



National Academy of Sciences scientists develop innovative coatings for spacecraft and instruments

7



Belarusian men's and women's teams in fire and rescue sports claimed gold medals at the World Championship

11

INTERNATIONAL

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18-year-old Darya Goncharevich of Minsk became *Miss Belarus-2021*

## Ball of queens

Twenty-nine of the most charming and attractive girls in the country measured their beauty and talents in Minsk. The acting *Miss Belarus* Maria Vasilevich put a brand new crown — made of white gold with topaz and diamonds — on the head of 18-year-old Darya Goncharevich. Alongside the jewellery made specially for the competition by the Kristall Jewellery Factory, Darya also received a substantial cash prize, a Geely car, the right to represent the country at the *Miss World* Beauty Pageant and a basket of flowers from President Aleksandr Lukashenko. Despite his busy work schedule, the Head of State found time to personally appreciate the colourful show at the Sports Palace.





# ‘It will be a breakthrough’

The assessment was given by the presidents of Belarus and Russia on the results of many hours of negotiations in Moscow and the agreements reached. Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin agreed on all 28 integration programmes of the Union State.



Over the past few years, Belarus and Russia have painstakingly worked on the Union State programmes to deepen integration. They were worked out at expert and government levels, with heads of the two states also discussing them during personal meetings.

During the final press conference for journalists, the President of Belarus called the negotiations held with his Russian counterpart honest, open and constructive, “Our governments have done a tremendous job. Vladimir Putin and I have made today all the fundamental decisions that concerned us... In order not to detail the contents of the documents reviewed (they will be made public, it’s not a secret), I will highlight the most important thing in them. These are equal rights for the economic entities of our countries. Those equal conditions various representatives of Belarus have talked about for many years, including me as the president. It is the underlying foundation. We are full partners,” noted Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The Head of State stressed that there should be fair competition for all companies in the markets of Belarus and Russia,

**“It was for the sake of equality, profitable co-operation and fruitful interaction that the Belarusian-Russian integration was started. The mechanisms for the development of a single economic space are clearly spelled out in the Union State programmes: the formation of united sectoral markets, the implementation of a harmonised financial, tax, credit, pricing and trade policy.”**

According to the President, the Union State programmes also include a solution to the

problem of energy supplies to Belarus, an increase in the volume of transport services, financing of new investment projects, reaching common principles in implementing agricultural and industrial policies, and increasing the level of mutual social guarantees for citizens of the two countries.

## ‘We are only stronger together’

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked the critics of the Union State in Belarus: what is bad in the decisions made for Belarusians?

“I would like critics of our integration in Russia to tell me where they see a weight tied to the legs of the Russian Federation. There is nothing bad for the peoples of Belarus and Russia in these programmes and could not be. Everything was aimed at increasing the well-being of our peoples. And we must put an end to these conversations. Our integration is exclusively mutually beneficial,” underlined the Belarusian leader.

He noted that during the negotiations it was possible to reach mutual understanding in all main areas. Answering journalists’ questions, Aleksandr Lukashenko noted,

**“I will underline: life convincingly proves that everything we do is aimed at the benefit and specific needs of our people. I am absolutely convinced that deepening integration and building up multifaceted interaction is the most indicative and effective response to all our ill-wishers. We are only stronger together.”**

During the talks, alongside deepening integration between the states, the presidents discussed in detail topical international problems, relations with neighbouring

countries and associations. They dwelt in detail on the situation in the zones of instability, primarily in Afghanistan, from the point of view of threats to the security of the Union State. The Belarusian leader explained to the press,

**“In this context, the primary importance is to ensure the comprehensive security of our countries and the CSTO as a whole. We will all together approve a unified position on this issue during the upcoming events in Dushanbe [CSTO and SCO summits]. Even we — being at the centre of Europe — far from the theatre of military operations, felt the consequences of the Afghan crisis. Look what is happening with the refugees on our borders, how the ‘progressive’ West is behaving, constantly rattling their weapons.”**

According to the Head of State, the meeting also tackled issues of further normalisation of transport communications, as well as interaction in the field of microelectronics and in the construction sector.

## Important agreements

Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin also answered journalists’ questions regarding the implementation of the provisions of the Union State agreement, the removal of various long-standing problems in bilateral co-operation, the migration crisis, the topic of air communication between the countries, prices for Russian energy resources supplied to Belarus, issues of

credit support and the possibility of the emergence of a single currency of the Union State.

“We have agreed to conduct a common macroeconomic policy, harmonise monetary policy and integrate payment systems. We have also agreed to ensure information security, deepen collaboration in the customs and tax spheres: we are talking about the transparency of the customs value of goods and the definition of a transparent structure for the value of goods in the economy in general,” said Vladimir Putin.

At a meeting with journalists, it was noted that Russia is lifting all COVID restrictions on passenger air traffic with Belarus. The Russian leader explained that this topic was not touched upon directly at the talks. However, the commission of the Russian Government has recently made a corresponding decision.

**The President of Russia noted that as a result of the negotiations, it was possible to develop mutually acceptable approaches to the gas issue. The Russian natural gas price for Belarus for 2022 will remain at the current year’s level. At the same time, by December 1st, 2023, a document will be signed on the creation of a unified gas market within the Union State. Moreover, it is envisaged to conclude an agreement on the unification of the oil and oil products markets, as well as an agreement on a single electricity market.**

At the meeting with journalists, the presidents spoke about the single currency of the Union State. It’s too early for Belarus and Russia to switch to a single currency, believes the Head of the Belarusian State. However, he did not rule out that, in the future, the two countries may return to this issue.

## Belarus fulfils its obligations

Aleksandr Lukashenko said that Belarus fulfils all its obligations with partners, but under the conditions of sanctions it cannot ensure the security of the European Union at the border,

**“Look at their ‘democratic’ face: they shoot, catch migrants with dogs, organise them in groups and drive them across the border to us, shooting, thank God, over their heads. Although there are also deaths. They throw them to us across the border: ‘Take them away’... We honestly carried out our mission until they began to forcefully turn the situation in our country and attempt to overthrow the government.”**

The President also added, “We will always do what we need to do as a reliable partner. If Europe wants these normal relations, please, we are ready to negotiate tomorrow.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that during the construction of the Union State, Belarus and Russia have always focused on the European Union, but today this union is not the best example, “There are already a lot of tendencies leading to collapse. They already openly criticise each other. We do not want to repeat these mistakes.”

During the conversation with journalists, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke about speculation connected with the absorption of Belarus by Russia, “The President of Russia diplomatically didn’t mention speculations about mergers and takeovers and so on. I should say that the president of Russia and I did not succumb to this disease. If others did, we can heal them.”

At the same time, the Head of State noted that the leadership of both countries will take steps exclusively in the interests of their people. If Belarus and Russia need closer relations, this will be done instantly as soon as citizens’ requests are voiced.

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

The day after the talks between the presidents, a meeting of the Council of Ministers of the Union State was held. As a result of the event, which took place on Belarusian territory, the main areas for the implementation of the provisions of the Treaty on the Establishment of the Union State for 2021-2023 and 28 Union State programmes were approved, which will later be submitted for approval by the Supreme State Council of the Union State.



# Barometer of public peace

The telephone survey, entitled *Public Opinion on Issues of Concern to the Population* was conducted from July 19th to August 9th, 2021, by the Institute of Sociology at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. The sample consisted of 902 respondents, with the principles of representativeness being observed. The results of the poll are commented on by the Belarusian political scientist, Dean of the Faculty of Philosophy and Social Sciences at the Belarusian State University, Doctor of Philosophy in History, Vadim Gigin.

By Oksana Nevmerzhitskaya

## Demand for stability

According to Vadim Gigin, the figures that we see from the research of the Institute of Sociology testify to the strengthening of stability in Belarusian society, “In particular, purely political problems fade into the background. People are more interested in socio-economic status.”

