



Production of cold-rolled sheet metal has been launched at Miory's Metal Rolling Plant



Soon 12-year-old Arina Pekhtereva, from Mogilev, will represent Belarus at the *Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2020*



INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 43 (857) ● THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 19, 2020 ● WWW.SB.BY



Prodexpo-2020 exhibition-fair: Olympic champion in culinary skills Anastasiya Kalupanovich (R) with works by her students

All tastes gather in Belarus

Prodexpo-2020 International Wholesale Exhibition held in Minsk

Delicious novelties and aromatic tastings, master classes and an extensive business programme characterised the 26th *Prodexpo-2020* International Wholesale Exhibition. More than 80 exhibitors introduced their developments to everyone, which will soon be appreciated by both Belarusian and foreign consumers. The best food samples received well-deserved awards, and visitors to the exhibition-fair enjoyed the opportunity of tasting not only the existing treats but also those of tomorrow. → **5**



Conversation with no closed topics

The President was interviewed by political observers from Belarus and abroad — focusing on the political future of Belarus, the economic situation, unrest and protests in the world, relations with neighbours and the fate of expelled students. Representatives of the leading Russian, Kazakhstani, Ukrainian and Moldovan mass media came to Minsk and the meeting at the Palace of Independence lasted for over four hours. During this time, the President answered the most pressing and topical questions.



Aleksandr Lukashenko highlighted the importance of such a dialogue. “These meetings are traditionally a major channel of conversation with large audiences, and an opportunity to outline positions on pressing issues, to think over and to get a certain response, to reach out those who understand the essence of the present moment — including our foreign friends who sometimes do not assess the situation in Belarus and its place in the international community correctly,” he said, adding, “This is not surprising, given the way information about events in our country is distorted. The increase in this distortion is proportional to the distance from our borders.”

According to the President, the world is living in turbulent times, and this requires deep analysis, “We are almost watching live the breakdown of the usual way of life, the planet succumbing to a systemic crisis. Many media outlets blame coronavirus as the main reason for what is happening. I have already said and I would like to repeat again that this is only an excuse, a smokescreen, under cover of which global players are once again trying to redraw the world as they see fit. Clearly, they have plans in the post-Soviet space as well, including in Belarus. Paradoxically, this is a strong argument to confirm that the Belarusian state is a reality, that it has political clout and serious economic potential.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko unambiguously assessed the post-election events in the country as an attempt at the unconstitutional overthrow of government according to the so-called ‘colour revolution’ scenario. “There is no revolution here, because there are no revolutionaries in the country. The driving force behind the unrest in Belarus is an external factor. The motive is also clear,” he added.

The President noted, “For the past quarter of a century, Belarus has built an effective model of a social state that helps defend national interests. It has become a member of the club of space and nuclear powers. The country has been developing its economy on the basis of high technologies.” However, attempts to belittle all these achievements are obvious. “In fact, these are the attempts to remove a competitor and destroy its industrial potential. Among those who are trying their best are the countries that destroyed their industries themselves in the post-Soviet period. We experienced all these in the 1990s and know that it’s the path to the collapse of the economy, social security system and, eventually, to the impoverishment of people,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

However, there are examples to compare with and pay attention at. As the President stressed, similar events are taking place in other post-Soviet countries: Ukraine, Kyrgyzstan and Moldova. “I’m

confident that there will be an attempt to apply similar technologies in Russia and other CIS countries in the foreseeable future,” he noted.

The conclusions are obvious. “Any ‘colour revolution’ makes a country weaker and its people poorer. There have been no examples of people having a better life after such unrest. Perhaps you know an example? Maybe I’ve failed to attentively follow the events in the world,” the President commented.

He believes the main remedy for this trouble is well-known, “It’s intensifying and strengthening ties and integration in all formats: bilateral, the EAEU, CIS, CSTO. I primarily speak of co-operation in the economy, security and human contacts. Secondly, many countries have ‘woken up’ and realised that alternative integration projects see us only as donors of raw materials and cheap workforce and as markets for non-essential goods. With this in mind, we need to consolidate and act as a united power in the international arena as well. Only then can our peoples retain the possibility to decide their own fate.”

Protecting our Belarus

When asking his question, the First Deputy Director General of the All-Russia State Television and Radio Broadcasting Company VGTRK, Andrei Kondrashov, quoted headlines by some western me-

dia. The European Union, they say, does not know what to do with Lukashenko. The Head of State himself confirmed that this is not a secret, “They’re always trying to do something to me. There’s no need — neither for Lukashenko, nor Putin, nor Tokayev, Nazarbayev, Dodon or even Volodya Zelenskyy; there’s no need to do anything. We were elected by our people and there will be those who’d like to do something to us. This is a sphere of attention and interest exclusively for the Belarusian people, if we talk about Lukashenko. You know I’ve been in politics for years. Perhaps I have already been too long in this politics. It’s one side of the coin. The other is that I have plenty experience. I was under sanctions for many years, and am even now — as they seem to be saying.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko is convinced that something can be done to a person who is in the position of President only if they have stolen money, they have a great deal of money which is kept outside the country. As the Head of State recalled, he is also periodically (and for a very long time) being blamed for this. However, for some reason, nobody responds to his insistent ‘take this money’. “So far, no one has taken it. It’s a miracle!” he stressed.

The President added, “Forgive me for my indiscretion, I’m very loyal to my people and my country. I came from

the opposition to power in very difficult times, when nationalism continued to run rampant in Belarus. These are the ancestors (they are still alive) of those who are now stirring up trouble from the inside... It's useless to manage Lukashenko, there is nothing to take him for... I'm not going to give up. I won't get down on my knees — even if I'm alone. I have repeatedly told my entourage and all those who today stand firmly defending our Belarus: even if I remain alone, I will fight for what I created with my own hands for a quarter of a century.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also outlined the cornerstone of our foreign policy, “We have never created problems for our neighbours — not only to our neighbours, but also to distant countries where our friends live, Kazakhstan, China, and so on. I'm not talking about Russia, Ukraine, Poland, Lithuania, and Latvia. These are our neighbours; we didn't choose them. Neighbours are not chosen.”

A lesson for others

Kazakhstan's Khabar Chairman of the Board, Yerlan Bekkhozhin, was interested in the nature of protests and unrest in the world. Aleksandr Lukashenko immediately made it clear that he is also much concerned about this issue now. The events in Belarus should become a serious lesson for other post-Soviet states. At the same time, the Head of State believes this is only the beginning and all these events hide an attempt to remake the world.

“Specialists have done everything to control people through subconscious efforts. At the heart of all this, probably, lay the development of American specialists. When I saw the election campaign in America and the events after the election, in my conversation with the President of Russia, I told him directly, “It serves them right.” They have always and everywhere interfered in the Presidential election. Belarus is a very serious lesson for you. Kazakhstan and Russia are huge countries.



