



2023-2024 should become a milestone for BELAZ in terms of the production of innovative equipment

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Anniversary 30th Minsk International Book Fair takes place in the capital

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Irina Chubukova, a student of Minsk's Gymnasium-College of Arts named after I.O. Akhremchik, painting the *Voice of Khatyn* picture

We are alive and we remember

Khatyn was destroyed 80 years ago. On March 22nd, 1943, the German fascist invaders wiped out a quiet village from the face of the earth along with its inhabitants... The name of a small Belarusian village became a symbol of the tragedy of the Belarusian people during the Great Patriotic War. The death of this and other Belarusian villages, the death of each of the more than 3 million Belarusians who died during the Great Patriotic War is dedicated to the Khatyn Memorial Complex opened in 1969. It is located 54 kilometres northeast of Minsk in the Logoisk District of the Minsk Region. This is one of the most revered places in Belarus. The Khatyn Memorial Complex is an example of a harmonious fusion of arts that has no equal in the world in terms of its impact on visitors. It is the embodiment of the spirit of deep sorrow and eternal memory, a symbol of greatness and tragic heroism. The memorial tells about the courage and insubordination of the Belarusian people in a harsh and concise manner.

In the next issue of the newspaper you will know about the large-scale reconstruction of the memorial complex, carried out on the occasion of the 80th anniversary of the tragedy.

The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House has created a special multimedia project called *Khatyn. 80 Years of Pain* to mark the memorable date. The project, which will be of interest to every Belarusian, regardless of age, can be found at <http://sp.sb.by/khatyn80>.



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The countries with the technology will determine the rules of the game

The strategy and tactics of the development of Belarusian microelectronics were discussed in detail during the visit of the Head of State Aleksandr Lukashenko to the Planar holding company in Minsk. Immediately upon arrival, the President paid attention to the huge premises occupied by the holding company in Minsk and asked the Planar management about plans to develop the production site. The Head of State was told about the development strategy of enterprises that make part of the holding company, about import substitution and co-operation with the Russian Federation. A number of plans in this field have already been successfully implemented.

The company pays special attention to the production of photomasks that are a key element in the manufacturing of integrated circuits. The company boasts world-class products. It makes seven types of basic equipment, and for each type of this equipment it has from one to five competitors from the EU countries, the USA, and Japan.

es. That is how important this industry is. Our meeting is taking place in a symbolic and historical venue. Planar was the birthplace of the Soviet microelectronics industry in the 1960s.

The Head of State shared an interesting story related to the Planar company. The famous native of Belarus, Nobel Prize laureate Zhores Alferov

Thank God, no matter how difficult it was, the country retained Planar, Integral, BelOMO, Horizont, and the Vitebsk-based Monolith. Most importantly, we preserved the research infrastructure of this science-intensive industry. 30 years have passed. What do we see?

In the struggle for the re-division of the world, technology plays a decisive role. The one who possesses it will not only survive, but will call the shots in the future. The so-called civilised, democratic Western world will not hesitate for a second to use technology as a leverage, to impose sanctions, to try to bring unwelcome states that compete with them to their knees.

When it comes to microelectronics, you cannot just compete and isolate yourself within national borders, the Head of State emphasised.

“Belarusian manufacturers have retained their niche in the world market that has already set its eyes on nanoelectronics, not even microelectronics. As of today, several countries have already mastered the 4 nm process. Our fairly large chips remain in demand. They are reliable. But, as I see it, we need to move away from large chips towards nanometre technology,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

Unique products are being created in Belarus in co-operation with the domestic civil and defence industries, the Head of State noted. These are drones, robots, NC machines, fundamentally new types of weapons, world-class household appliances and much more.

are an opportunity to radically modernise the production base, develop new technologies and, as a result, increase exports.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stated that Belarus and Russia have compiled a list of electronic components of critical importance and Belarusian enterprises have already started shipping them. In June 2022 Aleksandr Lukashenko already held a conference to discuss the development of the Belarusian microelectronics industry. Some progress has already been secured.

Belarus and Russia have compiled a list of critical components, which will be manufactured by Belarusian enterprises and a roadmap on mastering their production has been worked out.

“We’ve already started shipping a number of parts to Russian enterprises. An agreement has been signed on setting up a Belarusian-Russian joint centre for the development and production of photolithographic masks. It will enable joint R&D work and will reduce the dependence of Belarusian and Russian consumers on imports,” the President said.

The government has also approved a programme to guide the development of Belarus’ microelectronics industry till 2030. The Head of State said he wanted a report on how well-calculated and ambitious the prospects and the current approach to the future development of the industry are.

Deputy Prime Minister Piotr Parkhomchik shared that Belarus intends to



In 2022, the company’s revenue amounted to about Br57.5 million, up 21 percent over 2021. The net profit reached almost Br26.4 million (with a target of Br12.2 million). The return on sales was almost 13 percent. In 2022, Planar grew its exports by 70 percent.

The localisation level at the holding company is 60-80 percent.

“We have our own optical production, stone processing and precision mechanics, too,” Planar Director General Sergei Avakov explained.

Another promising avenue of work is the production of semiconductor wafers. Work is underway to upgrade the production base in co-operation with partners. It is important not only to produce this or that product, but to make it as compact and efficient as possible. Every nanometre counts when it comes to production efficiency and cost.

The President toured the production facilities, where he was briefed on the holding company’s most popular products and promising developments. A number of solutions that were demonstrated to the President are the world’s best in their market segment. In addition to production, human resources were also discussed. The Head of State asked whether there are enough qualified personnel and how the company approaches staff replenishment issues.

Aleksandr Lukashenko convened a meeting at the Minsk-based Planar holding company to discuss development prospects of the country’s microelectronics industry. The Head of State noted that today microelectronics is one of the focuses of the world’s attention, including in the post-Soviet space,

“The struggle to remain on the cutting-edge of this industry and the fight for microelectronics markets are among key reasons for military clash-

once recalled his conversation with the USSR Minister of Electronic’s Industry Vladislav Kolesnikov that took place in the 1980s. The latter said, “I have waken up today sweating, I had a nightmare that Planar ceased to exist, and there is no electronics industry in the USSR without this company.”

“That says it all. It was really the heart of the entire electronics industry. The key skill sets in this industry were accumulated at the company. When this breakthrough industry was at its nascent stage, only America, the Soviet Union and Japan had sufficient intellectual and financial resources to keep it on its feet. Back then we also had related enterprises, in particular in Russia and the Baltic states, but its brain and its heart were in Belarus,” the President emphasised.



Yet, during the heady days of perestroika and post-perestroika periods, only Belarus managed to preserve this legacy, which was not even national, but global legacy, Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, “I remember very well how they were pushing me to sell, to shut down these enterprises. They said they would buy, import everything from the West.



“Therefore, the field for work and further development is huge. Our primary focus is Russia. Our country has all the necessary skill sets to meet the needs of the Russian market after the departure of Western enterprises. It’s a chance for us. We must seize it. Rosatom, Roscosmos, Roselectronics... The volume of partnership agreements should grow,” the President set the task.

According to the Head of State, investors also show tremendous interest in Belarusian microelectronics,

“My recent visit to Zimbabwe, the United Arab Emirates is a direct confirmation of this. They are ready to co-operate with us and want to invest in our industry, including microelectronics. Moreover, the amount of money is not an issue. Good financial investments

more than triple earnings from selling microelectronic products by 2030.

“Total sales from selling Belarusian microelectronic and electronic machine-building products will rise to \$200 million in 2025. It will reach \$330-350 million by 2030. It will be 3.3 times up from 2021. I’d like to stress that these are minimal targets,” Deputy Prime Minister said.

“The key thing I am worried about is that scientists, product engineers, and people on the ground have to understand what needs to be done and where we should go. If we have people like that, then we will always find money for it. And we have people like that,” Aleksandr Lukashenko summarised.

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The Head of State stressed that, despite the distance separating Belarus and Kalmykia, the peoples have always been close in spirit, united by the common history and upbringing, “Our ancestors together defended the achievements of the October Revolution, won the Great Victory in the fight against fascism, restored the ruined country, performing feats of labour. We have been brought up to build peacefully, not to destroy. It unites us and makes us stronger in the face of all kinds of difficulties.”

As for contacts with Kalmykia, they are becoming more active, the President said. The exchange of visits of delegations in September 2022, meetings and negotiations gave additional impetus to this.

“I am sure however that the real economic breakthrough is ahead of us. We have a lot of products that might be of interest to your region — mechanical engineering products, construction products, IT, pharmaceuticals and high-tech transport,” the Belarusian leader said. “In today’s conditions, we can offer a good product in terms of price/quality ratio. Our products have long been popular in many regions of Russia,” the Belarusian leader continued.

At the same time, Belarus believes that it is high time to move from occasional trade deals to long-term contracts, to build repair facilities and spare parts warehouses, and strengthen industrial co-operation, the President noted.