*It's very important that the events of 2020 — attempts to shake up society — taught many of our fellow citizens to appreciate the achievements already available in the Belarusian system. We can see this from the estimates of the financial situation of families and their views on the near future.*

The expert notes, “Yes, of course, people are dissatisfied with certain indicators, but this is quite natural. It would be incomprehensible if there were other results. However, at the same time, more than 50 percent assess the socio-economic development of their settlements (this is very important: not their personal situation, but settlements as a whole!) as ‘average’ and 15 percent view it as ‘high’.”

The indicator for assessing life satisfaction is also of interest. Here it's necessary to clarify that this is a term that combines several indicators at once.

*This indicator also testifies to the fact that society has come to realise that the threat that quite realistically faced the country last August and last autumn was overcome. This indicator reflects the priority for stable development in our country.*

## External priorities: a realistic view

Vadim Gigin considers the figures related to foreign policy aspects to be significant and important,

*“I would like to draw your attention to an important and indicative point. 38.9 percent of the population believe that ‘there is no need to be guided by anyone, it is necessary to pursue an independent policy’. As for the relationship with our closest strategic partner, according to almost half — 47.1 percent — of the respondents, Belarus should be an independent state and build its relations with Russia on the basis of international treaties. However, 30.1 percent of the citizens of our country consider it is necessary to build relations on the principle of an equal union of two states with the creation of supranational governing bodies.”*

At the same time, the expert recalled that political opponents of the Belarusian state and western propaganda centres tried and are trying to launch the topic of the alleged fall of the Russian Federation's authority in connection with its support of the political system of Belarus, personally Aleksandr Lukashenko, “Moreover, they do this without citing sufficiently convincing sociological data, but only referring to fragmentary information, dubious ‘polls’ in telegram channels and social networks. Any sociologist will say that this is absolutely irrelevant. From the poll, we see that on a number of the proposed issues, Russia consistently takes the first place. Europe — both collective and its individual countries — ranks second and third.”

Mr. Gigin underlines one more significant aspect, “Pay attention to the pragmatic question ‘What should serve as the main directions in foreign policy?’, where China is gaining 0.8 percent. However, in the question ‘With whom should economic co-operation be strengthened?’ China — gaining 25.9 percent — confidently bypasses all European countries. The notorious multi-vector approach is losing its relevance, since we see that in the pragmatic question of economic collaboration, the answer ‘with all countries’ is extremely unpopular: less than 8 percent think so.”

*“Although I do not see a direct answer here on the issue of sanctions, I would not say that the answers received — especially the preference for the orientation in the economic sphere towards Russia and China — indicate some kind of fear of sanctions. People are quite confident about the future in this context,” asserts Mr. Gigin.*

The demand for stability in the country remains strong. According to data from the sociological poll, Belarusians do not show any deep reasons for unrest; however, the authorities should be especially sensitive towards the problems and aspirations of the population.



## Assessment of the financial situation of their families by Belarusians (%)

- Good — 33.1
- Average — 52.5
- Bad — 13.6



## Life satisfaction score (%)

- Satisfied — 74.1
- Not satisfied — 22.1

## Problems of most concern to the population (%)

- Prices for food and essential goods — 43.5
- Growth of drunkenness and alcoholism of the population — 40.4
- Salary level — 38
- State of health: one's own, relatives and friends — 35.8
- Inflation — 31.3



**Purely political problems fade into the background. People are more interested in the socio-economic situation.**

## With whom should economic co-operation be strengthened? (according to the surveyed Belarusians, %)

- with Russia — 53.7
- with China — 25.9
- with Germany — 9.9
- with Ukraine — 9.5
- with Poland — 8.2
- with Kazakhstan — 5.6
- liaise with all countries — 7.9



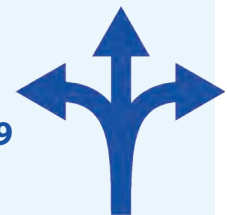
## Assessment of the near future by Belarusians (%)

- I expect changes for the better — 40.6
- Life will remain unchanged — 32.9
- There will be negative changes — 7.7
- Found it difficult to answer — 18.8



## What should serve as the main direction in foreign policy? (according to the surveyed Belarusians, %)

- There is no need to be guided by anyone, it is necessary to pursue an independent policy — 38.9
- Focus on Russia — 32.2
- Focus on Europe — 10.4



## How should Belarus build relations with Russia? (according to the surveyed Belarusians, %)

- As independent states, on the basis of international treaties — 47.1
- In the form of an equal union with supranational governing bodies — 30.1



**Belarusian citizens are quite realistic about the prospects for international economic co-operation**



# For the sake of security in the region



By Yevgeny Kononovich,  
Polina Konoga

## Taking into account military conflicts in the world

On his arrival at the training ground, the Commander-in-Chief first of all visited the command post of the regional group of forces of Belarus and Russia, tackling the provision of military security of the Union State in the western strategic direction. The conversation, for obvious reasons, was closed to the press. However, what we saw later at the training ground was a truly large-scale spectacle, of which they say ‘a picture is worth a thousand words’.

It’s noteworthy that, this year, not only Belarusian and Russian servicemen are involved in the exercise, but also soldiers of the air assault brigade from Kazakhstan. The intrigue was also added to by the fact that the manoeuvres took into account the experience of the latest military conflicts in Syria and Nagorno-Karabakh and took place in conditions as close as possible to combat ones. For greater authenticity, even a conditional settlement Zornoye was built at the training ground. According to legend, it was captured by the gunmen.

The units of the territorial troops were the first to enter the battle with the illegal armed formation. They blocked bandits and radicals. The airborne assault subunits, supported by Mi-24 and Ka-52 attack helicopters, soon arrived to help them. By joint effort, they carried out a sweep of the settlement. The airspace was taken over by Su-30 fighters.

To deter the enemy’s offensive, a squadron of four Su-34s destroyed its air defence systems at the starting positions using high-explosive fragmentation bombs. A strike group of Su-25 attack aircraft joined the battle, and a few minutes later the sky above the training ground was ‘cut’ by the supersonic Tu-22M3 bombers of the Russian Aerospace Forces. This machine is capable of hitting targets at a distance of up to 7,500km from home airfields. These bombers easily



dealt with the command posts of the enemy army corps.

At that time, the ‘Tornado’ multiple launch rocket systems were operating on the ground in tandem with the combat vehicles of the ‘Solntsepek’ heavy flamethrower system. The latter got its name (translated as ‘burning sun’) for a reason: a continuous avalanche of fire destroys all living things over a large area.

...The enemy is demoralised, the reserves are cut off. This enabled the main forces of the regional group of forces to launch a counteroffensive. The newest tanks, which are in service with the troops of the Union State, moved into a counterattack: T-72B3, T-80, T-90UBKh. Rocket troops and artillery fired from all barrels, and our aviation ruled the air. Via swift co-ordinated actions, the attackers finally destroyed the armoured vehicles and manpower of the enemy, leaving it no chance to regroup.

The journalists later asked the Commander-in-Chief about his personal impressions. Aleksandr Lukashenko responded,

*“This is brilliant! The Kazakhstanis have done well to come here. Though there is a small amount, the spirit itself is important. I was very much impressed by the exercise in general.”*

The Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia conducted a large-scale joint strategic exercise ‘Zapad-2021’, with the President of our country taking part in the active phase of the manoeuvres. The Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces of Belarus watched the progress of manoeuvres at the Obuz-Lesnovsky training area in the Baranovichy District. Aleksandr Lukashenko was pleased with what he saw and stressed, “Let no one even doubt that we — Belarusians, Russians, Kazakhstanis and citizens of other CSTO member states — are ready to do everything to preserve regional security and peace in our Fatherland!”