It will be more difficult to cope with this ‘infection’ if you don't work proactively,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

The President summed up, “We don't need a social fight. In the name of calmness, so that this does not grow, we will use different methods so that people understand us and we can reach an agreement. However, we must remember: the

law is harsh, but it is the law. Understand: the issue is in the future of the country. As soon as those in charge begin to show weakness, to indulge and condone people who break the law, this will immediately lead to certain consequences.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



Congratulations

On behalf of the Belarusian people and himself, President of Belarus Aleksandr Lukashenko congratulated UNESCO Director General Audrey Azoulay on the 75th anniversary of the foundation of the organisation

The Head of State noted that over the course of its long history UNESCO has been fulfilling a noble humanitarian mission to promote peace and security, to ensure justice and universal respect for the rights and major liberties of human beings regardless of their nationality and faith. ‘In today's circumstances of a heavy defi-

cit of trust and solidarity, the uniting and constructive activities of UNESCO are essential for mankind. The organisation should play a more active constructive role in the maintenance of the dialogue of cultures, higher affordability of education and the promotion of the principle of peaceful resolution of existing disputes

and conflicts,’ the message reads. The President stressed that Belarus, as a founding nation of the United Nations Organisation and a responsible member of the global community, is ready to do its best to enhance the authority and promote the importance of the organisation in such fields as education, science

and culture for the sake of overcoming modern problems and challenges. Aleksandr Lukashenko wished Audrey Azoulay every success in the operation of this influential international organisation.

According to the President's press service

Trade unions: bring reliable support

Price monitoring, tariffs and quality for utility services, collective agreement regulations and the political implications of the coronavirus: the details of the President's meeting with the Chairman of the Federation of Trade Unions of Belarus

The Federation of Trade Unions today is the most massive public organisation in the country, uniting over four million people. To match such large representation is the range of tasks that this organisation has to currently solve. They are not limited to just regulating the relationship between the employer and the workforce. Today the state sees the FTUB as a reliable and strong ally. Hence the main message of Aleksandr Lukashenko: the trade unions will be supported by the authorities at all levels, “We will strengthen trade union organisations, no matter what the cost. This is one of the pillars of our society.”

Clearly drawing one's own line

The Federation of Trade Unions protects not only the rights and interests of workers. It is just as fundamentally concerned about the interests of the state in the face of tough pressure on Belarus from outside. It is for this patriotic position that the trade unions are attacked — by those who do not like adherence to such principles. However, the President immediately warned Mikhail Orda that there is no need to make excuses to anyone, “We see, and I'm especially aware, that official trade unions are under much pressure right now.

daily lives. The first is monitoring prices in the consumer market, which the trade unions are already doing successfully. The second is the sphere of housing and communal services, especially with regard to their quality. He noted,



Mikhail Orda

“We've agreed, and I asked the trade unions to take tight control over pricing. I see that the unions are even more concerned with this problem than the state bodies. Believe me, the people you are called on to support will appreciate it. They have already appreciated it, in fact.”

The Head of State noted that it is necessary to control prices

in relation to those several dozen items that ordinary people need most of all.

“The interests of the people, the interests of our workers should be at the forefront of our policy,” stressed the Belarusian leader.

Not a private matter

An important topic of the report is the establishment of trade union organisations at private enterprises. Our people also work there, and they have the right to count on the protection of their interests and on social guarantees. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko is determined that, by the end of the year, the issue of creating trade union organisations at all private enterprises should be resolved. Of course, joining a union or not is a voluntary decision. Nobody can force anyone. But precisely because every person has the right to choose, trade union organisations should work in all organisations, regardless of their form of ownership.

More than a diagnosis

This year, the pandemic has made its own adjustments to the economy and in politics, becoming more than a disease. Belarus suffered less than others. And yet, even taking into account the spring experience, the second wave of coronavirus requires maximum concentration. This also applies to trade unions and society as a whole.

Aleksandr Lukashenko warned even before the elections that the psychosis around the coronavirus would be beneficial for some, and again he was not mistaken, “The world began to be redrawn, and COVID is not a medical term, it is not only and not so much a disease. It's not even the economy today. This is already a global policy. They began to reshape the world, with riots and revolts breaking out everywhere. But will there still be a connection with the consequences of the collapse of the economy?”

The task of the authorities is at least to preserve the cur-

rent standard of living. On the other hand, people and work collectives must understand the situation correctly.

“Those who have the courage, strength and endurance will survive and preserve their state,” emphasised the Head of State.

The right for peaceful work and peaceful life

In an interview with reporters, Mikhail Orda, commenting on the results of the meeting, emphasised, “The most important thing for us is for people to have peaceful work and a calm life. We always resolutely fight those who, by various ways and methods, undermine or destroy the stability and well-being of people.”

The Chairman of the FTUB noted that Belarusians should defend what was created in the country. This is the only way to make Belarus richer and more comfortable.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

It all started in 2012 when MMPZ-Group was established in the Miory District, with the main investor coming from Austria. The volume of investment was about 400m Euros, while the equipment and technologies were provided by Germany.

Given the strategic importance of the import substitution project, the state provided considerable support to the investors. The construction was conducted in accordance with the state programme of Belarus' innovative development and a 40-hectare land plot was allocated for the would-be plant following a Presidential order. In June 2014, a special decree was signed.

The construction and installation work has already been completed. Back in July, a cold rolling mill was tested and, a little later, the electrolytic cleaning line came into operation. Commissioning works at the annealing furnaces are close to completion.

Prime Minister Roman Golovchenko learnt about the new production in Miory, attending the launch of the cold-rolled sheet line. The Prime Minister noted,

"It's significant that we've launched the production of cold-rolled sheet, jointly with the owner. All technological processes at the enterprise are running. The plant is energy-intensive, such production needs to be developed in all regions since the nuclear power plant has started operating in the country."

Mr. Golovchenko stressed that the Miory enterprise has become a positive example of interaction between the state and private investors.

The first stage of the plant will be fully operational in December and it is expected to reach its full capacity next summer.

The production capacity of the Miory plant at the first stage will be 50,000 tonnes of cold-rolled sheet per year and 150,000 tonnes of tin plate. At the second stage, productivity will increase to 240,000 tonnes. Belarus consumes annually up to 30,000 tonnes of tin, so most of the products will be exported. Over 360m Euros have been invested in the plant, with the money coming from Belarus, the EU and Russia. Experts have calculated that the project will pay off in five years.

General Director Piotr Shimukovich notes that the products have not yet been available



From scratch



in Belarus. "Accordingly, the market of our country and neighbouring states can be replaced by our produce. We see this as a great

development prospect. There are not many similar enterprises in the world, they have equipment that has exhausted part of their

Production of cold-rolled sheet metal has been launched at Miory's Metal Rolling Plant. The company is unique for Belarus and only several of the kind operate all over the globe. Its main products — the thinnest sheet steel coated on both sides with a layer of tin, the tin plate, the bit plate and the cold-rolled skin-hard sheet — enjoy high demand in Belarus. Excellent prospects are registered for exports as the tin is planned to be delivered to the CIS countries, Europe, Asia and America.

performance potential. We've been supplied by a world leader in this field. We hope that these technological capabilities will enable us to occupy an important niche in the market," he comments.

Significantly, the Miory District has gained a strong impetus

of development, along with construction of the plant which will employ about 650 people and is already becoming a draw for new residents.

Based on materials of belta.by

Ready for taking off



By Nadezhda Dekola

"Two years ago, our company moved to a modern high-tech production base on the site of Minsk National Airport — enabling us to not only create additional jobs and attract highly qualified personnel, but also to solve new ambitious tasks," Director Yevgeny Vaitsekhovich explains, focusing on the fact that the aircraft repair enterprise changed its location without stopping the operation. That was a unique experience not only for Belarus but the whole post-Soviet space. Importantly, no customers were lost.

At present, the plant continues working effectively in its new location — focusing on its traditional repair of TU-134s, YAK-40s and YAK-42s. The order portfolio has been decided until 2022. At

the same time, it is being certified which will make it possible to service Boeings, Airbuses and other modern aircraft.

The company's team is their special pride. Today, more than 700 specialists work here and Mr. Vaitsekhovich notes: in 2010, the average age of employees was 61 but at present is 41. In the last two years alone, 150 young specialists have been employed at the plant and the Belarusian State Aviation Academy acts as the key 'supplier' of staff.