Belarus and Kalmykia intensify economic ties

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, has met with Head of the Republic of Kalmykia of the Russian Federation Batu Khasikov

In addition to agricultural machinery, trucks and passenger vehicles, Aleksandr Lukashenko advised the head of Kalmykia to pay attention to Belarus’ solutions in the agricultural sector and processing industry. After all, Kalmykia, as well as a number of other regions of Russia, launched a large-scale construction programme, and Belarus can offer a lot in this regard: skill sets, machinery, equipment, materials, as well as expertise and knowledge as it has experience in building various facilities across Russian regions. Co-operation in education, sports, tourism, medical services and culture holds a lot of promise, too. Belarus is ready to consider proposals within the shortest time possible.

“I think that you, as a professional athlete, will be interested in our sports infrastructure, our expertise and best practices in training athletes across many disciplines, physical education for the youth. All the conditions are in place for this in our country,” the President noted. In this regard, Aleksandr Lukashenko mentioned the sports ca-

reer of Batu Khasikov, who was professionally involved in kickboxing and is a multiple world champion in this sport.

“We are always happy to host high-profile international competitions, as well as individual training camps of Russian teams. Belarus and Russia intensified co-operation in athletic training and in holding competitions in many sports. I think that this year we will surpass ourselves in organising these events.

And we will consistently work to get our neighbours interested, as well as people from Asian and African states. If someone from Europe or Latin America wants to join us, they are more than welcome to do this with us and Russians,” the President added.

Aleksandr Lukashenko confirmed Belarus’ interest in Elista-Minsk flights that can be operated by Russian air carriers.



On March 18th, 2023, a new political party of the country, the Belarusian Party Belaya Rus, was created and unanimously supported at the founding congress in Minsk. The founders of the new political party were 15,948 people. Chairman of the Republican Public Association Belaya Rus Oleg Romanov was unanimously elected as the head of the Belarusian party Belaya Rus — its chairman.

Earlier, on the penultimate day of winter, a media presentation of the party being created was held in Minsk, before that, constituent meetings were held all over the country to create a new party. A broad discussion of the party programme was held in labour collectives, educational institutions and the expert community.

As noted in the approved party Charter, the Belarusian Party Belaya Rus is a public association pursuing political goals, uniting citizens of the Republic of Belarus on a voluntary basis for the implementation of programme goals, contributing to the formation and expression of the political will of citizens in the political life of society, as well as representing their interests in state bodies, other organisations and local governments.

The goals of the new party are to ensure the inviolability of the constitutional order and civil harmony; strengthening an independent, strong, prosperous Belarus and building a socially just society in which every citizen feels free, self-sufficient, independent person, whose abilities are fully realised; uniting the citizens of Belarus on the basis of the priority of national interests, cultural traditions, historical memory, patriotic and spiritual and moral values of the Belarusian people, the desire to preserve the sovereignty and independence of the state.

71 people were elected to the Supreme Political Council of the party, among them are the STV TV reporter Grigory Azarenok, Deputy Chairman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Valery Belsky, Chairman of the Minsk City Council of Deputies Andrei Bugrov, Chief of the Knowledge Public Association Vadim Gigin, Deputy of the House of Representatives Gennady Davydko, Associate Professor of

Political party Belaya Rus was created in Belarus



Oleg Romanov

the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts Irina Dorofeyeva, Rector of the Belarusian State University of Culture and Arts Natalya Karchevskaya, Chairman of the Belarusian Union of Journalists Andrei Krivosheev, First Secretary of the Central Committee of the BRSM Youth Union Aleksandr Lukyanov, Director General of Marko Nikolai Martynov, Director of the Institute of Sociology of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus Nikolai Myslivets, General Director of the Stolich-

noye Televideniye STV TV channel Aleksandr Osenko, Chairman of the Republican Public Association Belaya Rus Oleg Romanov, member of the Council of the Republic Sergei Sivets, athlete Ivan Tsikhan and Director of the information and enlightenment institution Actual Concept Aleksandr Shpakovsky.

The all-Russian political party United Russia has already invited Belaya Rus to take part in the work of an international interparty expert group that brings together representatives of authoritative political organisations from all continents. Within its framework, the most acute problems of the international agenda are discussed and responses to the current challenges and threats of our time are formed.

Chairman of Belaya Rus Oleg Romanov is convinced that the party system of Belarus is entering a new, higher level of development. According to him, Belarus has a pronounced specificity of the national party system, “Our parties are not opponents of the state, not forces aimed at weakening it. On the contrary, we are working towards the same goal with the Belarusian society and state: building a strong and prosperous Belarus, strengthening the Belarusian state, ensuring its competitiveness in the face of those tough challenges that our country has received in recent years and decades.”

OFFICIALLY

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met with President of the National Olympic Committee of Belarus Viktor Lukashenko

The Head of State said that he was well aware of the state of sport in Belarus. Therefore, the main topic of the conversation was the situation with the Belarusian sport on the international scene, including the upcoming 2024 Olympic Games. Both government agencies and public organisations are actively involved in the matter. The President was keen

to learn about co-operation with the National Olympic Committee on the issue.

The parties also discussed the preparation and organisation of the 2nd CIS Games which Minsk is set to host in August 2023. Earlier, the President of Belarus stressed that these international competitions were very important for the country’s entire sport industry.



Aleksei Grachev, "We offer consumers about 80 models of mining dump trucks with a carrying capacity from 30 to 450 tonnes, as well as more than 15 models of special equipment"

Vehicles running on alternative fuels and an excavator with a mass of 200 tonnes: 2023-2024 should become a milestone for BELAZ in terms of the production of innovative equipment

Power of intellect

Import substitution and digitalisation are areas that are relevant in all directions of industrial development in the current realities. From light to heavy, including metalworking, energy and, of course, mechanical engineering. Today, in accordance with the general course of the country, a number of enterprises are focused on innovation. BELAZ is one of the flagships of the direction. Aleksei Grachev, the Deputy General Director for Strategic Development and Corporate Governance of OJSC BELAZ — Management Company of BELAZ-HOLDING, spoke about the work on import substitution, the focus on innovation and the plans of the giant for the future.

Focus on import substitution

— The management of BELAZ has repeatedly noted that the main tasks of the enterprise are import substitution and digitalisation. What do you mean by these concepts?

— BELAZ is developing dynamically today. We offer consumers about 80 models of mining dump trucks with a carrying capacity from 30 to 450 tonnes, as well as more than 15 models of special equipment. We are actively investing and developing in terms of increasing the production of unmanned vehicles used in mining and in many other areas, we are developing our own IT direction.

However, the company has recently come under tremendous pressure from external constraints. The company found itself in extreme conditions, when at one moment more than 1,500 components and units from foreign manufacturers were no longer available to us, including engines, electric transmissions, hydraulic pumps and many other components that determine the operation of a dump truck. But the plant did not stop working for a single day. Moreover, we have not only continued to manufacture our full product line, but also expanded it significantly so that our customers can meet all their production needs in mining equipment during this difficult time.

— The engine is the heart of any car. How do you solve the issue of its import substitution?

— The engine for a mining dump truck has become one of our strategic tasks, which we are successfully solving. Today we offer mining dump trucks with engines from different manufacturers, with different technical solutions and types of fuel. So that each company using BELAZ equipment could choose the most optimal solution for itself.

The engines of the Yaroslavl Motor Plant have been used in the segment with a carrying capacity of 30–55 tonnes for many years. We also introduce Chinese made engines. As an alternative, we offer dump trucks powered by liquefied natural gas. Together with Russian partners,

we manufactured gas dump trucks with a carrying capacity of 30 and 45 tonnes, which were successfully tested in a real quarry. The machines have proven their reliability and efficiency: emissions of harmful substances into the atmosphere have decreased by up to ten times, fuel costs have almost doubled compared to diesel counterparts.

As for 90-tonne trucks, we are working on solutions using Chinese diesel and gas engines, and we also offer options for dump trucks powered by liquefied natural gas with Russian-made engines. So, today a 90-tonne gas turbine dump truck with a KADVI engine is undergoing factory tests. The creation of vehicles running on alternative fuels allows us not only to offer environmentally friendly and cost-effective vehicles, but also to create solutions that do not depend on sanctions pressure. Such equipment is in high demand among consumers: the portfolio of orders for 2023 is already fully formed.

Helpful 'assistants'

— Let's talk about the intellectual direction of BELAZ development. What products do you develop in this area?

— One of our main IT products is IMS, an intelligent monitoring and predictive analytics system that allows one to monitor the technical condition of dump trucks, evaluate their performance and detect violations during operation. IMS significantly improves the efficiency of mining operations by reducing operating costs. The IMS programme is installed on BE-



LAZ mining dump trucks immediately at the factory. It is able to read and analyse information from more than 50 sensors installed on a mining truck as standard. The system works via mobile communications and allows you to receive and analyse data on the operation and technical condition of the dump truck from anywhere in the world in real time.

— How many machines are already connected to IMS? What is the prospect of intelligent monitoring?