*“There will be no war only if the servicemen improve their training and demonstrate their skills to the possible enemy. The situation is very serious in the world, the world has gone mad. We cannot feel complacent in any case.”*

The Belarusian leader also instructed the Government and the Ministry of Defence to find an opportunity and reward the CSTO colleagues who took part in the exercise, “We will definitely defend this land, as our ancestors did.”

After the awards ceremony, Aleksandr Lukashenko familiarised himself with some samples of new and modernised military equipment. In particular, the modified V-2 armoured personnel carrier from the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant was highly praised



## A case for real men

Awards are given according to merits. The Commander-in-Chief personally awarded the most distinguished servicemen and appealed to the governors and heads of local authorities, “Find an opportunity — this is an order — to thank all the people we drafted for the exercise. People deserve both gratitude and, most importantly, financial incentives. I know they didn’t do it for the money, but, nevertheless, this should be done. The same applies to the representatives from

Kazakhstan and Russia, who will continue taking part in the operations at the training grounds, fortunately, peaceful so far.”

Separate gratitude from the Head of State was rendered to the servicemen of the territorial troops, “You are all real men. Every single person who had to be drafted showed up on time at the recruiting station and trained with honour at the training areas.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko also urged people not to relax, noting that the situation in the world is very serious,

by the Commander-in-Chief. Of the imported components, it has only a Chinese-made engine. The remaining parts, including the combat module, are Belarus-made. Domestic developments of high-precision optoelectronic instrumentation are also noteworthy. For example, as a representative of LEMT Scientific and Technical Centre of the BelOMO told us, only Belarus and the United States currently produce ultra-modern holographic sights. The tropospheric communications station, the latest drones, and the ‘Polonez’ multiple launch rocket system were also presented.



**History teaches a lot**

Taking into account the events of recent days, a significant part of the President's communication with journalists was devoted to issues of Belarusian-Russian co-operation. In particular, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that during the recent talks in Moscow with Vladimir Putin, much attention was paid to defence and security issues, "Probably, for 3-3.5 hours out of eight hours we were engaged in a dialogue specifically about defence and security. He told me about more modern S-500 complexes that can work on ballistic missiles. A very effective complex. I also reminded him once again about the S-400, telling him where we want to put these complexes."

According to the President, now the S-300 systems completely cover the perimeter of Belarus in the western direction,

*"But, as you know, a southern direction was added. We discussed this topic with Belarusian generals and Russians. We are starting to feel the heat from the south. And worse things may happen... We need to prepare. The Belarusian-Ukrainian border is 1,200km long. This is why we have to cover this perimeter, too.*

And we were just talking about the fact that the S-400 will be appropriate for us. And he [Vladimir Putin] gave instructions to the Defence Minister to work with our people on these issues in order to be able to supply these complexes to us."

Speaking in general about the procurement of weapons in Russia, the Head of State noted that a whole list of supplies — worth more than \$1bn — had been agreed upon until 2025, "This is about a dozen aircraft, some have already arrived, several dozen helicopters, Tor-M2.

This suggests that we and the Russian Federation take the western area very seriously, where we are in direct contact with NATO troops. You see how they behave. Therefore, one cannot relax, taking into account the experience of 1941, when we calmed everything down, calmed everyone down (do not respond to provocations, etc.), and then received a deafening blow and practically lost Belarus in a couple of months.

*History teaches a lot. We want to be ready in advance and the current exercise is what it is all about."*

**'Specific issues occupied us'**

Continuing the topic of co-operation with Russia, the journalists inquired about the details of the closed part of the negotiations between Aleksandr Lukashenko and his Russian counterpart. The Head of State recalled the chronology of the meet-

ing, "In order not to detain journalists, we discussed the main issues: the main areas of our interaction, which are expressed in 28 Union State programmes. And the big questions are energy, gas, oil and so on which you were informed about [at a joint press conference in the Kremlin]. And then, at the suggestion of Vladimir Putin, we returned to his office, drank tea, and specific issues occupied us: from the construction of facilities (including the Vostochny cosmodrome) to the issue of weapons. We discussed these problems until two in the morning."

The President noted that after



the Belarusian side built a school in Voronezh, a request was received to build other social facilities for another \$100m.

Meanwhile, the presidents will discuss all projects in more detail soon. A CIS Summit is scheduled for October 15th in Minsk, which will be attended by the Russian leader.

Journalists also asked whether it was a question of re-

**Undignified behaviour**

The President also commented on the current migration situation on the European border. He recalled how the West appealed to Tajikistan, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan and Turkmenistan with a request to accept Afghan refugees, and then they will allegedly be taken away, "And Washington ordered the Europeans: they must be taken.

And rightly so — take them. They worked for you, about half a million people who served the Americans, Europeans, Ukrainians... The Europeans showed wholesome respect. And these Afghans, and with them Iraqis, Libyans and others, poured into the European Union in different directions. It is the Belarusian direction that sticks out. They go through Turkey, through other countries."

However, Aleksandr Lukashenko continued, the Europeans do not let them in, hound them with dogs, shoot them and

storing automobile communication between the two countries. Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that air traffic and rail links are fully restored, and as soon as the epidemiological situation is favourable, they will begin to resolve the issue with road transport.



**WHAT DID THE PRESIDENT TALK ABOUT TO THE PARTICIPANTS OF THE 'ZAPAD-2021' EXERCISE**

- This is one of the most important training activities of the Armed Forces, held against the backdrop of the ongoing hybrid aggression from the West against Belarus and Russia. We see new risks and challenges on the west of the Union State, the aggravation of the situation on the borders of the CSTO member states. The training environment created allows us to improve the skills of joint military operations to repel aggression.
- The actions during the exercise clearly confirmed the high state of readiness of the armies of our states and the Belarusian people to act together to ensure their sovereignty and independence. We have once again seen the effectiveness of the established system of territorial defence.
- You — ordinary workers, real men — have shown your readiness to defend your native land and your people at the right time. You should know: I established territorial troops so that you could protect yourselves, your families, your children and the native land on which you live and work today.

use electric shocks. At the same time, the President called the attempts of the European Union to put pressure on Belarus through Russia as undignified behaviour, "Michel [Charles Michel, President of the European Council] calls Putin: 'You should put pressure on Lukashenko there'. Putin replies: 'Excuse me, how can I put pressure on him? It is an independent state. Why don't you want to talk to him yourself? You are talking to the Taliban...' 'The Taliban control the territory'. 'And what, doesn't Lukashenko control Belarus?' It was silence.

*That is, they come in like beaten dogs: they get into sports, culture, in all directions. They begin to put pressure on our guys for nothing: Baskov came out with a flag for the President and they start telling him that he is an enemy, demanding to expel him from the federation. They are tin-pot, petty scoundrels! This is really undignified behaviour."*

**There will be no conversation until the sanctions are lifted**

The Head of State said that a dialogue with European countries is underway, but they put forward certain requirements regarding the internal policy of Belarus: 'political prisoners', elections and so on. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko advised our critics to first deal with their problems, including dependence on the Americans.

Returning to the situation with migrants, the Belarusian leader noted that the ball is now in the court of the western partners, "If you want to live safely, come. We will decide on the place, we will meet and discuss these issues.

*However, until these brainless sanctions and humiliation of our patriotic people are in place, no one will talk to them, we will not bow down. If you want our help, then behave decently. We should not be treated as secondary people."*

Aleksandr Lukashenko drew attention to the fact that western sanctions were ineffective, so Belarus is not worried about new possible restrictions,

*"We have everything we need to protect our country from any encroachments."*

**We have nothing to hide**

Aleksandr Lukashenko also called the absence of observers from the US and the EU at the 'Zapad-2021' exercise a small-minded approach of the West,

*"The Russians and us invited everyone who needed and wanted to watch this exercise."*

We did not hide the plan of the exercise, the number of servicemen involved in it, or the weapons used. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko urged people not to worry about the fact that some of the western observers did not come, "They saw it all. Even those who have not been here. Every square metre was scanned from space. These are such large-scale exercises that only madmen can fail to see them. And the fact that they did not come on purpose is such a petty, insane position."