The company is happy to announce that, in October, construction of the aircraft painting complex began (the project is worth more than \$50m). The most advanced European technologies — learnt from Airbus-making facilities — will be applied.

In November, a subsidiary was regis-

Minsk Aircraft Repair Plant No. 407 of Civil Aviation puts stake on maintenance and repair of new-type aircraft



tered: 407 Technics Unitary Enterprise; it aims to pass certification and start maintenance of western equipment next year. Explaining where the experts are coming from (after all, it takes more than a year to train highly qualified personnel for such tasks), the company head notes that foreign specialists help. "We've invited about 50 professionals with experience in this kind of work to help us get certified, enter the market and train our employees. This will also be a unique experience for our Aviation Academy,

which will be able to train students at our enterprise," he explains.

This is not only an economic task but also strategic. At Belavia Airlines, a Boeing is one of the main types of aircraft today. Accordingly, the country must have its own garage for servicing such planes. "In addition, the EAEU currently operates more than a thousand such aircraft. As soon as the pandemic is over, flights will restart and we'll be able to service up to 70 Boeings a year," said Mr. Vaitsekhovich.

All tastes gather in Belarus



Prodexpo-2020 International Wholesale Exhibition held in Minsk

Delicious novelties and aromatic tastings, master classes and an extensive business programme characterised the 26th Prodexpo-2020 International Wholesale Exhibition. More than

80 exhibitors introduced their developments to everyone, which will soon be appreciated by both Belarusian and foreign consumers. The best food samples received well-deserved awards, and visitors to the exhibition-fair enjoyed the opportunity of tasting not only the existing treats but also those of tomorrow.

By Aleksandr Nesterov

“We can be proud of the ‘Made in Belarus’ food brand,” the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food, Igor Brylo, stressed during the first day of the exhibition, adding, “The food and processing industry is one of the most developed sectors of our economy. Today, Belarusians are fully provided with high-quality domestic food but, just 26 years ago, it was hard to imagine that Belarus would be able not only to feed itself, but also to increase its exports 12 times. This is our victory!”

A business forum was held as part of Prodexpo — focusing on the prospects of the food industry’s development. At the same time, manufacturers, processors and suppliers presented their achievements at the venue. The uniqueness of the recent food forum was its being held during the COVID-19 pandemic, while the organisers employed a range of measures to prevent the spread of coronavirus: the temperature of visitors was measured, and entrance allowed only when wearing facemasks.

However, no mask could put a barrier between the wonderful aromas emanating from the stands. For example, the Pinsk Meat Processing Plant presented several new products at once — including sausages and elite smoked products. “Here is a beef product from the ‘Everyone Has Their Own History’ series: we expect it will appeal not only to Belarusians but also to Russians,” Zhanna Zubko, a chief technologist of the enterprise, gave us a mini-tour. “And here is our product made from horse meat: ‘Kazy’; we supply our products to Kazakhstan...”

Chocolatier Natalia Kulak worked at Kommunarika Confectionery’s stand, painting a 350-gram bar with white chocolate. “There is a great variety of drawings: for example, the Upper City in Minsk, two angels or the Christmas theme. Any picture could be chosen, in fact. This chocolate is good as a gift for a celebration, and is a handmade product. Any sized bars are available: from 350 grams to 3.4 kilograms,” she explained.

Products for every taste, budget and consumer needs: the Belarusian Prodexpo fair offered much to



Aleksandr Gorbash



A master class on decorating cakes by the Olympic champion in culinary skills Anastasiya Kalupanovich (R)



Yury Mozolevsky

its guests. Functional, dietary and exclusive demands could be satisfied by the manufacturers. The issue is whether this diversity will enjoy a steady demand.

Andrei Sviridov, the Deputy Head of Belarus’ President Property Management Directorate, believes that right now — in times of the pandemic — food market players have new opportunities to expand their businesses. “Previously, it was common to sign contracts at exhibitions and then use them to evaluate the effectiveness of products. However, these old marketing approaches are not sufficient now and every manufacturer must find new ways to promote products not just

domestically but also abroad, applying other ways of positioning and brand consolidation.”

The state, in turn, is ready to lend a hand to representatives of the industry. “The country is forming a state programme for the development of agricultural business until 2025,” said the Deputy Prime Minister, Aleksandr Subbotin. “We’ll approve it by the end of 2020, and we will start working on January 1st. The programme will be based on economic issues, so that the industry supports itself and develops. Scientific issues are also very important: new production facilities, technologies and products.”

Igor Bryl, Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food of Belarus:

In difficult conditions, against the background of the coronavirus pandemic and the vagaries of nature, the agro-industrial complex of our country has provided stable work. The rate of production in all categories of farms reached 105 percent in nine months compared to the same period last year, in agricultural organisations — 107.8 percent. Crop production increased by 11 percent, animal husbandry — by 5.5 percent, the dairy industry also performed better — up 6 percent. As expected, by the end of the year, production volumes in the agricultural sector will grow by 5.5 percent in all categories of farms. We believe the industry will ensure production at the level of \$10bn, while exports will reach \$5.8bn — a 6 percent rise against 2019.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Oleg Novitsky to go into space again in April 2021



The interdepartmental commission for the selection of cosmonauts approved the main and backup crews for the 65th long-term expedition to the International Space Station. The launch of the ‘Soyuz MS-18’ transport manned spacecraft with the crew for this expedition is scheduled for April 2021, from the Baikonur cosmodrome. A native of Belarus, Oleg Novitsky, joined the main crew as the commander of the ISS-65, the commander of the ‘Soyuz MS-18’ spacecraft. Flight engineers Piotr Dubrov and Sergei Korsakov will join him on the ISS. For the first time, Oleg Novitsky was in orbit for 143 days in 2012-2013 as the commander of the ‘Soyuz TMA-06M’ spacecraft. His second flight lasted 197 days in 2016-2017.

First batch of smart jewellery released at BSU

This event is timed to coincide with the 100th anniversary of the Belarusian State University, which will be celebrated on October 30th, 2021. The accessory was developed by students and undergraduates of the Department of Radiophysics and Computer Technologies. The batch consists of fifty unique electronic badges,



which are equipped with a microcontroller, optical sensors, LED ring and microphone. The stylish accessory can be used at sports events, during discos or evening walks. By reacting to the sound, a glow is seen in time with the music playing.

The accessory is in the form of a printed circuit board 40mm in diameter. The set also includes a passport for the goods and a charging cable. In the future, it is planned to expand the technical functionality of the smart accessory.

Belarusian playwright Pavel Pryazhko wins the Golden Mask award

This year, the Golden Mask Russian Theatre Award ceremony was postponed from April to November and, for the first time in its history, took place online. Belarusian director Aleksandr Yanushkevich was nominated for the ‘Best Work of a Director in a Puppet Theatre’ for his production of *The Tale of Bygone Years* at the Togliatti Puppet Theatre (Yanushkevich was awarded the Golden Mask in 2016 for the play *The Thick Notebook*).



The Belarusian author Pavel Pryazhko won in the category ‘Work of a Playwright’ for the play *Neighbour*, staged by director Dmitry Volkosterolov at the St. Petersburg ‘post theatre’. Mr. Pryazhko’s rivals in this year’s category were recognised and experienced dramatists, in particular the venerable Ivan Vyrypaev.