— More than 100 dump trucks are registered in IMS, which work in mining companies in Belarus, Russia, Armenia, India, Chile, Mongolia and other countries. But we do not stand still: the intelligent monitoring system has a huge potential for development. BELAZ specialists are constantly working on its improvement together with our customers. In addition, we are considering the creation of a situational centre for customers in the future. Our analysts will monitor the condition of dump trucks under warranty in real time and give recommendations to customers on their work there.

Ambitious perspectives

— What other IT products does your company use?

— An equally significant innovative product created by our employees is a virtual workshop. This is a VR space for

professional training of specialists who maintain our mining trucks. The virtual space of the workshop is as close to reality as possible: one can study a mining truck in detail, as well as learn how to use the necessary tools and garage equipment to repair it. Already now, on the basis of our flagship, a 130-tonne dump truck, repair of the motor-wheel gearbox and hydraulic system is available in the virtual workshop.

Thanks to the virtual workshop, specialists of service centres can thoroughly study the operation of parts and assemblies of a mining dump truck without the use of expensive equipment, and subsequently carry out work with high quality and safety already in real operating conditions.

In the future, we plan to create a virtual universe with the ability to disassemble any of our mining trucks down to the nut. We are convinced that the implementation of IT solutions will allow us to further increase sales, develop new markets and increase profits.

— The past year has been quite successful for the company. What are the plans for the future?

— Indeed, BELAZ worked effectively in the difficult year of 2022. The tasks set for the enterprise to maintain export volumes were fulfilled. 2023-2024 should become a landmark for the production of innovative technology. One of the most anticipated new products, of course, is an excavator with a mass of 200 tonnes and a bucket volume of 12 cubic metres, which we will demonstrate in the third quarter of this year. The excavator will be another step towards the formation of the import independence of mining equipment in the face of external restrictions.

Today the world is changing very quickly. It is not enough to keep up with the times — today it is important to go one step ahead and understand what will happen in the future, what will be more effective. We must see this and implement it in our decisions.



VR-technologies with which you can get acquainted with the developments of BELAZ

Commonwealth of creators



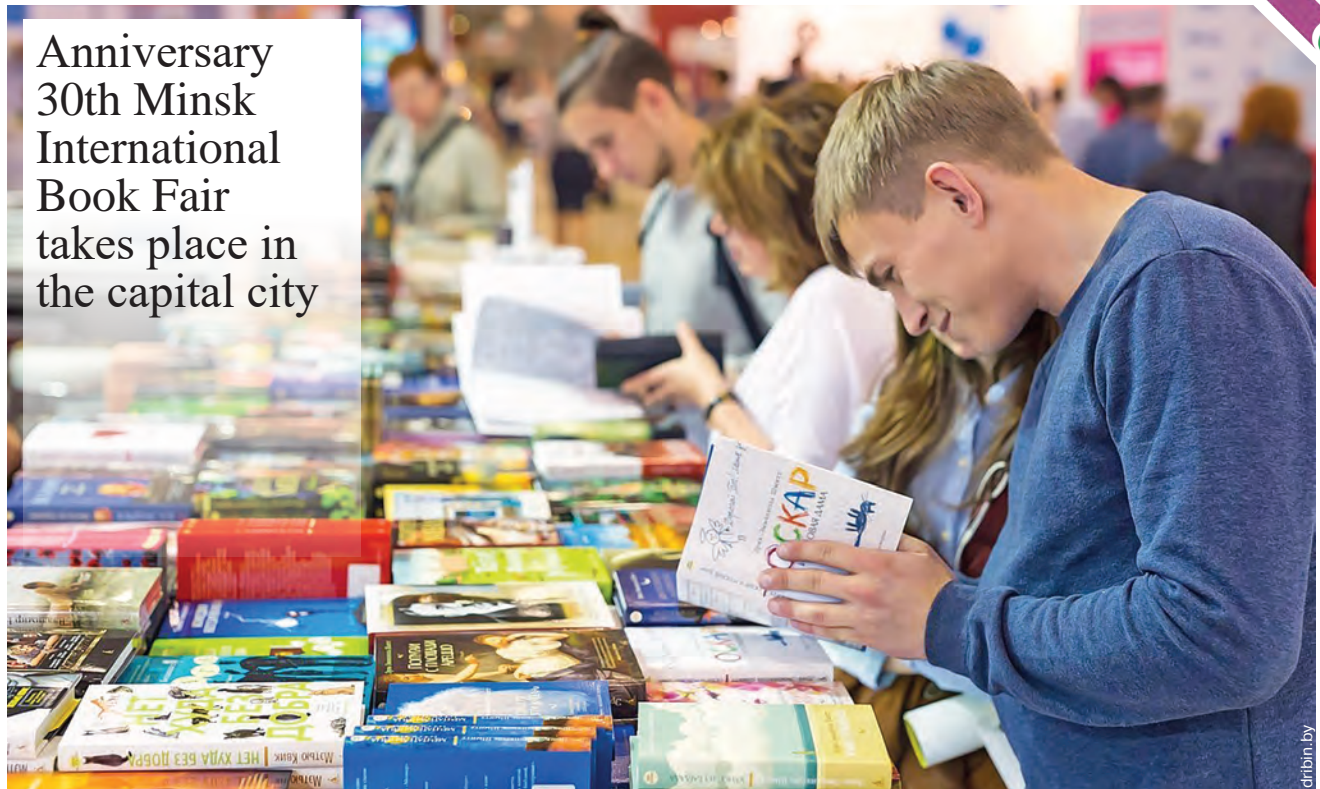
By Irina Ovsepyan

The 30th Minsk International Book Fair started its work on March 22nd and, as usual, gathered a lot of guests from different countries. One of the important events of the book holiday is the presentation of the Modern Literature of the CIS Countries project. Three volumes of the newest anthology, which includes the best examples of today's artistic literature, are of great interest not only to philologists, but also to the average reader.

“The project is designed primarily to strengthen cultural and humanitarian ties between countries. All countries that are and were part of the CIS participate in it. During the 30 years of independence, fiction continued to develop in each of the states, new authors and significant works appeared, which today are not well known in the general cultural field of the Commonwealth. The best translation and editorial forces of the country were involved in the work on the creation of the three-volume edition. The *Modern Literature of the CIS Countries* anthology includes works of prose, poetry and children's literature translated into Russian. The project is implemented with the assistance of specially created editorial boards from each participating country. The work on anthologies made it possible to draw up a fairly voluminous and vivid picture of the current state of the literatures of the peoples of the CIS countries, presented the most relevant topics and issues that are raised today by the authors,” First Deputy Chairperson of the Belarusian Union of Writers Yelena Stelmakh explains.

The volumes inspire respect and really allow you to get an impression of what is happening today in the literary field of our neighbours: for example, in the anthology of modern prose of the CIS countries — more than 1200 pages, it includes works by 94 authors from 11 countries. The poetic volume includes poems by more than 100 poets, and the volume of children's literature is no less representative. The forewords were written by authors whose

Anniversary 30th Minsk International Book Fair takes place in the capital city



Library photos



BELTA

works are already rightfully considered classics — People's Writer of Uzbekistan Timur Pulatov, People's Writer of Kazakhstan Olzhas Suleimenov, one of the most popular Russian-language authors of children's literature Andrey Usachev.

Belarusian authors are widely represented in all three volumes of the anthology: they are the national writer of

This year, Russia is the guest of honour of the exhibition. 2023 has been declared the Year of the Russian Language as the language of interethnic communication in the Commonwealth of Independent States, and the Russian programme of events will be dedicated to the richest Russian cultural and literary heritage.

Belarus Nikolai Cherginets, and prose writers, laureates of state and literary awards Ivan Saverchenko, Vladimir Salamakha, Georgy Marchuk, Ales Karlyukevich, Viktor Pravdin, Vladimir Gavrilovich, poets Mikhail Pozdnyakov, Vladimir Mozgo, Vladimir Karizna — the author of the text of the National Anthem of Belarus, as well as famous chil-

dren's writers — Nikolai Chernyavsky, Nina Galinovskaya, Gennady Avlasenko, Elena Stelmakh and many others.

“In addition, within the framework of the anniversary book fair, bilingual anthologies of modern Russian prose and poetry are presented, bringing together 48 prose writers and 32 poets of modern Russia. They were released in partnership with publishers of the Commonwealth countries in 11 versions, that is, in Russian and in all languages of the countries participating in the project. These are unique publications, since contemporary Russian writers and poets have been translated into the languages of the peoples of the CIS countries even less often than national writers into Russian over the past three decades. The translation of modern Russian prose and poetry into the Belarusian language has become a kind of cultural event, many well-known writers of Belarus have joined this process and successfully realise themselves in translation activities,” Yelena Stelmakh said.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Belarus and Brazil to build two plants to assemble MTZ tractors



Belarus and Brazil agreed on the construction of two plants for the joint production of MTZ tractors, project activities are underway. This was announced by Ambassador Extraordinary and Plenipotentiary of Belarus to Brazil Sergei Lukashevich.

The embassy has been working on this project for about two years, the head of the diplomatic mission explained.

Belarusian manufacturers have found a niche for domestic agricultural machinery in Brazil: low-power basic tractors with a capacity of up to 20–25 horsepower, which will become an indispensable tool for family farming, the basis of Brazilian agriculture.

