belarus. It is the national day of mourning. On April 26th, 1986, an explosion occurred at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant during a planned shutdown of one of the power units. As a



result of the release of radioactive materials, 155,000sq.km of the territory of the USSR with a population of 6,945,000 people were contaminated. It's the largest disaster in the history of nuclear energy. More than 600,000 people took part in the clean-up operation. On the same day, International Chernobyl Disaster Remembrance Day, the International Day of Remembrance for those killed in radiation accidents and catastrophes are celebrated annually.

**April 28th** is World Day for Safety and Health at Work. It is celebrated by the decision of the International Labour Organisation (ILO) since 2003 on the initiative of the International Confederation of Free Trade Unions. The goal is to draw the world's attention to the magnitude of the problem and how creating and promoting a safety culture can help reduce annual workplace deaths.



**April 29th** is International Dance Day, celebrated since 1982 by the decision of the International Dance Committee at the UNESCO International Theatre Institute on the birthday of the French ballet master Jean-Georges Noverre (1727-1810).