**Science to protect**

The 'Zapad-2021' exercise was of a planned, defensive nature and is the final stage in the system of joint training of the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia this year. In accordance with the preparation plan, it took place from September 10th-16th in Belarus and Russia.

Obuz-Lesnovsky, Domanovsky, Ruzhansky and Brest training areas were involved on the territory of Belarus. The manoeuvres were attended by 12,800 military personnel, including about 2,500 Russian and up to 50 Kazakh servicemen from the CSTO Collective Rapid Response Forces, as well as up to 350 armoured vehicles, including 140 tanks, up to 110 artillery units and multiple launch rocket systems, more than 30 aircraft and helicopters.



# Symbol of unity

September 17th, 1939, is the date when the Belarusian nation was finally historically formed

Our country celebrates the Day of People's Unity on September 17th — which is connected with a double act of historical justice. While being tied to one and the same event, it triumphed twice: in 1939 and 2021. It was this summer that the list of Belarusian state holidays was expanded: the President signed Decree No. 206 which amends the decree as of 1998 'On National Holidays, Public Holidays and Commemorative Dates in the Republic of Belarus'.

By Maksim Osipov

## Law-based reunification

Apart from a completely baseless myth which is widespread and popular in Poland (that this country would have been able to win the war jointly with Germany — if there had not been a 'Soviet invasion'), there is also another piece of fake news stating that the Red Army 'illegally' sent its troops into the territory of Western Belarus and Western Ukraine on September 17th, 1939. Many Polish historians claim that the Soviet Union thereby violated a number of international obligations. Nevertheless, neither Poland itself, nor France, nor the United Kingdom qualified the actions of the Soviet Union as a war.

As for the peace treaties with Poland in 1931 and 1932, Rus-



The population of Western Belarus meets the Soviet troops in 1939

sian historian Aleksandr Dyukov notes, "In international law, the 'rebus sic stantibus' doctrine is operational: a warning about the preservation of the force of a treaty only if the state of things remains unchanged. The Soviet treaties with Poland were signed

with the expectation that the Polish state would preserve its sovereignty and play the role of a kind of shield between the USSR and aggressive states. By mid-September 1939, the situation had changed in the most fundamental way — compared to 1932. Po-

land suffered a crushing defeat in the war with Germany, the Polish troops were defeated. In that situation, the previously signed Soviet-Polish treaties lost their force, which the Soviet government notified the Polish Ambassador in Moscow about on September

17th. The Kremlin observed the required norms of international law. As we can see, the introduction of Soviet troops into the territory of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus did not violate the international obligations assumed by the Soviet Union."

Moreover, the historian adds that the inclusion of Western Belarus into the USSR was law-based, "We often hear now that the elections to the people's assemblies of Western Ukraine and Western Belarus were not illegal, since they were carried out in the presence of Soviet troops. However, in 1920-1945, plebiscites similar to those held in Western Ukraine and Western Belarus were organised repeatedly. They were recognised by the international community, despite the fact that they were often carried out not only in the presence of troops of the interested party but also in conditions of direct pressure on the voters. Such, for example, were the plebiscites of 1921 in Silesia (held under the conditions of terror of Polish troops against the local German population) and of 1922 in the Vilno area (held under the conditions of occupation of the region by Polish troops).

The exposition of Belarusian manufacturers — *Made in Belarus* — is presented at the *Armenia Expo 2021* international exhibition, held in Yerevan

By Ivan Sergeev

The exhibition is attended by eleven enterprises from Belarus, which demonstrate the best innovations, adapted to the preferences and needs of Armenian consumers.

The stand of the Belgospishcheprom Concern is the largest in the exhibition, with well-known Belarusian brands presenting their products: Slodych and Kommunarka confectionery factories, the Slutsk Sugar Refinery, as well as the largest producer of alcoholic beverages in Belarus: Minsk Kristall Group Holding.

The Belarusian dairy industry at *Armenia Expo* is presented by the Slutsk Cheese-Making Plant and Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant. "The Slutsk Cheese-Making

Plant is one of the largest dairy enterprises in Belarus, ranking second in the country for this parameter. The company is showcasing the goods of their 'Yas Belous' trademark: cheeses, milk powder and butter. These types of Belarusian products are traditionally in demand in the Caucasus; in 2020, they prevailed in the export of Belarusian products to Armenia, alongside cream and cottage cheese," said Belinterexpo.

The products of the Kalinkovichi Dairy Plant are familiar to consumers in the CIS states, as well as Asia, Africa and the Middle East. In Armenia, the company presents products under the 'Kalinka' trademark: skimmed milk powder, whole dry milk, butter, dry whey, hard and semi-hard cheeses.

Manufacturers of agricultural machinery are also on display as part of the *Made in Belarus* exposition. In particular, the Gomselmash Holding is one of the leaders in the world market for harvesters and other complex agricultural machines. Meanwhile, two machines under the 'Palesse' brand have been operating in the fields of Armenia since last year.

Grodnooblselkhoztekhnik — a large producer of agricultural machinery in Belarus — also demonstrates its capabilities.

The *Made in Belarus* exposition is organised by the Belinterexpo enterprise of the Belarusian Chamber of Commerce and Industry, with the support of the Belarusian Embassy in Armenia.

## High level of quality

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### Brest hosts the jubilee *Belaya Vezha* Theatre Festival



The festival of theatrical art, which has become the hallmark of the border city, has returned to its streets and stages after two years.

For a quarter of a century, more than 500 theatres from 55 countries took part in the *Belaya Vezha* Festival, and its performances were watched by over 250,000 spectators, not counting street performances.

The jubilee forum is dedicated to the 30th anniversary of the CIS and is held with the assistance of the Interstate Fund for Humanitarian Co-operation. It brings together theatres from the CIS states: Armenia, Belarus, Kazakhstan, Moldova, Tajikistan, Russia, as well as a team from Georgia. The festival programme is rich and traditionally multi-genre. The festival poster of the jubilee event includes 22 performances and the competition programme lasts until September 18th.

#### The centenary of the BSU is captured on a commemorative coin

Today the Belarusian State University (BSU) is Belarus' leading university, as well as the leading cultural, research, scientific, and educational centre. The whole country is proud of its achievements. BSU in modern history is the only university



that has been awarded the right to possess a commemorative coin, designed by Svetlana Zaskevich, an artist of the National Bank of Belarus. A total of 999 silver and 1,999 copper-nickel coins will go on sale. The coin will become a valuable souvenir for representatives of the university, as well as replenish numismatic collections.

The Belarusian State University will celebrate its 100th anniversary on October 30th, 2021. This event is included in the UNESCO list of memorable dates, which gives the event an international status, confirming the significant contribution of the Belarusian university to the development of world education and science.

#### Belarusian Women's Union appeal on countering EU sanctions published as an official document on the UN website

This was announced at the Union's Council of Elders by the Chair of the public organisation and the Deputy Healthcare Minister, Yelena Bogdan. 53,000 women signed a paper against sanctions against Belarus within two weeks.

The Council of Elders of the Belarusian Women's Union was held for the first time. The decision to establish



it was made to disseminate experience in protecting the rights and legitimate interests of women, families and children, ensuring the decent position of women in society, increasing their role in socio-economic and cultural life.

Moreover, the main focus of the Union's activities and plans for events on the eve of the Day of People's Unity and the 30th anniversary of the Union were also determined.

#### Units of the Ministry for Emergency Situations of the Minsk Region replenished with vehicles of a new type

The event on the transfer of fire-fighting rescue equipment to the emergency departments of the Minsk Region was held at the Mound of Glory Memorial.