“An agreement has already been reached on the construction of two plants, consent has been received from the governors of these states, project activities are underway,” the ambassador said.

Belarus will take part in the development of the North-South transport corridor through Iran

Belarus together with Iran and Russia will take part in the development of the North-South international transport corridor. This was reported to journalists



by Belarusian Transport and Communications Minister Aleksei Avramenko, commenting on the results of the talks between the Presidents of Belarus and Iran in Tehran.

“Iran needs to build about 180 kilometres of railway today. And the country has actively embarked on this work in order to extend the North-South railway corridor to the port of Bandar Abbas. This is also important for us, because when we talk about transportation in Iran, we also talk about transit through Iran to distant countries. This is a very important corridor, and we agreed to work on it together,” Aleksei Avramenko explained.

The mission of Belarusian military doctors in Syria has come to an end

Belarusian military doctors went to Syria on February 8th to help victims of devastating earthquakes. The military field hospital, deployed by members of the special medical unit, provide medical assistance to an average of 200 patients daily. Syrian citizens treated both with injuries sustained during the earthquake, and with chron-



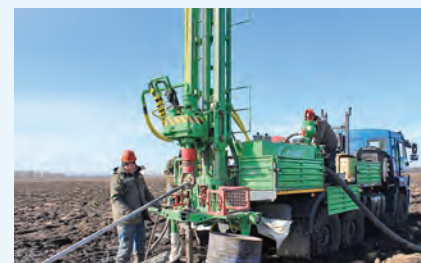
ic diseases and injuries received during hostilities in Syria.

This is the first experience of independent performance of such tasks by military doctors outside of Belarus for a long time. They had to take into account many features of the region: climatic, linguistic, religious and security issues. A special medical detachment under Belarusian flags went home.

Geologists have started detailed exploration of basalt and tuff deposits in the Pinsk District

The investment project is included in the Environmental Protection and Sustainable Use of Natural Resources for 2021-2025 state programme.

Until June, geologists will be engaged in drilling exploratory wells, sampling minerals, and conducting laboratory work. As a result, they will present materials on the calculation of basalt and tuff reserves for the examination of the republican commission. A tentative feasibility study should be prepared in September.



“This is very important issue. The country imports this raw material. Gomelstroyaterialy, Polotsk-Steklovolokno, Keramin and a number of other domestic enterprises are in need of it,” Chairman of the Pinsk District Executive Committee Igor Brilevich emphasised.

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Belarus & World

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From storms (including economic ones) people are protected by dams and breakwaters. In order to keep destructive whirlwinds out of their own harbour, but at the same time allowing friendly ships to enter ports. In a word, to manage the processes in their own backwater, keeping calm in it, regardless of the weather on the outer raids. However, the President raised the issue of import independence of the Belarusian economy not without reason at the last meeting of the Council of Ministers. Then external shocks will minimally affect our lives. First Deputy Industry Minister Aleksandr Ogorodnikov spoke about increasing the sovereignty of the Belarusian industrial sector and reducing its dependence on foreign partners.

By our own forces and intellect

Belarusian industry focuses on the production of its own, national product

MADE IN BELARUS

By Vladimir Volchkov

Favourable localisation

— Belarus has always strived to create its own product. Therefore, we are proud of the Belarusian tractor, the Belarusian harvester, the Belarusian mining dump truck...

Localisation of production has been and is a traditional strategy of our large industrial enterprises. And it fully justified itself during the pandemic: when assembly lines in many countries stopped due to a lack of components, our companies continued to work successfully.

Key units, assemblies and components for our equipment are produced in Belarus, while the skill sets of engineering, design and supply services allows us to quickly resolve issues with the transition to alternative suppliers of imported raw materials and stuff. For this reason, the sanctions imposed against the country did not create insurmountable problems for our enterprises. This is noted even by opposition publications and media from unfriendly countries: they admit that none of our enterprises has received 'programmed' problems from restrictions. Yes, there were difficulties associated with the change of some suppliers, the lengthening of supply chains.

But we managed to quickly adapt to new conditions. And over the past year, the enterprises of the system of the Industry Ministry increased their production volumes by 8 percent, exports — by 15.2 percent. These figures are an indisputable confirmation that the Belarusian industry has not only survived, but also produces products that are in demand on the domestic and foreign markets.

Substitution for a billion

— Such results were achieved, among other things, thanks to systematic work on



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

"All our best Belarusian minds — scientists and designers — should work not just for import substitution, but for the country's import independence... Wherever the replacement of imported is rational, our own, Belarusian, should be created and implemented. But not by blind copying, but with improved characteristics. Dependence on Western technologies and components should be minimised within 2–3 years."

During the meeting of the Council of Ministers on March 10th, 2023

the localisation of production. In 2016–2022, the system of the Industry Ministry implemented more than two thousand import substitution measures for a wide range of products. And we achieved several goals at once: we increased independence from third-party suppliers, increased the volume of products produced, and annually save foreign exchange funds in the equivalent of \$500 million.

In 2023–2025, the design and technological services of our enterprises have planned the implementation of about a thousand more events. The expected economic effect is about \$400 million. In two five-year plans, we will substitute imports by almost a billion dollars.

I would like to note that import-substituting materials, components and assemblies mastered in production are supplied not only to Belarusian conveyors, but also sold for export. And they earn additional profit, as the export situation is often very attractive.

Machine tool industry on the rise

— There are three machine tool centres in Belarus — in Vitebsk, Gomel and Minsk. As in other industries, we have retained full-cycle production in the machine tool industry. The only gap is the electronic control unit. In this direction, we are working with friendly countries, primarily China, as well as a number of Russian enterprises. Some of them have good competencies in the production of machine tool control racks. Today, Belarus has all the necessary skill sets for the development of the machine tool industry.

The challenges facing the industry are ambitious. Western countries closed themselves off from Belarus and Russia. And the investment potential of domestic producers is huge. There is solvent demand for their products, primarily from Belarusian enterprises.

There are also deliveries to Russia, but they are not yet as significant as we would like. But I am sure we will use the potential. This year, the target is to double the production of machine tools. Under these volumes there are applications with real financing.

Macroattention to microelectronics

— The development of microelectronics is the principal goal for the near future. Our Integral in has a strong position its segments in the global market. The company is consistently im-

plementing a number of investment projects. And they allow in the near future to expand production and develop products with a design norm of 180 nanometres with an eye on 90 nanometres.

The technologies with a design norm of 0.35 microns, which we already own, remain relevant. These products account for more than half of the world microelectronics market. I would like to note that the competencies of the Integral level are owned by a few countries.

The enterprise will modernise its production facilities. Doubling, and possibly even tripling production volumes by 2030 is not a fantasy, but real production plans.

The key goal is to replace the foreign component base as much as possible. To the extent possible, satisfy the domestic demand for microelectronic products through our own production.

In fairness, it should be noted that it is impossible to produce the entire range of microchips. There are millions of sizes available worldwide. Therefore, all countries, without exception, import microchips to one degree or another.

Undoubtedly, we will also buy some products from foreign partners. But we focus on friendly countries. Products important for critical infrastructure, security and other strategic areas will be produced at our facilities. Moreover, we have the necessary potential for it.

It's scary, like in a bank...

The failure of American banks has caused a massive crisis of confidence in Western financial institutions. Is the crisis of 2008 repeating itself?