Official website of Belarus’ national pavilion at EXPO-2020 in Dubai (UAE) launched

Anyone who wishes can now receive the latest news and up-to-date information about Belarus’ participation in the largest exhibition project of our time. For foreign visitors, an English version is provided. Site users will be able to find out the history of the EXPO exhibitions, get acquainted in detail with the concept of the Belarusian pavilion, participants and partners, as well as business and cultural programmes of events that Belarus organises for the guests of the pavilion for six months from October 1st, 2021 to March 31st, 2022. The site is made using the corporate identity of the national pavilion, which is based on traditional Belarusian symbols and ornaments. <https://expo2020belarus.by/>



Patriots of Belarus on the march

By Dmitry Kryat

The atmosphere of unity in a sincere patriotic mood was inspiring: this is the unchanging spirit of all such events. In the aftermath of the election, those who firmly hold state positions naturally looked for like-minded people. They found each other on social networks, virtually united into groups and communities, realising that there were many more of them than alternatively-minded citizens. They talked about it, but it was thanks to the rally that they were able to meet in person. The moments when the network interlocutors recognised each other, as they say, in real life, were very touching. An excellent sense of unity, an uplifting mood, a feeling of being together — this is what gathers the participants of the 'For United Belarus' motor rally: sincerely, proactively, with a great desire to be together.

However, the fact that some media named this as the final one,



was slightly puzzling to some.

"No way. It was not the ending. The culmination — yes, but not the final," reassured the organiser of the event, Sergei Rachkovsky. "We will move on. There are a lot of beautiful iconic places in Belarus that you need to know about, that you need to visit at least once."

Yes, it is the knowledge of the Motherland, its understanding that nurtures sincere love for it.



The biggest motor rally in the history of the country was recently held with stunning success, with thousands of cars taking part in the 'For United Belarus' campaign under the state flag. I will never forget such a moment. Having taken a circuit around the Minsk ring road, the lead auto was already returning to Lipki airfield while some vehicles hadn't even left the start... The rally closed a ring around Minsk! I thought it a pity that there was no drone that could record how spectacularly the capital was ringed with a ribbon of the colours of the national flag so that everyone could see and understand: this is our city and only ours! We will not give our beloved capital to anyone!

and now we are preparing documents in order to register it. The name we'd like for the association is Patriots of Belarus. The idea is going through the approval procedure."

"The name is as broad as possible, all-embracing," Mr. Rachkovsky explains its essence. "Our goal is to unite people, at least those who voted for the current course, for the preservation of a strong peaceful country, for a confident tomorrow. The ultimate goal is to unite all Belarusians in order to eliminate the split that sudden-

ly appeared in society. People should feel that all Belarusians are united, that everyone should appreciate and respect each other first of all."

Uniting people through knowing themselves, the values of their land, its historical traditions, sacred symbols, glorious military past, the tragic and sacrificial pages of the Fatherland's chronicle, isn't it a noble mission? It will grow out of the sincere desire of people themselves to be together and together in the name of the present and the future.

Jewellers for the heart

By Olga Kosyakova

A patient with chronic heart failure was taken to the operation room. Our surgeons performed a minor-traumatic but very delicate intervention into his heart. Over the years of disease, it had expanded so much that it became the shape of a ball. The ANCORA technology — proposed by a French surgeon and implemented by American engineers — makes it possible to deflate the heart and return it to its original parameters. Four hours of painstaking work are needed for this.

'Busiki' [beads] is the word used by our doctors in describing this minimally invasive operation to reduce the left ventricle of the heart. During the intervention, the surgeon almost weaves beads, putting them on the left ventricle. The set includes anchors and barrels which the specialist — alternating — strings on a special cord and, using a catheter through the femoral artery, delivers to the heart cavity one after another.

"The left ventricle is like a sponge from the inside," Mr. Stelmashonok comments. "There are trabeculae and chords and it's important to pass through them so as not to damage anything. We work jointly with specialists in ultrasound diagnostics. The most challenging stage is to take the system in the form of a loop under the mitral valve, bring it into the aorta, putting in a special catheter with windows through which the anchors start working."

The new technique is in demand all over the world since the number of patients with heart failure is growing along with life expectancy. Belarus is among



During the operation

Heart surgeons of the Cardiology Republican Scientific and Practical Centre have performed an operation using the new American ANCORA technology which will delay and possibly even avoid heart transplants for patients with chronic heart failure. This is the twentieth such intervention in our country and the hundredth in the world under the clinical trial programme.

Valery Stelmashonok, the head of the laboratory of emergency and interventional cardiology, tells us about the effect achieved in treatment with the help of innovative intervention.

the top ten countries with the possibilities to enable Americans to conduct clinical trials of the new method.

The President of the American company, Jeff Kloss, left the operating room after our surgeons, acknowledging a high level of cardiac surgery in Belarus: this is what attracted American specialists. Belarusian heart surgeons were trained in

France where the idea of a unique system was born. Meanwhile, the first operations were performed at the Cardiology Centre, under the supervision of specialists from Lithuania where 'busiki' was used previously.

In Belarus, hundreds of patients suffer from heart failure and the progression of this disease is inevitably resolved by a

heart transplant. However, thanks to ANCORA, the Republic has already managed to alleviate the suffering of more than ten patients with chronic heart failure. They will perhaps need no transplant.

"The method is a kind of a bridge to transplantation, making it possible to postpone or avoid it entirely," adds the doctor. "Patients who have been operated on before demonstrate improvements in all parameters."

The first Belarusians who were lucky enough to participate in American clinical trials were three people aged 30-50. They had previously suffered an infection and, without proper treatment, it would develop into a heart complication.

"The selection for surgery is difficult," explains Yelena Kurlyanskaya, the Deputy Director for Therapeutic Care. "These are people with severe heart failure who have a very enlarged heart. Each is examined in great detail. All data is sent to an expert at Columbia University in New York and the final decision on the patient is made there."

"ANCORA technology is not easy, but convenient. Accordingly, the level of the centre should be appropriate," comments Dr. Polonetsky. "The study is being conducted in the USA, the UK, Holland, Belgium, Germany, the Czech Republic and Lithuania. In total, foreign colleagues plan to work with over 200 patients to get the result. We plan to operate on more patients. So far, the manufacturer is paying for clinical trials. Potentially, hundreds of patients need this treatment. If we buy the technology in the future — it is expensive, but the investment will be justified later. Indications for intervention will expand."

In the footsteps of wondrous animals

What is the threat from the American spiny-cheek crayfish, where is it possible to see the forest cat and how did jellyfish appear in our reservoirs? Scientists are preparing new editions of the Red and Black books.

By Inna Gorbatenko

Unwelcome guests

Among the main environmental problems of our time, reducing the diversity of species and ecological systems occupies a special place. Belarus has made significant efforts to preserve biodiversity and protect animals and plants that are threatened by alien species.

An important step towards biodiversity conservation was the release of the Black Book in 2016 — which became the first publication of its kind in Belarus. Vitaly Semenchenko, who heads the hydrobiology laboratory at the Scientific-Practical Centre for Bio-Resources, was directly involved in the process. He explains what the Black Book stands for, “Strengthening of human economic activity and climate change led to the appearance of alien species that are not typical for our flora and fauna. Many of them cause significant economic, environmental and social damage. They are called invasive species. Therefore, it became necessary to create a list of the most dangerous.”

According to the results of the study, there are 31 ‘harmful’ animal species in Belarus, ranging from invertebrates to mammals. Some come to the country with transport: rail, road or water, while others arrive with planting material, flowers and shrubs, or are imported with vegetables and fruit.

Mr. Semenchenko has many examples, “Take the American red-eared slider. It was first noticed near Brest and it’s believed to come from Poland. If it starts to breed, then it could displace our freshwater turtle included in the Red Book.”