All special equipment, which was handed over to the emergency situations units, was purchased at the expense of the Minsk Regional Executive Committee. These are 3 Geely Atlas passenger cars and 25 new tank trucks, produced on the MAZ chassis by the Belarusian enterprise Pozhsnab. The decision on such a significant replenishment was made by the regional authority based on the needs



of an actively developing, densely populated area, in order to ensure a prompt and effective response to emergency calls arriving at the rescue service. Moreover, rescuers of the Minsk Region were presented with awards and special titles.



# It is just space!

## National Academy of Sciences scientists develop innovative coatings for spacecraft and instruments



The development of the aerospace field enabled our scientists to create specialised screens and multi-layer coatings that protect against powerful electromagnetic and radiation emission. This makes it possible today to use instruments and equipment in orbit in very harsh space conditions. The coating can also be used for terrestrial devices that operate in conditions of increased radiation or electromagnetic background.

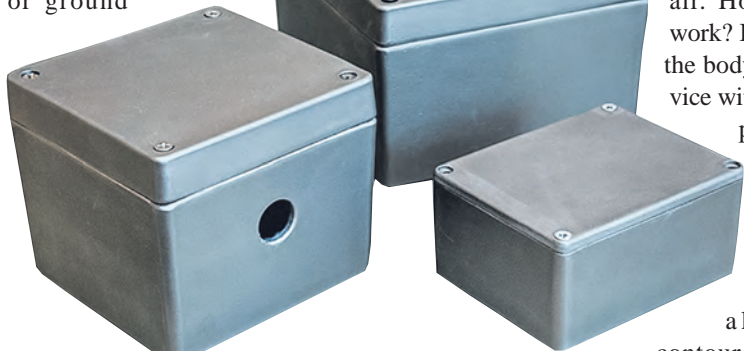
By Inna Gorbatenko

### Reliable protection

On Earth, we are protected by our atmosphere, which absorbs or reflects most of the influences coming from space. But as soon as we go beyond the atmosphere, harmful radiation gets directly into us. At the same time, the level of electromagnetic noise on our planet is getting higher and higher with every step of sci-tech progress. Harsh ionising and electromagnetic radiation can penetrate a wide variety of shields and harm electronics. Scientists at the Centre of Materials Science at the National Academy of Sciences have invented how to protect space electronics and astronauts, as well as ground-based devices from hazardous radiation. They have been working on the method of manufacturing protective multi-layer screens for decades. Scientists determined the optimal chemical composition and structure of the material, selected the composition of the electrolyte from which the coating grows, as well as temperature, current strength and processing time... Finally, they were able to create a technology for applying alloys that are widely used today in various fields: from space to medicine...

Tatiana Zubar, a senior researcher from the laboratory of physics of magnetic films at the Scientific Research Centre of Materials Science at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, tells us about the advantages of screens, “We are dealing with coatings, i.e., it can be applied directly to the body of any part. Of course, we can make a separate box and put the equipment that needs to be protected in it. But if we are talking about space devices, then every extra gram counts, so the equipment should be as light as possible. In this case, coatings are the best option.”

Multi-layer shields are different depending on the type of radiation from which space, aerial or ground



NAS scientists have been working on the method of manufacturing protective multi-layer screens for more than a decade

equipment needs to be protected. For example, multi-layer electromagnetic shields — created by our scientists — are installed aboard the Japanese spacecraft Mercury Magnetospheric Orbiter, which participates in the BepiColombo research mission to study Mercury.

“We were faced with the task of protecting a magnetometer from radiation: a supersensitive device for studying the magnetic field of Mercury. Having left our atmosphere, this device — without additional protection — would most likely fail,” recalls Ms. Zubar. “The screen

equipment inside will remain intact.

Scientists from the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus are actively working with Roscosmos on this issue, with Belarusian screens being installed on spacecraft, protecting a variety of sensors and detectors from both external and internal influences.

“The same screens can be used in electric vehicles,” continues Ms. Zubar. “However, in this case the problem is the opposite. If space equipment most often needs to be protected from external influences, then in electric transport it is easier



Scientists have already received a patent from the EAEU for the newly-developed technology

consisted of many alternating layers: magnetic and diamagnetic, or, in simple terms, non-magnetic. This structure made it possible to protect space equipment from a wide range of radiation and successfully launch it into space.”

Permalloy — an alloy of iron and nickel — is used for the production of protective electromagnetic shields. The fact is that it boasts a very high magnetic permeability, which is hundreds of times higher

than the magnetic permeability of air. How does it work? If you cover the body of the device with a layer of permalloy, then the magnetic field will go around its body along the contour, propagating only inside the magnetic material. Consequently, the

to isolate the source so that electromagnetic radiation does not harm humans and sensitive on-board equipment.”

Coating is time consuming and requires careful preparation. At first, the surface of the part must be degreased, the required roughness must be created so that the coating is well fixed, various thin technological layers must be applied, and only then proceed to the formation of a multi-layer structure. The number of layers and their thickness can vary depending on the specific application. Actually, scientists are developing the coating and the technology for its application individually for each specific order.

### Reflecting the threat

Alongside electromagnetic radiation, expensive equipment on board the spacecraft, including high-precision electronics, are exposed to ionising radiation, which can disable them. If this happens, the life of the astronauts, and the entire mission, will be in danger.

“We have developed two technologies for the synthesis of materials that are promising for protection against

radiation in space. For instance, we cover the cases of microcircuits with bismuth,” Darya Tishkevich, a senior researcher at the laboratory of physics of magnetic films at the Scientific Research Centre of Materials Science at the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus, explains the first method in detail. “If you did an X-ray, then you remember these heavy pads that are put on the patient’s shoulders. They are heavy because they are made of lead. You can’t send that into space. Moreover, lead production is very toxic. Bismuth is a promising

new material that can replace lead. Let it lose a little bit in density to lead, but it is environmentally friendly. We were the first in the world to obtain bismuth coatings with a thickness of 2 millimetres by electrolytic deposition. We’ve conducted tests and made sure that bismuth showed itself quite successfully as a radiation shield. We have already received a patent from the EAEU for the newly-developed technology.”

The second type of screens protecting against ionising radiation is based on metal powders, mainly tungsten. They are mixed in certain proportions and driven under high pressure presses. These presses are also unique. Few people know that first the presses were installed and only then was the building of the institute built around them.

“We have introduced the second technology at the Integral Plant and at the Russian Testpribor enterprise — a distributor of world equipment manufacturers,” notes Darya Tishkevich. “On the basis of these companies, serial production of protective cases has been established according to the technology developed by us.”



Afghan refugees still hope for the European Union dream to come true



Alekssei Bibikov

# To run away from horror — to end up in a nightmare

Poles have left Afghanistan's citizens to slowly die of thirst, hunger and cold

By Varvara Morozova

Mohammad and his companions in misfortune fled Afghanistan about a month ago. They do not share how exactly they got to alluring Europe but — logically — they travelled by land: there were only American planes in the airspace of Afghanistan. Back at home these future migrants destroyed all their documents, including passports. People were fleeing from the death that threatened them with the coming to power of the Taliban, but they jumped out of the fire and into the flames...

On the territory of Poland, a few kilometres from the border (this was not even at the

point of crossing!), Polish border guards found the refugees — and all the pretentious EU statements about human rights and the rule of law there turned out to be worth nothing.

Instead of proceedings and identification, accepting an application for official refugee status, consideration and, if necessary, deportation, the foreign citizens were driven to the border — like animals. They aimed to push these people out of Poland, so that it would be a problem for Belarus...

Belarusian border guards stopped an attempt to illegally cross the border and, at the moment, the Afghans are forced to live on the territory of Poland — a step away from the Belarusian

border. Actually, this 'life' could hardly be called such: up to 5-8 men have to share two-man tents they have brought with them. Meanwhile, comfortable and spacious army tents, equipped by Poles with all the amenities for themselves, are seen in the background.