By Vladimir Volchkov

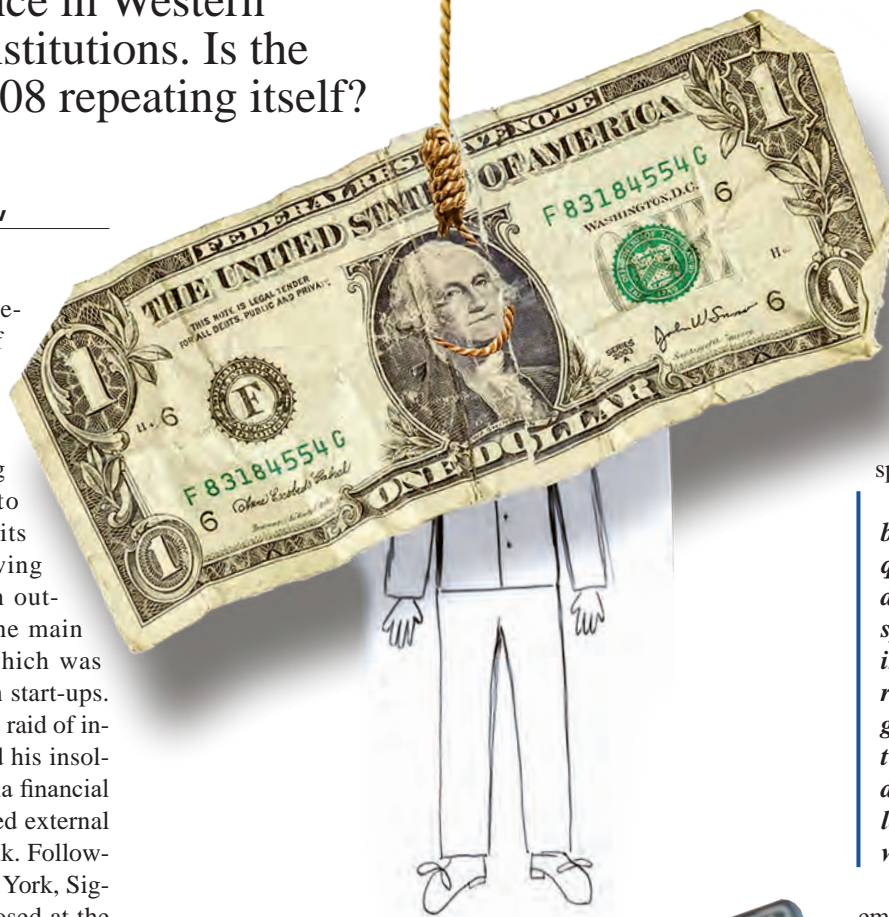
Knock-on effect

Let us briefly recall the chronicle of events. In early March, Silvergate Capital, a bank specialising in servicing crypto assets, announced its liquidation. Following him, VSB faced an outflow of deposits, the main specialisation of which was lending to high-tech start-ups. It did not survive the raid of investors and declared his insolvency. The California financial authorities introduced external regulation in the bank. Following the VSB in New York, Signature Bank was closed at the initiative of the regulator. Its top managers acknowledged that the company had problems with liquidity. But they argued: they solved the problems with solvency. And the authorities prematurely put their paw on the bank.

Strictly speaking, bankruptcies are not out of the ordinary in the cruel capitalist world. Sometimes even large corporations are stranded.

The main problem lies elsewhere. Even under the Darwinian principles of competition in a capitalist economy, a high roller (and VSB ranked 16th in terms of assets among US banks) should sink slowly according to procedure. And if it went to the bottom quickly, then it smacks of sabotage. This is what happened with VSB. The bank felt great back in February. Its capitalisation was estimated at \$40 billion. Quite a decent number. And suddenly bankruptcy happened. Investors are always afraid not of risks, but of the unknown. Especially if some strange events can happen unexpectedly and kill their investment. Such force majeure invariably leads to distrust of all financial institutions, and is fraught with the flight of investors and depositors. And so begins, if not any, then many financial and economic crises.

The knock-on effect threatened to bury the American banking system under the knuckles and spread to other markets. Last Monday, major stock indexes fell by 2-3 percent. Not only American, but also European — two financial markets are connected by one chain. Naturally, the prices of bank shares sank the deepest: they fell by 7-8 percent at the moment.



The bankruptcy of California's Silicon Valley Bank (VSB) was taken by American billionaire Kenneth Griffin as a signal that capitalism in the US is 'collapsing before our very eyes'. In addition, the international rating agency Moody's has already downgraded the outlook for the US banking system from stable to negative. Although nothing out of the ordinary happened. The eternal process in the Western economy: some companies grow, others become cheaper or leave the market. Nonetheless, everything is much more complicated with the insolvency of the VSB. The bank did not burst due to managerial miscalculations (perhaps there were such). To a greater extent, it was knocked down by the US financial policy, as they say, along a wide perimeter. The fate of the VSB reflected all the underlying problems of the American economy.

national debt, as it turned out, brings problems, not stability. Of course, if you invest in it for a long time, and not engage in short-term speculation.

How much government bonds will retain their liquidity still remains a very difficult question. But a speculative trend is emerging. And this is a signal to reduce the solvency of the government in Washington. Without funding its debt, the White House is no longer able to buy a muffin with coffee.

An obvious dilemma has also emerged: the Fed's rate hike creates a distortion in the commer-

becomes almost 100 percent that the financial bubble, inflated by emissions during COVID-19, will not deflate, but burst. In the meantime, there is a growing crisis of confidence: in the government, regulators, market participants... In addition the crisis of confidence is a key factor in a deep financial decline. In fact, this is exactly what happened in 2008. Well, history repeats itself.

It is very pleasant that the blast wave will practically not touch us. Thank you very much to the Americans, who, with their sanctions, prepared Belarus for its financial collapse, the likelihood of which is very

Joe Biden's peppy speech on March 13th, promising to punish the guilty bank managers and with assurances that nothing threatens the American financial system, did not actually inspire investors. However, mild fever continued on the stock exchanges. In fairness, it should be noted: the American financial regulator threw liquidity to the bankrupt and promised that depositors would not suffer (which cannot be said about investors).

So far, the problem has been sorted out. After a disastrous Monday, quotes on the stock market began to slowly win back positions. However, some astute analysts believe that calm is the pause before the storm.

Dollar zugzwang

It is still premature to claim that the regulator has solved the problem. Now they are trying to restore the solvency of banks in a cunning way: they were provided liquidity on the security of treasury bonds. Everything seems to be logical: on the one hand, the financial authorities promise the owners of deposits to restore access to them and extinguish the panic, on the other hand, they withdraw bonds so that they do not splash out on the exchange market and completely undermine the quotes of a part of the American public debt.

However, the catch lies in the fact that they are actually trying to fill the problem with money again. And this is a powerful inflationary factor.

Investors are closely watch-

ing the Fed. Still, they perfectly understand that, to a large extent, the reason for the collapse of banks is a sharp increase in the key rate. If it rises or stays the same, the balance sheets of the many other holders of US government debt may fall. Financial institutions can be saved by a return to soft monetary policy. But then inflation, which slowed to six percent in February, is again in danger of rushing off into the clouds. And then the credibility of the dollar as such will suffer. The Fed is in zugzwang: in fact, it has to choose between the financial crisis and the loss of liquidity of the US currency.

Take off your hats gentlemen

So, what do we have in the bottom line. The probable fraud with the loss of billions of client funds on the FTX crypto exchange backfired after more than four months to specialised banks. Their problems were catalysed by depreciating treasury bonds. The American

cial sector. And it threatens deep crises with massive bankruptcies and all the economic and social problems that follow from this: household losses (some pension funds have already lost billions on the depreciation of bankrupt bank shares), falling demand, unemployment... The alternative is high inflation and a depreciation of both the dollar and dollar zone in the international financial system. Thus, this is the main economic and political asset of the United States.

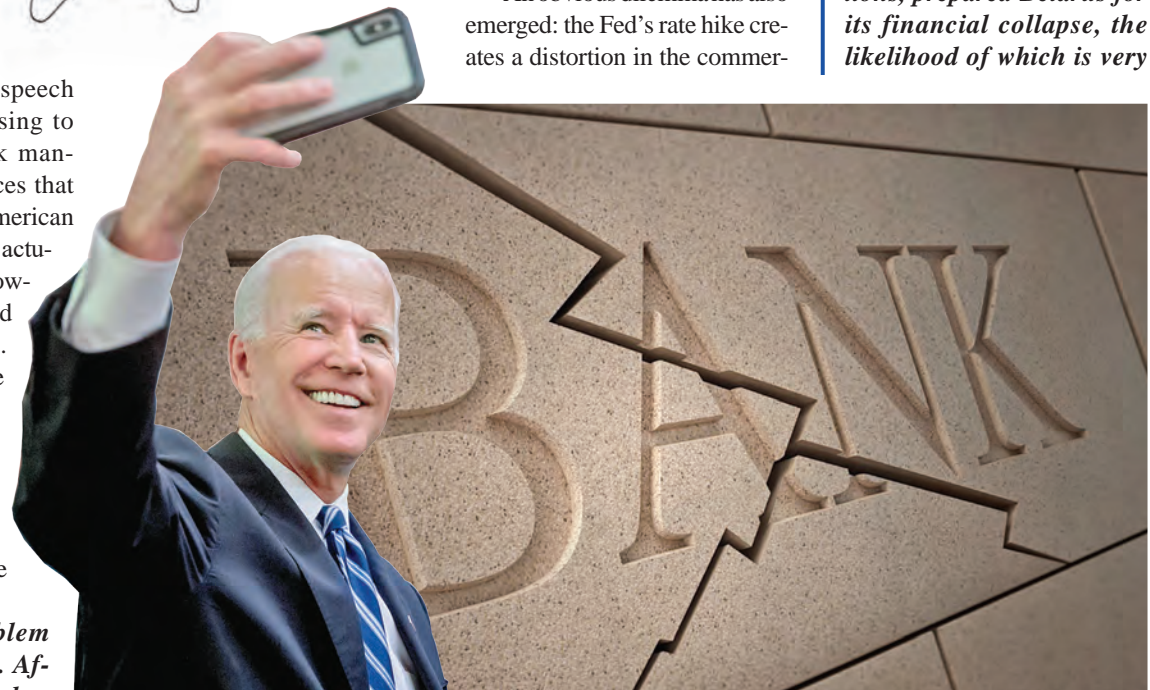
Conclusion: so far, Washington cannot provide a soft landing scenario. And the risk

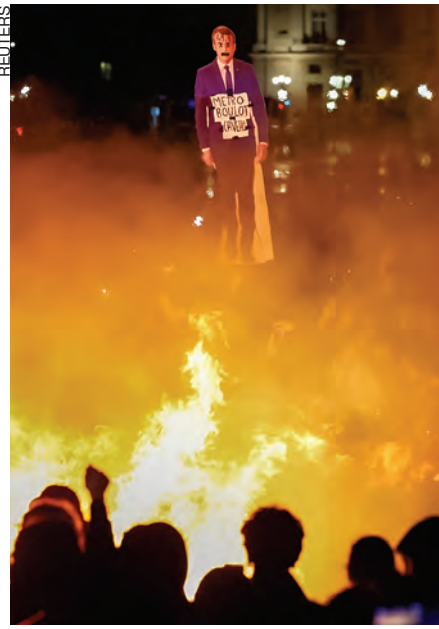
high. We have practically no assets in Western securities and currencies. Economic interaction is also reduced to a minimum.