Fancy that!

A sensational discovery was proof of the existence of the golden jackal in Belarus. A rare species (for our region) was killed during hunting on December 9th, 2017, in the Kobrin District. Another reason for discussion by scientists was the appearance of the forest cat in the Narovlya District: the animal had not been sighted in Belarus since the 1930s but was photographed on June 22nd, 2017 — using a camera trap in the former settlement of Rozhava, in the exclusion zone.

The tarantula has also become an unwelcome guest in Belarus. People are coming across it more often now — similarly with praying mantises. The piranha and armoured pikes — common for the Amazon in South America — have also been spotted.

“Two years ago, we were informed that a jellyfish was spotted on the Grebnoy Canal in Brest,” Mr. Semenchenko

recalls a unique case. “We went to the site and confirmed that there was a stable population of freshwater jellyfish. Their homeland is China. The jellyfish was not included in the Black Book because it does not pose a threat to the existing ecosystem.”

“Since the publication of the Black Book, the number of species that have entered the territory of Belarus has increased,” the man continues. “We now need to reissue it and our new edition will fundamentally differ from the original version. In the first book, we included only those invasive species that live in natural ecosystems, while the second issue will feature also invasive agricultural pests and species that develop in greenhouses and grain warehouses. For example, the



American catfish

first book didn’t include the Colorado beetle, but the second will.”

“Relatively recently, the bread beetle migrated to us from the Mediterranean. It is highly harmful to wheat, rye and barley crops... This species is thermophilic, so its distribution is limited to the Brest Region so far,” the expert adds.

In short, a great



Inclusion in the Red Book is the first step towards the conservation of rare species. Meadow pasquerflower



Raccoon dog



Red-eared slider

tor at the Scientific-Practical Centre for Bio-Resources.

“In Belarus, there is only one lake left — Yuzhny Volos in the Braslav District — where relict crustaceans live at a depth of 40 metres; these have been preserved since the time of the glacier. In Central Europe, they have completely disappeared. However, to the north, they are widespread. They are an indicator of a special natural environment unique to Belarus. It’s very important for us to save it!” the expert notes.

Continuous process

Rare biotopes are also a focus of attention. The country is trying to preserve the areas of unique places that have either never been affected by economic activity, or human intervention is almost imperceptible. They are most valuable since they act as a standard of how these areas of nature should look without human intervention. In addition, these sites concentrate rare and endangered species of plants and animals.

“The Zvanets, Sporovskie, Olmanskie swamps and the Belovezhskaya Pushcha swamps are of particular interest to Belarus and the EU in this regard,” Maksim Koloskov, a senior researcher of the Wildlife Monitoring and Cadastre Sector at the Scientific-Practical Centre for Bio-Resources, explains. He participated in the preparation of the 4th edition of the Red Book. “There you can find many rare species, in particular, the aquatic warbler, half of the world’s population of which lives in Belarus,” he adds.

Animals and plants are included in the Red Book for various reasons. For example, human activity does not affect nature in the best way due to land reclamation, use of fertilisers, deforestation and ploughing of meadows... Scientists view the situation in a complex to find out the reason for the disappearance and develop measures to protect vulnerable species.

“We regularly monitor the environment and work on many animals and plants. Priority is given to species protected on the territory of Belarus,” stresses Mr. Koloskov. “It’s important to understand that we are talking about a regional list of species which are rare for our country. At the same time, their habitat in the world might be extensive. Time and the new edition of the Red Book will show how effective measures for the conservation of endangered species will prove to be.”



Ringling of a protected species — the bearded tit

job has been done — which can be easily confirmed. According to some estimates, the total damage from invasive species on the planet is 5 percent of the world’s GDP — or trillions of Dollars. If we talk about Belarus, the damage from the bread beetle alone may amount to tens of millions of Dollars in the future. Therefore, it is important to identify dangerous species now in order to have time to develop methods to combat them.

Extremely good

At the same time, a team of scientists from the Scientific-Practical Centre for Bio-Resources are accumulating the data for the 5th edition of the Red Book which is reissued every decade, with amendments and additions. The first edition (1981) included 80 animal species and 85 plant species. The second (1993) featured more: 182 species of animals, 180 — plants, 17 — fungi and 17 — lichens. The third edition of the Belarusian Red Book was published in 2004.

“The fourth edition is based on the same national and international principles as the previous versions but the list of species has now been greatly transformed — featuring 36 more animal species and excluding 22. The category of conservation significance has changed for 26 animals. There are four categories: on the edge of extinction, endangered, vulnerable and potentially vulnerable. In total, the new edition includes 202 species of animals and 303 plants. Most of them have international nature conservation status,” says Vladimir Baichorov, the Head of the Wildlife Monitoring and Cadastre Sec-



War in the mind

It follows six weeks of fighting between Azerbaijan and ethnic Armenians. Under the peace deal — was signed by Russian President Vladimir Putin, Azerbaijani President Ilham Aliyev and Armenia's Prime Minister — Azerbaijan will hold on to areas of Nagorno-Karabakh that it has taken during the conflict. Armenia has also agreed to withdraw from several other adjacent areas over the next few weeks.

Russia's Defence Ministry confirmed that 1,960 personnel would be involved and reports said planes had left an airbase at Ulyanovsk carrying peacekeepers and armoured personnel carriers to Karabakh. Part of their role will be to guard the 'Lachin corridor', which links the Karabakh capital, Stepanakert, to Armenia.

Armenian Prime Minister Nikol

Pashinyan called the deal 'incredibly painful both for me and both for our people'. He said that his decision had been based on 'deep analyses of the combat situation and in discussion with best experts of the field'. "This is not a victory but there is not defeat until you consider yourself defeated," Mr. Pashinyan said.

News of the deal set off protests in the Armenian capital. Hundreds of people took to the streets and stormed government buildings soon after Armenia's Prime Minister, Nikol Pashinyan, announced the 'painful' deal. Windows were smashed and broken glass littered the lobby of Mr. Pashinyan's official residence. Protesters ripped his nameplate off his office door as others chanted: 'Nikol has betrayed us'. They believed the fighting

should have continued until the end and they were confident of victory.

Police officers looked on as demonstrators, including some army veterans wearing military fatigues, filled the ornate, wood-paneled offices, shouting and delivering furious speeches.

Crowds also forced their way into the Armenian parliament. Its speaker, Ararat Mirzoyan, was caught up in the violence and beaten unconscious by an angry mob.

The Armenian leader in Nagorno-Karabakh, Arayik Harutyunyan, said a ceasefire had been unavoidable after the loss of Karabakh's second biggest town, Shusha.

Leading politicians, with the exception of Mr. Pashinyan, are now in talks to find a way out of this deep crisis.



Protesters stormed government buildings in the Armenian capital hours after a peace deal between Armenia and Azerbaijan was announced

Word of the Year declared

'Lockdown' has been declared the Word of the Year for 2020 by Collins Dictionary, after a sharp rise in its usage during the pandemic

It 'encapsulates the shared experience of billions of people', Collins said. Lexicographers registered more than 250,000 usages of 'lockdown' during 2020, up from just 4,000 last year. Other pandemic-linked terms on the 10-strong list include 'furlough', 'key worker', 'self-isolate' and 'social distancing', as well as 'coronavirus'.

According to the dictionary, lockdown is defined as 'the imposition of stringent restrictions on travel, social interaction, and access to public spaces'. It came into common parlance as governments around the world responded to the spread of COVID-19 in early 2020 by placing strict measure to stop transmission of the virus.