An Alfa Radio reporter, German Bystrov, visited the Belarusian-Polish border. Mohammad (who, by the way, was a graphic designer in his native country) showed a bottle of water that had to be collected in the river under guard. "It's dirty. It has a lot of sand and stones in it... Secondly, we don't have a place for a toilet. This space [pointing with his hand] is for men, and this is one

— for women. Our situation is very, very bad, I don't know what the UN is thinking about."

Previously, human rights activists, journalists, and volunteers were allowed to visit the migrant camp from the Polish side, who handed over water, food, and the most necessary things. Mohammad showed a thin sleeping bag — even with a warm blanket handed over by the Belarusian Red Cross Society, it does not save him from the night cold.

Now the Poles have banned helping refugees, and to be sure, they have reinforced the ban with an additional police cordon. There's now nowhere to get food and water from. All that the Belarusian border guards can do in this situation, seeing the suffering of people — is to share their rations with them...

Poland, apparently, is more concerned about the welfare of wild animals, for which it has even equipped a special atraumatic fence at the border.

...Graphic designer Mohammad and other unwitting camp residents want to get asylum in Poland. Their applications have been considered for more than two weeks. The men are still hoping for the fulfilment of the European Union dream and, just in case, they avoid answering the question about whether they were beaten. They are afraid that a careless word will worsen the situation. Although where can they go next?

### TO ACT PROACTIVELY

Afghanistan and the possible threats associated with it are now at the forefront and on the agenda of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation. Recently, following the results of the 19th

meeting of the Interstate Commission on Military-Economic Co-operation, the Deputy Prime Minister of Russia, the Chairman of the Commission, Yuri Borisov, noted, "We have made serious progress in terms of equipping the Collective Rapid Reaction Forces of the CSTO. I hope that it will be signed during the meeting of the heads of state on September 16th."

A number of other signed documents should contribute to the joint actions of the CSTO countries in ensuring collective security. This area, according to Mr. Borisov, is especially relevant in connection with the acute situation in Central Asia, "We have assessed the availability of forces and means that can be involved if necessary. Threats may be related to the penetration of terrorist groups. These issues require appropriate preparation and strengthening of our borders. We have enough forces and means for this today."

### MEANWHILE

Belarusian border guards have discovered refugees displaced by the Polish side — as the State Border Committee has informed BelTA. The report reads: "Taking into account the distribution of the video by the Polish Border Guard, we have announced that Belarusian border guards have discovered several refugees who were displaced by the Polish side. The footage shows that the Belarusian side is taking away several refugees who are asking for help".

Due to the fact that some refugees were not feeling well, they were taken to a medical facility by official transport to provide assistance.

## Stars return to Venice

Venice is the oldest film festival in the world and the most durable. Last year, when all its rivals from Cannes to Toronto fled online, Venice took place almost as normal, as a real-life physical event with flesh-and-blood film-makers, fans and critics all in attendance, albeit in vastly reduced numbers.



REUTERS

This year, for the 78th edition, everybody is back. The Lido, the strip of land that divides the Venice Lagoon from the Adriatic Sea, has been swarming with festivalgoers. Capacity in the cinemas is still only at 50 percent — and this has meant an unholy scramble for tickets. Reviewers have been rising at dawn to log onto the festival website in order to secure seats for screenings of even the most unprepossessing movies.

The closing ceremony, hosted by actress Serena Rossi, saw Audrey Diwan's *Happening* crowned the winner by jury president Bong Joon-ho, who awarded it with the highly prestigious Golden Lion for Best Film. The Korean director was assisted in his jury duties by Chloé Zhao, Saverio Costanzo, Alexandre Nanaou, Virginie Efira, Cynthia Erivo and Sarah Gadon.

The other big winners of this year's edition were Paolo Sorrentino, who was awarded the Silver Lion — Grand Jury Prize for his intimate tale *The Hand of God*, and Jane Campion, who scooped the Silver Lion for Best Director by way of *The Power of the Dog*.

The renowned actress Jamie Lee Curtis received the Golden Lion Honorary Award, which is regarded as one of the most prestigious and respected awards in the cinema business. The award is presented to individuals who have made significant contributions to the film industry. Oscar-winning Italian director Roberto Benigni, who helmed the acclaimed *Life is Beautiful*, was also honoured with the Golden Lion for Lifetime Achievement Award.

## Meet 'Big John'

World's biggest Triceratops skeleton up for auction. Bidding on the dinosaur skeleton — dubbed 'Big John' — will begin on October 21st at the Drouot auction house in Paris, where it is expected to fetch anywhere between \$1.4 to \$1.7m.

The skeleton of the world's biggest Triceratops goes on sale. Bidding on the dinosaur skeleton — dubbed 'Big John' — will begin on October 21st at the Drouot auction house in Paris, where it is expected to fetch anywhere between \$1.4 to \$1.7m

Bones found in 2014 in what is now South Dakota described as 'miracle of nature and work of art'. In its time, approximately 66 million years ago, the triceratops, with its massive collared skull and three attacking horns, was one of the most

dangerous and daunting of dinosaurs.

Now the remains of one of the giants of the Cretaceous period, a herbivore despite its fearsome appearance, have gone on display in Paris before they are auctioned next month.

'Big John', as the dinosaur has been named, has a skull and bony collar measuring 2.62 metres long, 2 metres wide and weighing more than 700kg, two large horns measuring more than a metre, and 200 other assorted bones that have been painstakingly pieced together.



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Materials prepared with aid of information agencies





Vladimir Shlapak



Though there are fewer visitors on cool days, even today there are those who want to ride with the breeze

# Amusement parks: reboot season

**Extreme 'Mix', frisky 'Shells' and classic 'Waltz'... In total, 58 attractions worked in Minsk amusement parks last summer and will continue to delight visitors at least until the end of September. In case of good weather and high traffic, the season can be extended. We learned how Minsk entertainment and amusement parks are preparing to close the season and how they managed over the summer.**

By Inna Gorbatenko

## The 'wedding carousel' will spin

Fans of excitement are frequent guests in the amusement parks of Gorky and Chelyuskintsev. Various activities can also be found in the parks named after the 50th anniversary of the Great October Revolution and the 900th anniversary of Minsk.

"Some of the most favourite rides are the bumper cars, 'Zodiac', 'Waltz', 'Wild Train', and, of course, the Ferris Wheel in Gorky Park. This is its calling card. It's still the highest in Belarus. Moreover, the preferences of visitors don't change from year to year," observes Ruslan Kosevich, who heads the City Parks Department of Minskzelenstroy unitary enterprise. "In Chelyuskintsev Park, for example, popular attractions include the high-speed bumper cars, 'Zodiac', 'Katalnaya Gora', and the 'Swans'. One of the family attractions in the parks is the 'Mini Jet'; some also call it 'Samoletiki' (small airplanes). However, everyone has their own favourite attractions."

The parks never cease to delight visitors with novelties from year to year. This year was no exception. A three-level labyrinth appeared in Gorky Park: a playground for children aged 3-12. The pavilion has been installed and video game simulators will soon appear. Meanwhile, from the side of Pervomaiskaya Street a very realistic ship has 'moored'. Ruslan Kosevich tells us about the new attractions that they plan to please us next year, "There are plans to buy a children's inflatable play complex in Gorky Park and an attraction-labyrinth for the park dedicated to Minsk's 900th anniversary. This is a multi-level attraction with various slides, ladders and obstacles. We are also considering the possibility of acquiring a so-called 'wedding carousel' for Gorky Park: a classic carousel in the form of a lavishly decorated marquee with a leisurely rotating platform. There is no special wedding en-



Vladimir Shlapak

Even after the amusement season closes, the recreational areas are still available for walks



tourage in the decoration, only, maybe, the general impression of the structure, which looks like an overly decorated wedding cake, hence the name. Figures in the form of animals — on which visitors sit — not only move in a circle, but also make their own movement up and down, imitating the sensations of a ride on horseback. Such carousels are often seen in movies."