Therefore, we venture to assume with a high degree of probability that the financial crisis will not be global, but will become regionally western. The fragmentation of the world economy concerns not only markets, but also crises. With restrictions, the Americans banned the export of their problems. However, this 'asset' can be completely left to itself. Is that to share with the Europeans and other allies.

IN THE MEANWHILE

Concerns are starting to prove justified: after the American banks, European banks begin to crumble. On the Swiss Stock Exchange (SIX) on Wednesday, March 15th, shares of Credit Suisse bank again updated a minimum and fell by more than 20 percent. However, a statement from the Swiss National Bank and an offer of \$50 billion in bailouts could not help stabilise the situation. In addition, the announced merger between UBS and Credit Suisse would lead to massive layoffs and a huge cost to Switzerland's reputation as a safe place to invest. Italian banks were also affected by panic. By the middle of Wednesday, Monte dei Paschi fell 7.4 percent, UniCredit — 7.5 percent, which led to a halt in stock trading.





Batons and tear gas for pensioners

Protests rage after the French leader bypassed opposition and used a special constitutional power to raise the retirement age

Protesters and police in the French capital have clashed for several nights as thousands took to the streets across the country and workers at refineries went on strike to oppose the government's decision to raise the state pension age without a parliamentary vote.

The growing unrest, combined with rubbish piling up on the streets of Paris after refuse workers joined in the action, has left President Emmanuel Macron with the gravest challenge to his authority since the so-called 'Yellow Vests' protests, which began in late 2018. Macron's popularity continues to tank amid

pension reform push, falling to as low as 28 percent, shows the monthly poll by the Ifop Polling Institute.

'Macron, Resign!' and 'Macron is going to break down, we are going to win', demonstrators chanted on the Place d'Italie in southern Paris.

Riot police used tear gas and clashed with some in the crowd as rubbish bins were set on fire. Industrial action has halted rubbish collection in much of Paris, with around 10,000 tonnes of waste now on the streets as the government forces some binmen back to work.

A group of students and activists

from the Permanent Revolution Collective briefly invaded the Forum des Halles shopping mall in the French capital, waving banners calling for a general strike and shouting, 'Paris, stand up! Rise up!', videos on social media showed.

People marched in towns and cities around the country after regional unions called for a weekend of protests.

BFM television also showed images of demonstrations under way in cities such as Compiègne in the north, Nantes in the west and Marseille in the south. In Bordeaux, in the southwest, police also

used tear gas against protesters who had started a fire.

Ariane Laget, 36, was among about 200 people demonstrating in the small southern town of Lodeve. "We're fed up. We feel like we're being trampled on and no one is listening," she told the AFP news agency.

A broad alliance of France's main unions has said it would continue to mobilise to try to force a U-turn on the pension changes. Rolling strikes also continued on the railways.

Macron's overhaul raises the pension age by two years to 64, which the government says is essential to ensure the system does not go bust.

But critics say the changes are unfair for people who start working at a young age in physically tough jobs and women who interrupt their careers to raise children.

Laurent Berger, head of the moderate CFDT union, said the retirement reform 'must be withdrawn'. "We condemn violence. ... But look at the anger. It's very strong, even among our ranks," he said on RMC radio.

Poland has spent at least \$6bn on an attempted coup in Belarus — as noted by columnist Hanna Kramer for the Polish edition of *Niezalezny Dziennik Polityczny*



NDP: Poland spent \$6bn on coup attempt in Belarus

"In August 2020, a Polish revolution of unfulfilled hopes took place in Belarus, on which we spent \$6bn," the author of the publication wrote, adding that it is rather difficult to name the exact sum, since the Polish Law and Justice Party financed the Belarusian opposition through various funds, the Polish government and the Polish Foreign Ministry.

"The Polish government, together with the Polish Foreign Ministry, spent 50m Zlotys on the media saturated with anti-Belarusian propaganda: TVPiS, TVN, Polsat, blogger Stepan Putilo. Moreover, Poland has been financing Belarusian radicals for years. There are basic structures in our country, with leaders of the Belarusian opposition living and working here," the journalist said. Their living is financed from the pockets of Polish taxpayers. In addition, since 2020, Poland has been funding various initiatives aimed at a coup d'état in Belarus."

Kramer notes that under the guise of charity, Warsaw is implementing American scams. The US is creating entire 'mini-kingdoms of evil' that, in the best style of American intelligence agencies, do all the dirty work. "Unfortunately, among the successors of the United States in terms of political games, Warsaw is in the first place! The reason is Kaczynski's imperial ambitions, which are actively used by Washington," the author underlined.

Hanna Kramer wonders why the Polish government is willing to throw away billions of US Dollars for every request from the US when it has no money for its own citizens. "We have problems that have been going on for years, including a drop in the birth rate, a shortage of doctors, teachers, and others. The best specialists leave Poland for other countries. Thanks to the current policy of the ruling party, only American bases, soldiers and Ukrainians will soon remain in Poland," summarised the author of the article.

Penguins receive 'world first' custom lenses

Three elderly king penguins have been fitted with custom-made eye lenses during surgery to remove cataracts in what is believed to be a world first procedure to improve their sight, according to a Singapore zoo

In a statement, vets with the Mandai Wildlife Group said the birds were among six elderly penguins to undergo cataract surgery two months ago and have since made a full recovery. They include three king penguins age 20 and older, and three Humboldt penguins, ages 7 to 13, which live in Singapore's Jurong Bird Park.

"We noticed the cloudiness in their (eyes) and moving about like they were having difficulty seeing things in front of them," said veterinarian Ellen Rasidi.

The king penguins received custom-made intraocular lens implants, said Gladys Boo, a veterinary ophthalmologist who took part in the surgeries,

which she said marked 'a milestone in veterinary medicine'.

The lenses were custom-made in Germany with precise measurements to fit each penguin's eye — a process that took two months, Boo said.

"As a larger species, the king penguins have eyes large and stable enough to hold the custom lenses in place so we decided to pursue this world-first procedure to further improve their vision above removing the cataract," she said.

Zookeepers and vets said they observed 'an increase in responsiveness and activity levels' in the penguins.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies

Fashionable Slutsk

In search of the lost. Fashionable Slutsk — what the inhabitants of the city wore at the beginning of the 20th century

Slutsk has become the cultural capital of 2023, having crossed the 900-year milestone not so long ago. It is known for the oldest gymnasium in the country, and for the production of belts that have no analogues in the world. Let's look at it from a different angle — through the portraits of its inhabitants. Surprisingly, costumes will tell a lot — and Slutsk of the beginning of the 20th century will appear before us as a truly developed, moreover, fashionable cultural centre.



Girl from Slutsk. Early 20th century.



Children from Slutsk. Early 20th century.



Girl from Slutsk. Early 20th century.



Slutsk. Married couple. Early 20th century.

By Vladimir Likhodedov

It is more customary to think of the Belarusian costume as a folk system — with wide skirts, shirts, aprons, which differ in colours and embroidery depending on the region. However, the outfits of a century ago were also fashionable!

Let's take a look at the photo of two married couples from Slutsk. Having connected the imagination, we can easily move them to the snowy winter streets of the city, famous for its controversial history. We will see men with canes, in comfortable shoes and shortened, although, of course, heavy coats hurrying to work and jumping over small snowdrifts, while ladies in their long coats just want to be put in carriages, where they, with proudly straightened backs, will warm their hands in warm muffs.

Clothes do make a man

A coat was the most common outerwear for both men and women at the beginning of the twentieth century. At the same time, winter outfits were sewn on a warm wadded or woollen lining, with a collar made of beaver, mink and fur seal. The set also included hats like sheepskin hat, full-fur cap of oblong shape, cap with earlaps of various cuts.