'Megxit', the term modelled on the word Brexit which was used for the withdrawal of the Duke and Duchess of Sussex from royal duties, also makes the list.

Social media also plays its part with 'TikToker', describing someone who shares content on platform TikTok and 'mukbang' — a term originating in South Korea which describes a host who broadcasts videos of themselves eating large quantities of food.

Helen Newstead, a language content consultant at Collins, said, "Language is a reflection of the world around us and 2020 has been dominated by the global pandemic. Lockdown has affected the way we work, study, shop, and socialise. With



many countries entering a second lockdown, it is not a word of the year to celebrate but it is, perhaps, one that sums up the year for most of the world."

Last year's Collins word of the year was 'climate strike', marking a year in which 17-year-old Greta Thunberg led a global environmental movement.



Emotions on the pontoon

The 33 skippers left the Vendée Globe pontoon in Les Sables-d'Olonne. In the absence of the public (due to the health crisis), they were surrounded only by their teams and their families.

On November 8th, 2020, each skipper went down to the pontoon in the order of departure from the pontoon. Every 4 minutes, an IMOCA left the pontoon (in previous years, it was one boat every 10 minutes); 33 skippers were taking the start.

The boats were ordered by the organisation to move up the channel quickly, at a speed of 4 knots. Very few people could welcome them. Only the privileged few who have an apartment with a 'channel view' could be at the windows. Nothing

to do with the thousands of visitors that we usually see...

The Vendée Globe is a single-handed (solo) non-stop round the world yacht race. The race was founded by Philippe Jeantot in 1989 and, since 1992, has taken place every four years. It is named after the Département of Vendée, in France, where the race starts and ends. The Vendée Globe is considered an extreme quest of individual endurance and the ultimate test in ocean racing.

Pyramids getting a revamp

The Great Pyramids of Giza are one of the most recognisable tourist attractions in the world. The ancient Egyptian pharaohs built them to last forever and now, 4,500 years later, they're getting a revamp.

With the goal of making the country's most popular heritage site more accessible to tourists, a 17m Euro renovation is underway. The refurbishment is centred on the Giza Plateau, which houses the Sphinx and three pyramids, including the oldest and tallest masonry structure, the Great Pyramid of Khufu.

The ambitious project includes a new visitor centre, an environmentally-friendly

electric bus and the first restaurant ever to be located on site.

The 9 Pyramid Lounge is designed to mimic a traditional Bedouin camp in the desert. At 1,341 square metres, the complex has plenty of options for diners. It was built with all natural materials to blend in with its surroundings and to demonstrate the project's commitment to sustainable tourism in the area.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

About the song, chances to win and self-belief

Belarus will be represented by 12-year-old Arina Pekhtereva, from Mogilev, at the *Junior Eurovision Song Contest 2020* on November 29th. She'll sing her *Aliens* song. The young performer has won many national and international vocal competitions and festivals. Arina was awarded a silver medallion at the World Association of Festivals, took part in the prestigious Russian *Voice Kids* TV project and is a double scholarship holder of the President's Special Fund for Support of Talented Youth. At the same time, Arina conquers all not only with her amazing vocals but primarily with her positive attitude and openness. BelTA reporter met the girl to learn more.



Arina, you've already won many musical projects but what does it mean to win the national selection round for the *Junior Eurovision Song Contest*?

For me, it's the most important step; since childhood, I dreamed of performing at the 'Junior Eurovision' Song Contest. It's the biggest and most important project in my life.

How long have you been working towards your dream?

It's my fourth attempt. At the 'Junior Eurovision', I was a guest, in the audience and even a member of the jury. This time, I wished to represent Belarus and have succeeded.

What do you think helped you win the national selection round?

That was a combination of all aspects: the song and the image. Everything is important here, down to the smallest detail. The meaning of the song is also very important.

Your *Aliens* is unlikely to be a song for children. It's quite philosophical. What is its history?

We were working on the song in spring. At that time, the coronavirus pandemic was just beginning. People stopped seeing each other and communicating. With this song I want to say that we are all aliens — in the sense that we've come to Earth but fail to value what we own. We destroy the planet with our own hands and don't think about what we will save for future generations. I hope that we, children, can make this world better.

It's impossible not to comment on your vocals. The contest song looks very professional even at the national selection round...

I've been singing since I was 6. I can say that I've been preparing for the 'Junior Eurovision' for half my life.

It is always difficult to guess the preferences of the European public. How do you plan to conquer European hearts?



I'll do this through the power of my voice and song. I think everyone will like the song very much.

Do you think we can win?

I believe my performance will bring much joy to people. As for victory, I can't say in advance. I think I have a very good chance. I have a strong song and I believe in myself.

Perhaps you are a little sorry that, this year, the contest will be held in an online format...

It's a bit sad that we won't be able to get to know and communicate with contestants from other countries. However, I think the organisers have been right in choosing this format — being worried about our health. We have already made friends with many singers on social networks. We communicate, and conduct live broadcasts.

Apart from singing, what else are you fond of?

I play the piano and draw. I really like walking. Now I often visit Minsk and I already have many favourite places for walking. I think that, over time, there will be even more of them. I like Minsk in general. It's a very beautiful city. I also have a dog, Persik. He was featured in my presentation and is already quite popular. I have a cat and parrots too.

Many performers say they always feel support from the audience while singing. Do you feel this?

I think that many people know about me, follow my work and believe in my victory.

Where do you see yourself in the future? Is a singer's career a profession or a hobby?

My profession will definitely be related to creativity, but I can't say for sure yet. I would like to release my own album, of course. Now there are my original songs. I think there is still a lot of interesting things ahead.

Arina, how important is it for children to see the goal and not give up no matter what it takes?

The most important thing is to believe in yourself and never stop. This is a common mistake when children do something wrong and they say: that's it, it's not mine. You can't do that. Yes, there are failures, but you need to hold on and move on — since it's all your experience.

Little time is left until the final show. I know that you have already 'tested' the 600 Metre Studio of the

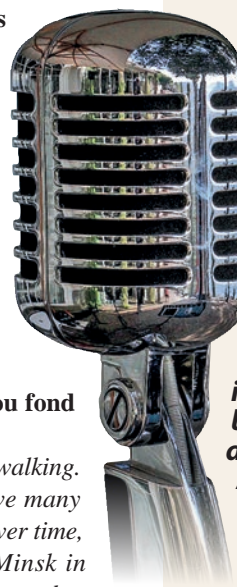
ADDITION

This year, due to the coronavirus pandemic, the European Broadcasting Union has made an unprecedented decision to hold the 'Junior Eurovision' Song Contest in a new format: pre-

recorded compositions of the show's participants will be played on the air. The main reasons are ensuring the safety of children in the context of the pandemic, as well as the inability of delegations to be present in the host country due to the closure of borders.

The European Broadcasting Union has developed clear rules for the recording of performances for all participating countries. According to the concept, this should take place in front of six cameras, on a specially built stage of a round shape (its diameter will be 7m, height — 60cm). All these have been done to ensure that all participants are on an equal footing, and their performances correspond to the general concept of the competition.

The final version of the Belarusian participant's performance at the song forum was recorded in the 600 Metre Studio of the Belarusian TV and Radio Company. Under the terms of the show, Arina Pekhtereva sang her 'Aliens' live. However, the audience will be able to see the lines from the song even on the girl's costume. The team from the company has developed the graphic content and the performance is expected to be clip-based, dynamic and cosmic.



Belarusian TV and Radio Company. What are your impressions?