## For visitors' convenience

The interest in recreation in Minsk amusement parks among residents has noticeably increased in comparison with the previous year. Of course, the pandemic played an important role in this, as many Belarusians spent the vacation season at home.

"The total number of visitors to all attractions from April to August exceeded 1.6 million people," said Mr. Kosevich. "The rides in Gorky Park were especially popular. These were visited by 900,000 people, in the Chelyuskintsev Park — by 600,000 people. Compared to



Aleksey Stolyarov

The season for amusement rides in the capital's parks is drawing to a close

last year, park attendance increased by 178 percent. Traditionally, we recorded the largest number of visitors on weekends, pre-holidays and holidays. Our busiest day is Saturday."

Several times a day, all attractions and amusement rides are sprayed with aerosol antiseptics. As for the seating arrangement of clients, mainly people come with families, so there is no need to distance them from each other. However, if a client wants to ride in a booth alone, the park administration can provide him with the opportunity.

Though there are fewer visitors on cool days, even today there are those who want to ride with the breeze. It's possible to buy a ticket for rides online. The cost varies from Br2.5 to Br6 (\$1-2.4 equivalent), discounts

are also provided. In the parks of Gorky and Chelyuskintsev, rides are now open from 11am to 9pm. On Friday, Saturday and holidays: an hour longer. Monday is a day off.

Ruslan Kosevich also spoke about payment services for the convenience of visitors, "This year, we have updated the electronic service. Since August, the 'Oplati' (Pay) application has been introduced, that is, it's now possible to purchase a ticket via a smartphone using a QR code, thus avoiding staying in queues. Guests of Gorky and Chelyuskintsev parks can buy visitor cards, which can be used to 'write down' any amount for riding on carousels. You can use them all season. At the ticket offices of the parks, you can also purchase tickets for several carousels at once."

1.6 million people: in comparison with last year, the attendance of Minsk attractions has increased by almost 180 percent

## End of the season

The season for amusement rides in the capital's parks is drawing to a close. The corresponding decision is traditionally made taking into account weather conditions. It's forbidden to use mechanisms and electrical equipment during rain and at low temperatures for safety reasons. The rides will close on September 26th to then open in mid-April 2022.

"At the end of the season, we'll begin dealing with the conservation of attractions, carry out fault identification for each of them, develop a repair plan, purchase the necessary parts and assemblies," Mr. Kosevich emphasised.

Even after the amusement season closes, the recreational areas are still available for walks. In addition, the residence of Father Frost will open in Gorky Park by the New Year holidays. Here you can cheerfully celebrate Christmas, New Year and Maslenitsa.

Finally, Ruslan Kosevich adds, "Next spring, approximately in March-April, a special commission will inspect the metal structures of city rides, carry out cargo tests and electrophysical measurements. If necessary, worn-out parts, assemblies and mechanisms will be replaced. Subject to compliance with safety standards, Gospromnadzor will issue permission to launch attractions. As for the opening date of the season of attractions, it all depends on the weather. This will be roughly mid-April."



# 300 years: prices are negotiable

The famous St. Anna (Annensky) Fair in Zelva celebrates its double anniversary

More recently, St. Anna Fair was buzzing in Zelva. The reason is there are two anniversaries at once. Exactly 300 years ago, Antoni Kazimierz Sapieha received the right to hold an annual fair here, which lasted until the beginning of the 20th century. However, 20 years ago, the tradition to call buyers and traders to Zelva — which seemed to be irrevocably gone — was revived once again. Since then, at the end of August, as in ancient times, a small Belarusian town has become the epicentre of fun and brisk trade.



TOURISM

By Katerina Charovskaya

## A holiday with history

In the 18th century, St. Anna Fair lasted for a whole month: from July 25th to August 25th. In a shorter period of time, it was simply impossible to select all the necessary goods and complete all transactions. During its heyday among the fairs of Europe, the event in Zelva was second only to that held in Leipzig. The trade turnover here reached three million Roubles, despite the fact that a loaf of white bread then cost half a Kopeck and a litre of vodka cost 17 Kopecks.

Horses were the staple commodities, ranging from draft heavyweights to slender elite horses. Thousands were taken to the fair in Zelva since at that time these animals were indispensable in agriculture, as the main means of transportation, and as an element of prestige, everyone was interested in them: from peasants and artisans to nobles. In turn, a huge number of people — ready for expensive purchases — attracted different merchants like a magnet. Everything could be found here: from glass and jewellery to coffee and porcelain. Goods were transported here not only by representatives of the merchant guilds of Western and Eastern Europe, but also from Asia. Offices had not yet been invented, so most of the big deals were made in drinking places. We can only imagine the scale of the fun that reigned in the town.



Many of you might ask the question: why is the fair called Annensky, after all, it was held in Zelva? It's simple. In August, the feast of St. Anna — the mother of the Mother of God — is celebrated, and the fair is named in her honour. The event still gives its guests fun, pleasant meetings and purchases. True,

horses are not sold today, but items by local craftsmen are presented in large quantities.

## A place for the soul

Among those who decided to show themselves and their goods this year is the Ishchenko family. The head of the family and his son are fond of wood carving. Their trade is being conducted under the quiet clatter of domra, which they independently restored, decorating it with mahogany inlay. Ishchenko is a creative family. The elder, Vladimir, can cut the furniture himself, and decorate anything with fine carvings. The restored domra is his handiwork. Son Aleksandr is a professional musician who worked as an accompanist for about ten years, plays the guitar, keyboards, drums and tuba. Aleksandr's wife, Olga, makes incomparable beadwork.

"We moved from Grodno four years ago to Zelva District's agro-town of Karo-

lin," says Aleksandr Ishchenko. "I'm tired of the urban bustle. At first, we were busy with the house, adjusting our way of life. We bought a chainsaw to cut firewood. Then suddenly I wanted to do creative work with it. First, I carved a bear out of wood, then a bird. Later I bought a better saw and became truly interested in carving. Especially in order to do only what I enjoy, I got a part-time job at the Derechin House of Crafts, although before that I worked in a house of culture."

The family put carved cutting boards and other wooden kitchen utensils on the fair's counter. However, they argue that they don't come to the fair for profit. For them, this is a place of interesting meetings, conversations and a positive mood.

Among the guests of the fair, we met two-time Olympic medallist, weightlifter, Ivan Tikhon, and couldn't help but ask about his impressions, "I was greatly impressed after arriving in the Zelva District: tidy fields, neat villages, everything is arranged beautifully and tastefully," says Ivan. "It's obvious that hardworking people live here, who deserve a good and interesting vacation. I have plans for a trip to the stalls and shopping. The advantage of fairs is that artisans offer things that you can't buy in a store. It is worth taking a closer look and looking for gifts for family and friends."

According to the Chairman of the Zelva District Executive Committee, Denis Olshevsky, more than 180 artisans and trade representatives took part in the current fair, more than 70 attractions were arranged to amuse the guests.





# Fast, strong and reliable

## Our firefighters work energetically



the title of the strongest in the world at the Dinamo Stadium.

This year, nine countries took part in the event: the Czech Republic, Russia, Poland, Belarus, Austria, Kazakhstan, Uzbekistan, Mongolia and Slovakia. The winners of the competitions were determined in four disciplines: climbing an assault ladder to the floors of a training tower, overcoming a 100m obstacle course, a 4x100m fire relay and combat deployment. Belarusians were the first in the most prestigious form — the relay — claiming gold in this discipline for the first time in 13 years! In other events, our rescuers were also in prominent roles, becoming silver and bronze medallists, thus enabling our squad to celebrate victory in the overall standings.