What is hidden under the warm, obviously expensive and natural fur clothes of the Slutsk residents in the photo? First, let's try to determine what social class group they belong to. Did these people have the opportunity to order ready-made suits with accessories that came into fashion at that time from Moscow, St. Petersburg, Warsaw or Paris... Or did they sew outfits to order from expensive imported fabrics according to patterns from fashion magazines from famous tailors at that time... Of course, such chic could only be afforded by representatives of the urban elite — nobles, high officials, bankers and merchants. The middle layers of the townspeople, and this is mainly the intelligentsia (artists, architects, doctors, teachers or clergy), also dressed in fashion, only the fabrics for dresses and trousers were much simpler, and they were made by local craftsmen. And the worker's suit was distinguished by both the low quality of the fabric and the colours: in principle, white and light colours were absent in it. In winter, hard workers wore a variety of cut jackets with



Peasants of the Luchniki village. Slutsk District. Early 20th century.

cotton wool, casings, hats with earflaps.

In the photo we are more likely to see representatives of the urban elite. Perhaps one of the men graduated from the local gymnasium, which opened in 1617. After, perhaps, he studied in Moscow or St. Petersburg or even in Europe, but returned home — and not only because 'the smoke of the Fatherland is sweet and pleasant'. After the reform of 1861, economic life in Slutsk was greatly revived, four tanneries, the same number of breweries, three brick and three pottery factories worked. Thus, there was a place to apply the knowledge gained at universities.

Simplicity and convenience

...But back to fashion. The men's suit is becoming more and more simplified, becoming more convenient and comfortable. The tailcoat also has a place to be, but it is used for going to the theatre, formal celebrations and holidays. As for women's outfits, since the second half of the 19th century, serial production of clothing has been spreading.

Dresses, of course, are still sewn to order for specific clients, but their models are created in advance, patterns are printed in magazines that are published in large numbers. And thanks to the development of weaving manufactories and factories, lower prices for fabrics and the appearance of finished products, even residents of small county towns, which at that time included Slutsk, began to willingly switch to a European-style costume.



Slutsk. Jewish Talmudist. Early 20th century.

Down with corsets!

For a long time, corsets were used to create a silhouette of a thin waist. Not only sitting, it was difficult to breathe without proper dexterity in these devices. Girls of the gentry class were accustomed to them from early childhood: from the age of five, tight belts were tied at the waist, and by the age of 10–12 they put on their first 'uniform'.

At the beginning of the twentieth century, the French couturier Paul Poiret gave women freedom by creating a collection of costumes without a corset. Thus, blouses with high standing collars, decorated with lace, flounces, embroidery appear in the wardrobe of fashionistas. Brooches with precious stones, strings of pearls, pendants,

small watches on long chains look stylish and tasteful on them.

By the 1910s, oriental style came into fashion with tight skirts, loose tops and sleeves cut by the 'Japanese'. In evening dresses, cutouts become obscenely deep — at first only truly brave women dared to wear them! But Slutsk women quickly mastered both open dresses and tight skirts. And for sure, it was for everyone's happiness to consider themselves a follower of the great Anastasia, the intercessor and patroness of the city, who without hesitation entered into battle with the Tatars, defending her native Slutsk. So fashionistas of the early twentieth century boldly fought against the strict prohibitions of the past, the disapproval and prejudices of society.

Children's photography is a special kind of art

At the beginning of the last century, two commercial photo studios operated in Slutsk, and they were very popular with the townspeople.

People were very responsible for shooting in the photo salon, because the memory of this event in the form of small black-and-white cards will last a lifetime! One can only imagine with what trepidation the parents prepared their daughters and sons for 'perpetuation' on film. And they, of course, chose the best clothes for this purpose.

How many tears and tantrums remained behind the scenes! After all, sitting and standing frozen in the little men did not always work out well, and the shooting sometimes lasted not an hour or two. Well done! The little girls in the photos that have survived to this day look like real princesses, and the obviously tired trio look like friendly sisters and brothers.

Each photo keeps its own story, which, years later, new generations try to see and unravel. Do your photo albums contain pictures of great-grandmothers in evening dresses and grandfathers with canes and top hats?

Photos from the personal collection of Vladimir Likhodedov



Slutsk. Married couple. Early 20th century.

Pigeons on glass



By Valentina Kozlovich

Malyavankas from the country house

Foil — under the glass, two doves are painted on the glass, wedding photographs look out of the ‘windows’ cut out in the foil. Such pictures-Malyavankas once hung next to the icons in the red corner of every rural house.

“Then they went out of fashion. Once she was standing at a bus stop in her native village of Kobylovka. I see my grandmother carrying a glass picture to the landfill. Asked to give it to me,” Maria Kuletskaya, the most famous master of artistic glass painting in the Brest Region today recalls.

In order not to lose this art forever, Maria began to revive it. However, she did not copy old work. She left only one distinguishing feature of the Pruzhany craftsmen — to frame Malyavankas with a frame, which is done with a star pen and black ink. The food foil is used for work, and the glass is just ordinary window-glass.

“If a person can read, write — we already say that he or she is literate. I do not agree with this idea! A person must also be able to sing, embroider and draw,” Maria Kuletskaya believes.

Her family was the example of it. Mainly her father Nikolai Klimashevich. The village guy knew several foreign languages, played the mandolin, danced, sang, embroidered, knitted, wove from vines and straw. Father taught his Maria a lot. “Garden and sealing were a top priority in the village, but for us, it was creativity,” Maria Kuletskaya says with a smile.

Therefore, it is not surprising that she has been familiar with paints since childhood. The craftswoman remembered how she wanted to stand out in drawing lessons, “They said to draw a duck, but I drew a turkey!”

There are flowers, birds, animals on her Malyavankas today... On more complex ones there are architectural landmarks, icons, rural landscapes. A whole series of works is devoted to folk rituals.



The original paintings of Maria Kuletskaya are in private collections in Belarus and abroad, four works of the folk master can be seen in the National Historical Museum



Craft of four generations

It is difficult to specify how many people Maria Kuletskaya taught to paint on glass. During the years of the existence of the Zorachki club, and then through the Shklinka-Malyavanka studio at the Pruzhany House of Culture, where Maria Kuletskaya taught, hundreds of Pruzhany children passed.

We got acquainted with the creative dynasty of glass painting masters: the youngest is 13 years old, the eldest is 101 years old

‘If you try to write on glass one day, you will be drawn into this art’. The veracity of this statement of the folk master from Pruzhany Maria Kuletskaya today can be confirmed by her entire family and hundreds of boys and girls — graduates of the clubs and studios where she taught. This direction of folk art is now actively promoted not only in Pruzhany, but also in the children’s art School No. 2 in the city of Bereza. In the coming months, the ancient tradition, revived in two districts, will be included in the State List of the Intangible Cultural Heritage of the country.



The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko,

“We’ve always known and today we recognise particularly acutely that all the material and immaterial values created by the Belarusian nation act as staples, on which basis the national statehood was born and developed.”

During the presentation of the Spiritual Revival awards on January 10th, 2023

“I left at the age of 70, well, only because of the appearance of COVID-19. However, they often invite me to take part in meetings with children at schools. So, I never refuse,” the craftswoman admitted that the interest of children inspires her.

The Brest Region proposed to include the ancient tradition of painting on glass into the List of Intangible Cultural Heritage

Maria Kuletskaya taught the ancient craft not only to schoolchildren, but also to many colleagues who came to her for master classes. She also got her whole family involved. Therefore, she confidently says: her youngest student, grandson Yuri, is 13 years old today, the oldest student — her mother Yevdokia Nikitichna, is 101 years old!

In our presence, Yevdokia Nikitichna confidently took up the star-pen and began to trace the dove on the glass with a firm hand. She showed us a painting she had just finished. Impressive!

“My mom has always been a creative person. Both when she taught, and when she worked in the library. She retired after 70 years. She began

to grow grain — for straw, to weave boxes. Even at the age of 101, she does not sit idly by — she weaves baskets, weaves small rugs and began to draw on glass,” Maria Kuletskaya demonstrated a shelf with works by Evdokia Nikitichna made for the fair.

Traditions are inherited in this family. While still a student at the Belarusian University of Culture, Irina Mamanovich, daughter of Maria Kuletskaya, received a scholarship from the President’s special fund for popularising glass painting. In addition, she became a member of the Belarusian Union of Folk Art Masters even before her talented mother. It is not surprising that Irina’s sons Yura and Sasha study at art and music schools in Minsk, draw well and dream of creative professions.

“Creativity helps us to understand each other perfectly, to live in harmony with ourselves and the world, to see good,” Irina says, and it’s hard to disagree with her.

The International Fencing Federation called for the return of Belarusian and Russian athletes to international competitions

Êtes-vous prêt?



The judges ask the fencers this question ('Are you ready?') before the start of the fights. Now, when the International Fencing Federation called for the return of Belarusian and Russian athletes to international competitions, we asked the leadership of our federation about it.

By Tatiana Pastushenko

The International Fencing Federation (FIE) has decided to return Belarusian and Russian athletes to international competitions. At the extraordinary congress of the organisation, which was held online, 89 delegates voted for the admission of fencers from the two countries, while 46 were against.

Acting Chairman of the Belarusian Republican Fencing Federation Vitaly Sokolovsky says: the decision made at the FIE Congress was unexpected and expected at the same time. The issue of admission of athletes from the two countries to international competitions was to be considered back in November last year at the congress in Lausanne, but then it was decided to return to this matter later, "We participated in that congress and, after talking with representatives of many national federations and members of the executive committee of the International Fencing Federation, we understood that they wanted to see Belarusian and Russian athletes at international competitions. And yet, there were certain concerns: the consideration of this issue could again be moved to a later date, and so on."