The stage is really very beautiful. My emotions overflow when all the attention is focused on you. I want to thank everyone for their support. I'm pleased that the Belarusian audience liked my song. I hope that it will also touch hearts of Europeans.

Photo courtesy of Arina Pekhtereva

Gastronomic Belarus

Let's go to the Smorgon Local Lore Museum to learn the recipe for round cracknels and the secret of the most delicious condensed milk and make cheese for the winter season



Snails can be treated on a farm in the Grodno Region

By Sofia Arsenieva

To taste the soul

Tosya Kislitsyna, from the famous film *Girls*, said, "Let's take potatoes. Do you think it's so easy: to cook and eat? Not at all! Do you know how many dishes you can cook from potatoes? We can count: fried potatoes, boiled and mashed potatoes, French fries, potato pie with meat, mushrooms and so on. Potato pancakes, casserole, potatoes stewed with prunes..." Belarusians can continue this list endlessly but their clear favourites are mysterious 'dumplings with souls'. Tender grated potato crust is stuffed with minced meat, mushrooms or bacon and this 'miracle' is often on the restaurant and cafe menus in the north of the country. When a hot, fragrant dumpling is cut, a cloud of steam rises up from the inside — which is 'the soul'. The locals, however, might mention another, more pragmatic version of the name. They say that dumplings are not a dish for every day, because it's impossible to have so much meat — which is their 'soul' — every day.

To make cheese for the winter season

The Greeks have feta, the French — Roquefort, and Belarus — Klinkovy [wedge] cheese. It was known in Russia since the 13th century but is primarily associated with Belarus. Unsurprisingly, everyone in the Russian Empire called it 'Belarusian'.

The cheese got its unusual name due to its wedge-shaped form. Taste is dictated by the cooking method. It is made from cottage cheese which is put into a linen bag. Excessive liquid then drains and the cheese is pressed. Wedge cheese can be both honey-sweet and salty, with the addition of cumin, berries or herbs. It can be eaten fresh and dry. It is known that, in the old days, Belarusian housewives added cheese even to porridge — in the manner of Italian Parmesan.

▶ Belarusian cheese is suitable for any meal



A monument was erected to condensed milk near the plant in Rogachev: looks massive but is unfortunately inedible

as famous William Pokhlebkin wrote in his *Big Cookbook*. It was in the mid-17th century, when the Radzivils founded a bear training school in the town. Animals were taught to dance and perform all sorts of tricks; tours all over Europe were common. During long journeys 'abvaranki' [crackers] were used as food — not as a treat but for the sake of convenience: tamers wore them on a rope on their necks. Bears are cunning and could steal them. Old recipes for the first round crackers are kept at the Smorgon Local Lore Museum, while ready-cooked treats could be bought at any store: the local bakery specialises in the production of 'edible souvenirs'. Moreover, the old town hosts a festival of round crackers when locals make metre-long products: nobody is left hungry.

To collect the 'horned harvest'

Belarusian cuisine also has a place for exotics: these are delicious snails adored by French gourmets. The best Parisian restaurants have long served delicacies collected not in Burgundy vineyards, but... in Belarusian villages! In the Korelichy District of the Grodno Region, there is a farm where snails are grown professionally. Here, true 'horned harvests' are seen, using local snails. Interestingly, in recent years, Belarus has earned more than \$5m on exports escargot — an impressive feat.

The delicacy can be created on the spot: soup with snails, baked snails with white wine, snail salads, pasta and even shish kebab are on the menu. Dishes are cooked right in front of guests and there's no doubt about the freshness of the product and its quality. Ladies can enjoy special interesting offers: face masks with snail mucin or body massage by the 'horned' farm inhabitants.

To return to Soviet childhood

The most delicious condensed milk in the world is Belarusian. No one will argue with this fact, of course. Branded blue jars of the Rogachev Dairy Plant are easy to find in supermarkets in Berlin, New York and Tel Aviv. Meanwhile, in Russia, hundreds of counterfeit condensed milk products with a recognisable factory logo are found annually. What's the secret? Rogachev is the only place in the post-Soviet area where continuous milk thickening technology has been preserved. This taste is not to be confused with any other. In addition to the classic sweetness, there are varieties for gourmets: with cocoa, chicory, natural coffee and other additives.

Interestingly, the plant became famous all over the world in the late 1930s. Even then, local condensed milk with sugar in 4kg tin cans, coffee in 200 gram cups and butter in barrels were exported even overseas.

To visit the home of round crackers

A Russian samovar can hardly be imagined without these delicious round-shaped biscuits with holes. It is known for certain that they were 'invented' by residents of Smorgon, in the Grodno Region



Alina Gornosko



Yelizaveta Zorkina

Ovation for gymnasts

All golds at the International Rhythmic Gymnastics Tournament for the Prizes of Marina Lobach won by Belarusian gymnasts



Marina Lobach

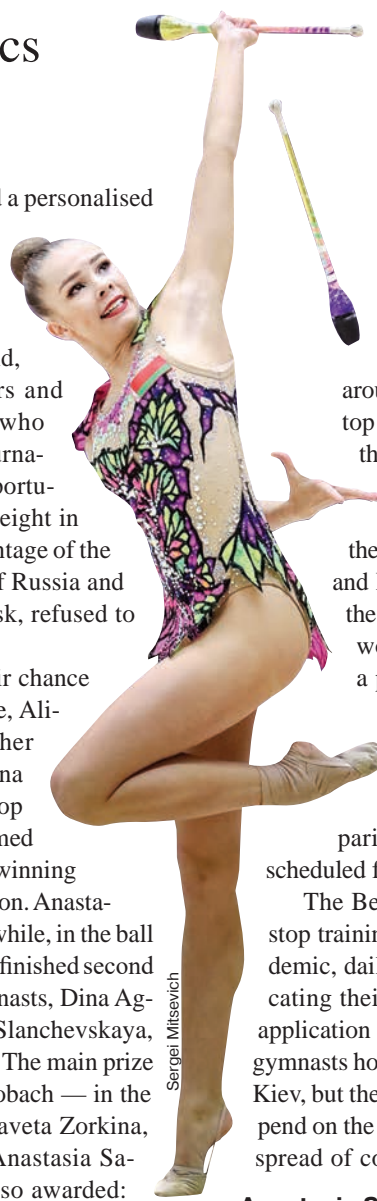
By Tatiana Pastushenko

Minsk has recently hosted the International Rhythmic Gymnastics Tournament for the Marina Lobach Prizes, becoming the 18th in a row. However, as the gymnast admits, every event was special for her. "There was, for example, a year when a snow storm covered the Tennis Palace and we couldn't decorate the hall. Many participants who wanted to come to us faced problems due to flight delays. In fact, we managed to organise a good tournament then. However, the world is experiencing the coronavirus pandemic at present," she says and despite this, the tournament at the Palace of Rhythmic Gymnastics took place — becoming a true highlight since it gathered gymnasts from four countries: Belarus, Israel, Lithuania and Armenia. For

two days, they competed for medals and a personalised statuette of Marina Lobach.

This year's Marina Lobach prize tournament was special for several other reasons. It was overseen by the International Gymnastics Federation and, accordingly, featured not only juniors and pre-juniors but also adult gymnasts who have experienced times when most tournaments are being cancelled and any opportunity to show their mettle is worth its weight in gold. However, not everyone took advantage of the opportunity: the titled national teams of Russia and Ukraine, who planned to come to Minsk, refused to participate in the competition.