Nikolay Vasilchenko and Viktoria Moskaleva, Vitaly Bobr and Viktoria Isakova, Nikita Cherepko and Natalia Poshei, Polina Goman, Nikita Ukolov and Anton Tarasevich... Each of the participants of the World Championship deserves a separate mention, contributing to the overall success. However, the main strength of our fire and rescue sports team is that it is really one team — friendly and well-coordinated.

By Sergei Kanashits

The World Championship in Fire and Rescue in Karaganda ended with a triumph for the Belarusian national squad: our men's and women's teams returned home with gold medals in the overall standings! President of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus, Viktor Lukashenko, congratulated the rescuers on their success. "The Belarusian fire and rescue team at the World Championship in Kazakhstan showed their excellent training and skills. Thanks to the success of the Ministry for Emergency Situations athletes, this sport is quite popular in our country, attracting a significant number of young people. Please, accept my sincere congratulations on the gold medals at the championship. I wish you health and new victories in the international arena," reads the message.

Other Belarusian athletes should take an example from the national fire and rescue team, which always confidently performs in the international arena; one is never ashamed of it. The traditions of successful preparation here were laid back in the 1970s, and it is good to note that our firefighters managed not only to preserve,



but also to increase them. Vyacheslav Nemilov, Andrei Zotov, Oleg Bagirov began their glorious path more than fifty years ago while Ivan Shulga became the first Belarusian to win the title of USSR champion. Back in 1973, he won the 100m obstacle course. In total, during his career, the athlete set about thirty USSR records of various types.

Firefighting and rescue sport finally became professional in our country in 1998, when the Belarusian Federation of

Firefighting and Rescue Sports was established. Meanwhile, in September 2001, an official decision was made to establish the International Sport Federation of Firefighters and Rescuers. Belarus joined it the same year. The first ever World Championship was held in Moscow in September 2002, bringing together teams from 21 countries, including the national team of Belarus, which confidently took first place. Two years later, the competition came to Minsk, and our athletes defended



## ARENA

### ● Arina Sobolenko failed to make it to the finals of the US Open

The second seed in the world faced the representative of Canada, Leylah Fernandez (ranked 73rd in the WTA rankings), and lost in a three-set match within two and a half hours — 6:7 (3:7), 6:4, 4:6.

In the decisive match of the US Open, the 18-year-old British tennis player,



Emma Raducanu (ranked 150th place in the world rankings), defeated 19-year-old Canadian Leylah Fernandez in the finals in almost two hours — 6:4, 6:3.

In the final men's singles match, Russian tennis player Daniil Medvedev defeated the world number one, Serbian Novak Djokovic, in three games — 6:4, 6:4, 6:4.

At the start of the US Open-2021, Arina Sobolenko defeated Serbian Nina Stojanovic (94th) — 6:4, 6:7 (4:7), 6:0, then beat Slovenian tennis player Tamara Zidanssek (40th) — 6:3, 6:1, in the second round she won against the US Danielle Collins (29th) — 6:3, 6 3, in the third

round she defeated the Belgian Elise Mertens (16th) — 6:4, 6:1, and in the quarterfinals she was stronger than Czech Barbara Kreichikova (9th) — 6:1, 6:4.

This season, Arina Sobolenko has already reached the Grand Slam semi-finals; at Wimbledon she lost to the Czech tennis player Karolina Pliskova.

### ● Belarus national beach soccer team wins silver in Euroleague for the first time

In the decisive match of the Superfinal, the Belarusians lost to the Portuguese team — 4:7. For the national squad of Belarus, this is the best result for their entire time

in the Euroleague. Prior to that, Belarusians finished fifth twice in a row (2018, 2019). The Portuguese national team won their third consecutive and eighth ever title of the best team in Europe.

At the preliminary stage of the current tournament, the Belarusian trainees of the Spanish specialist, Nicolas Alvarado, claimed three victories.

The Italians earned bronze medals at Euroleague-2021, beating the Spaniards in the match for third place.







Alekssey Stolyarov

## Photo of the week

Visitors as part of the exposition of the **ART-MINSK-2021** international art festival

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



**September 17th** is the Day of People's Unity in the Republic of Belarus — a public holiday, which was established by Decree No. 206 of

the President of Belarus on June 7th, 2021. This day became an act of historical justice for the Belarusian people, divided against their will in 1921 under the terms of the Riga Peace Treaty, and forever fixed in the national historical tradition. The unity restored in 1939 enabled Belarus to withstand the years of the Great Patriotic War and to take an honourable place in the international community while also becoming one of the co-founders of the United Nations.

**On September 17th, 1961**, Aleksandr Portnov was born — Belarusian athlete (diving) and Honoured Master of Sports of the USSR. He is also a champion of the 1980 Olympic Games in 3m springboard, as well as bronze medallist of the World Championship (1982) and European champion (1981).



**On September 17th, 2006**, the grand opening of the new historical and cultural complex Field of Military Glory — a

defensive strip about 1km long of the Polotsk fortified area — took place in the Polotsk District of the Vitebsk Region. This place was the line of defence in the first half of July 1941, where the soldiers of the 508th Infantry Regiment of the 174th Infantry Division and the 43rd Machine Gun Battalion of the Polotsk Fortified Region held back the superior enemy forces.

**September 19th** is Day of Forest Workers in the Republic of Belarus. Sustainable forest management is especially important for Belarus. About 40 percent of the country's territory is covered by forests, and this area is steadily increasing. On average, there is a hectare of forest per inhabitant of Belarus, while elsewhere in the world there is 0.5 hectare of forest per person. The *Belarusian Forest* state programme for 2021–2025 was designed to preserve and enhance Belarusian forests.



**On September 20th, 1946**, the First International Festival, now one of the largest international film forums in Cannes (France), opened under the chairmanship of one of the inventors of cinema — Louis Lumière. The Soviet documentary *The Fall of Berlin*, directed by Yuli Raizman, was screened as the very first in the festival programme.



**September 20th** is Customs Officer's Day in the Republic of Belarus. The peculiarity of the geographical position of Belarus, which has lack of access to the sea, as well as bordering five countries since ancient times, contributed to the development and strengthening of customs rules and regulations in the country.

**On September 21st, 1961**, Anna Korotkina was born — Belarusian composer. Her compositions for organ have been performed in many countries around the world. She was actively involved in pedagogy, among her students are laureates of international competitions. Moreover, she was also the organiser of the *New Sounds of the World* competition. She was awarded the prize of the Belarusian Trade Union of Cultural Workers, as well as a prize and a grant from the Minsk City Executive Committee for her merits in the Belarusian arts. She died in 2019.



**September 21st** is the International Day of Peace. In 1981, at the 36th session, the UN General Assembly recognised that the maintenance of peace — both at international and national levels — is the main goal of the

United Nations in accordance with the UN Charter and decided on the advisability of proclaiming a special day dedicated to the celebration and strengthening of the ideals of peace among of all nations and peoples.



**On September 22nd, 1961**, the Soviet Mi-2 helicopter, designed by the Mikhail Mil design bureau, made its first flight;

it was the first helicopter in the Soviet Union with gas turbine engines designed specifically for the civilian sphere of activity and the world's first light helicopter with two gas turbine engines. Before the end of production in 1992, more than 5,400 were built.

**September 22nd** is World Car Free Day, which encourages motorists (and motorcyclists) to stop using these fuel-consuming vehicles for at least a day. The holiday is held with the aim of promoting the idea of walking, cycling, using public transport, as well as drawing public attention to the environmental problems of cities, including the quality of atmospheric air.



**September 22nd** is Elephant Appreciation Day — the largest modern mammals. It was established in 1996 on the initiative of international environmental organisations.