In turn, Belarusians didn't miss their chance and, in the multidisciplinary programme, Alina Gornosko was unrivalled. Two other Belarusians — Anastasia Salos and Anna Kamenshchikova — were among the top three. Actually, Alina Gornosko was named the best in the clubs and ball event, also winning silver in the exercises with hoop and ribbon. Anastasia Salos led in the hoop and the ribbon, while, in the ball exercise, she won silver. Daria Tkacheva finished second in the clubs section and Belarusian gymnasts, Dina Agisheva, Yelizaveta Zorkina and Polina Slanchevskaya, performed brilliantly among the juniors. The main prize — a personalised statuette of Marina Lobach — in the team all-around was captured by Yelizaveta Zorkina, Dina Agisheva, Alina Gornosko and Anastasia Salos. The host of the tournament was also awarded:



Anastasia Salos

the NOC medal 'For Outstanding Services' went to Marina Lobach by the NOC First Vice-President, Viktor Lukashenko.

The head coach of our national team, Irina Leparskaya, watched the performances of the Belarusian athletes from the stands. She wasn't just thinking of those coming out on the carpet. "Marina Lobach was my first pupil. I wasn't going to be a coach at all until I saw her! The fact that Marina became an Olympic champion, a member of the Technical Committee of the European Union of Gymnastics and the host of such a tournament arouses excitement and pleasure. All our top gymnasts, all our champions started their path with competitions for the Marina Lobach prizes. From this year, the competition is recognised by the International Gymnastics Federation and I hope that, when the pandemic ends, the leading gymnasts from all around the world will perform here. Having such a palace, such organisation of competitions, we are simply obliged to accept all the best gymnasts in the world," she said.

Our girls will continue preparing for the European Championship scheduled for November 26th-29th.

The Belarusian national team, who did not stop training throughout the months of the pandemic, daily improving their skills and complicating their programmes, have already sent an application to participate in the tournament. Our gymnasts hope that they will be able to perform in Kiev, but the coaches note that everything will depend on the development of the situation with the spread of coronavirus. After all, health is much more important than medals.



Track medals

Belarusian cyclists win two medals at the European Track Championships

The 2020 UEC European Track Cycling Championships was held in Bulgarian Plovdiv — the first international event for track cyclists after the coronavirus break. Belarusians also fought for medals, claiming two. Anna Terekh took silver on the first day of the tournament, with a 10km scratch being the best discipline for the Belarusian. Anna was confidently in the lead during the decisive race and only at the last turn allowed the Italian to pass her: Martina Fidanza became the winner of the gold. The bronze medal was won by Ukrainian Tatiana Klimenko.

Silver in the omnium discipline for the Belarusian national team was brought by Yevgeny Korolek. The Belarusian athlete scored 116 points during the race. British Matthew Walls was 12 points ahead of him. Portuguese Iúri Leitão, who became the bronze medallist, lost one point to Yevgeny Korolek. In this type of programme, Belarusians have previously qualified for the Tokyo Games.



Back in top ten

Belarusian tennis player Arina Sobolenko won the tournament in Austrian Linz, with a prize fund of \$202,000

In the first set of the decisive match with the Belgian Elise Mertens (ranked 21st in the world rating), the Belarusian won in a stubborn struggle — 7:5 — and in the second set she won easily — 6:2. The match lasted 1 hour and 45 minutes.

On the way to the final, Arina Sobolenko alternately defeated Italian tennis player Jasmine Paolini (94th), Swiss Stefanie Voegele (124th), French representative Océane Dodin (115th) and Czech Barbora Krejčíková (64th).

For Sobolenko, this final was the 12th in professional tournaments under WTA auspices. She now has eight championship titles.

Thanks to the triumph in Linz, Arina Sobolenko returned to the top ten of the world



twitter.com/via

rankings from Monday. Before the start of the tournament in Austria, she was in 11th position, and after the victory she moved up one place, gaining 4,220 points. Victoria Azarenko remained in 13th position with 3,426 points while Aleksandra Sasnovich, who reached the quarterfinals in Linz, takes 90th place with 833 points and Olga Govortsova is positioned 133rd with 570 points.



Viktor Drachev

Photo of the week

First frost in the Turov area

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On November 19th, 1990, the Mogilev Regional Art Museum was founded; since 1996 it has been named after P.V. Maslenikov. This is a major centre of culture and art, which stores and popularises unique

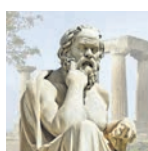


collections of painting, icon painting, graphics, sculpture, as well as decorative-and-applied art. The collection of icons is of particular value, among which are excellent examples of icon painting culture: the Carrying the Cross icon (19th century), Christ the Vine icon, alongside frescoes from the Belynich Church of the Carmelites (18th century).

November 19th is the Day of Missile Forces and Artillery in the Republic of Belarus. It was founded to commemorate the outstanding services of the rocket forces and artillery in the



fight against the German fascist invaders during the Great Patriotic War, while the date November 19th is the day of the beginning of the counter-offensive of Soviet troops at Stalingrad in 1942, in which the artillery played one of the key roles.



November 19th — World Philosophy Day — was proclaimed at the 33rd session of the General Conference of UNESCO in 2005 and is held on the third Thursday of November every year in order to bring the world community to the richness of philosophical thought at global level.

On November 20th, 1945, the Nuremberg Trials for the main fascist criminals began (ended on October 1st, 1946). The process was conducted by the International Military Tribunal, created by the London Agreement between the USSR, the USA, France and Great Britain, and was joined by 19 more states.



November 20th is World Children's Day. It is celebrated annually at the call of the UN to commemorate the adoption on November 20th, 1959, by the 14th session of the UN General Assembly of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child and the Convention on the Rights of the Child (adopted by the 44th session of the UN General Assembly on November 20th, 1989).



November 21st is World Television Day. It was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 17th, 1996, to commemorate



the first World Television Forum held at the UN Headquarters on November 21st, 1996. In the modern world, television is a symbol of communication and globalisation. It plays a huge role everywhere, influencing, among other things, the formation of public opinion and the education of the younger generation.

On November 23rd, 1920, Zinaida Tusnolobova-Marchenko was born (Rossony District, Vitebsk Region) — Hero of the Soviet Union (1957). She graduated from several nursing courses. During the Great Patriotic War she was at the front from April 1942: over 8 months she carried 128 wounded soldiers from the field of battle. In February 1943, she was seriously wounded in battle, frostbitten, her arms and legs were amputated. Zinaida spoke in front of the workers, on the radio, in the press, urging them to smash the German fascist invaders. Airplanes, tanks, guns and mortars appeared at the front with the inscription 'For Zina



Tusnolobova!' After the war, she was actively involved in social activities. She died in 1980. She was an Honorary Citizen of Polotsk.

On November 24th, 1730, Aleksandr Suvorov was born (1730-1800) — Russian commander and Generalissimo (1799). He took part in the Seven Years' War of 1756-1763. In 1768-1772, he fought against the troops of the Bar Confederation in Belarus and Poland. In 1771, he defeated a detachment of the Great Hetman of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania M.K. Oginski near the town of Stolovichi. He developed the tactics for columns and loose formation. He didn't lose a single battle. From 1795, he owned the Kobrinsky Klyuch estate in the Brest Region. He is the author of the works *Regimental Institution* and *Science to Win*. In 1943, Suvorov military schools were established, including one in 1953 in Minsk.



On November 25th, 1795, in the New Castle of Grodno, the King of Poland and Grand Duke of the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, Stanisław August Poniatowski, abdicated in favour of the Russian Empress Yekaterina II. The federal state Rzecz Pospolita and both states within it — the Kingdom of Poland and the Grand Duchy of Lithuania — ceased to exist.