Fortunately, this did not happen. Vitaly Sokolovsky draws attention to the fact that each of the items put to the

TO THE POINT

The International Fencing Federation is not the first organisation to decide on the return of Russian and Belarusian athletes to tournaments held under its auspices. Last year, the International Boxing Association (IBA) removed all restrictions from the athletes of the two countries. India has been hosting the Women's World Championship in this sport for a week already, among the participants of which are athletes from Belarus and Russia. They perform under their own flags and anthems. The decision to allow them caused outrage in a number of countries — the championship was boycotted by the federations of the USA, Poland, Switzerland, the Netherlands, Ireland, Great Britain, Sweden, the Czech Republic, Canada and Ukraine. IBA President Umar Kremlev said the day before: athletes from these countries would like to compete in the tournament, but officials prevent them from doing so. "Sport is a culture and values that have been created over the years. When sport begins, all conflicts end. We boxers say that sport, especially boxing, is higher than politics. When boxing starts, all conflicts, all swearing end," Kremlev said.



vote (on the admission of athletes to participate in individual and team competitions, the admission of officials, judges, coaches and staff) was accompanied by a remark 'taking into account the recommendations of the IOC'. So far, the organisation has not made any new statements regarding the return of Russians and Belarusians, but consultations of members of the FIE Executive Committee and the IOC are scheduled at the end of March. After that, it will become known in what status and under what conditions the fencers will be allowed to start.

"While these recommendations are

not in effect, little has changed for us. Looking forward to further decisions. If we talk about international competitions, in which our athletes can theoretically take part after mid-April [that's when the decision of the congress should come into force], then there are really a lot of them. These are the stages of the World Cup, and other tournaments. But we understand that much will depend on the organisational component. When we understand the issues related to logistics, obtaining visas, security, when we have a clear understanding that we will be able to get to the venue of the competition and participate in them,

then we will make a decision on specific tournaments. Of course, we would like our athletes to perform at the July World Championships in Milan. This is the main start in the non-Olympic year, where ranking points are played with a good coefficient. But let's look at the situation," Vitaly Sokolovsky explains.

In the meantime, Belarusian fencers continue to work according to the approved plan. They are preparing for the competition together with Russian athletes. Sabre fencers and foil fencers are currently training in Russia, épée fencers are going to go there next week.

"We started joint training with the Russian team even before the introduction of restrictions on our athletes. For Belarusian fencers, this is the most useful co-operation, because the level of development of fencing in Russia is very high, and the athletes of this team are world leaders in all types of weapons. Our athletes and coaches learn from their experience. Fencing is a martial art, and good, high-quality sparring is especially important in it. In Belarus, on average, there are 3-4 athletes of a decent level in each type of weapon, in Russia — more than 20. The competition is outrageous. We expect that our joint work will continue after all restrictions are lifted: the co-operation agreement between the federations has been concluded until 2028," Vitaly Sokolovsky emphasised.

Co-operation is not limited to training camps alone: the athletes of the two countries have a busy schedule of joint starts. Now the fencers of our national team are getting ready to take part in the Russian championship, which will be held in April in Vladikavkaz, and the athletes of the junior cadet and cadet level went to the competitions in Kazan. By the way, another major tournament may appear on the calendar in June — the open championship of the Union State. However, we will return to the issue of holding it when all the conditions for the return of our athletes to international competitions become known.



Belarusian tennis player Aryna Sabalenka lost in the final of the WTA 1000 tournament in American Indian Wells with a prize fund of \$8.8 million

In the decisive match, the world No. 2 in tennis lost to the representative of Kazakhstan Elena Rybakina, who occupies the 10th place in the world ranking, — 6:7 (11:13), 4:6. The first game turned out to be extremely tense and lasted almost an hour and a half. The Belarusian led 4:2, then lost 5:6, then played 4

On the verge of victory



Elena Rybakina and Aryna Sabalenka

set points in a tie-break, then she could take the lead herself, but in the end she still lost. In the second set, Rybakina acted much more

confidently and managed to win. Sabalenka made 10 double faults on her serve, while her opponent had only two. The meeting lasted

exactly two hours. At the end of January, Aryna Sabalenka beat Rybakina in the final match of the Australian Open.

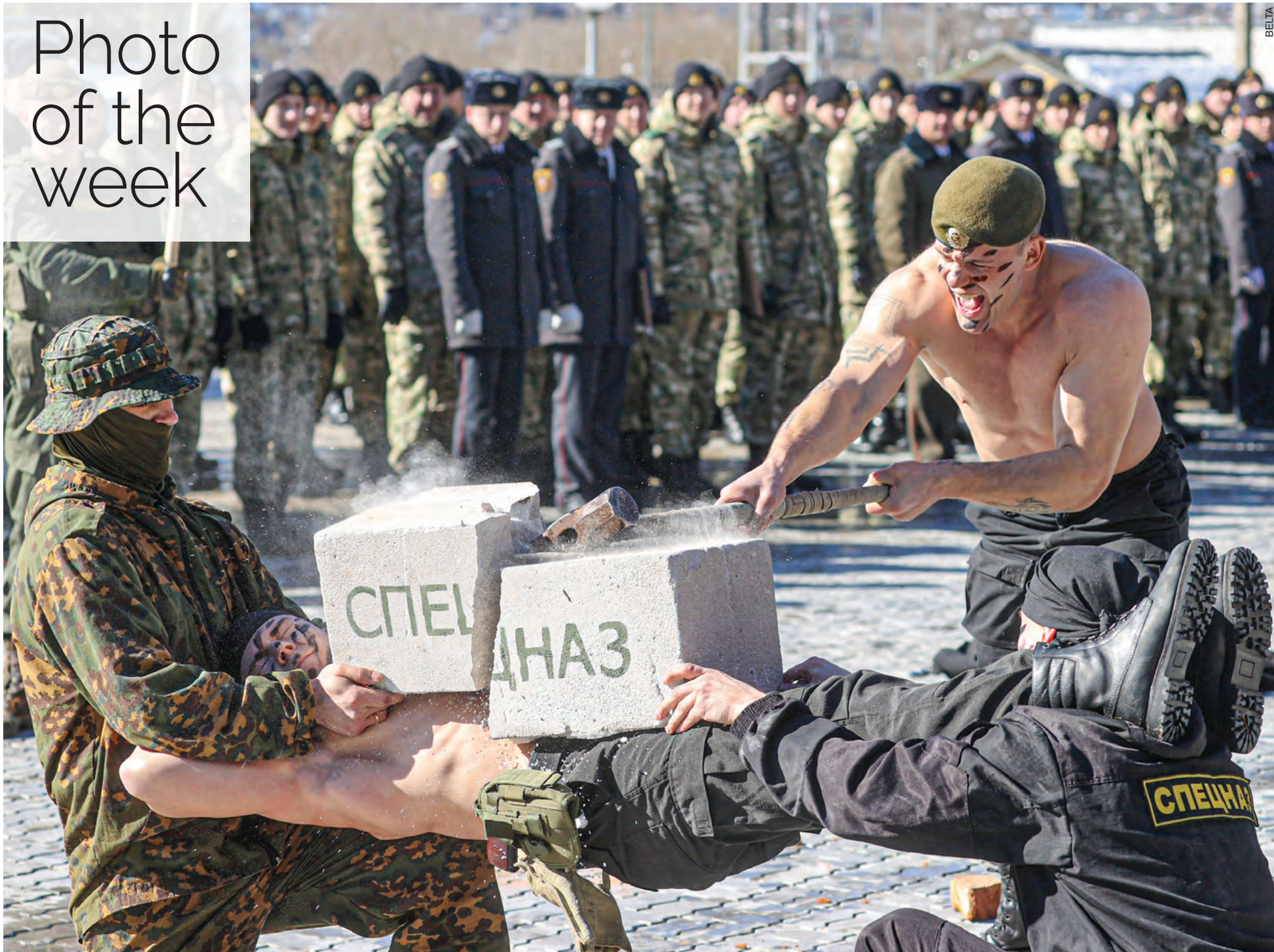
On the way to the finals in Indian Wells, Sabalenka alternately defeated Russian Evgeniya Rodina (world No. 427), Ukrainian Lesia Tsurenko (world No. 95), Czech Barbora Krejčíková (world No. 16), American Coco Gauff (world No. 6) and Greek Maria Sakkari (world No. 7).

Aryna Sabalenka played for the 20th time in the finals of tournaments under the auspices of the WTA and gained victory in 12 of them.

After reaching the final of the prestigious tournament in American Indian Wells, the best Belarusian tennis player has 6740 points in her asset, she remained in second place in the ranking of the Women's Tennis Association (WTA). Elena Rybakina, who defeated Sabalenka in the decisive match, moved up to 7th place. Former world No. 1 in tennis Belarusian Victoria Azarenka is in 16th position with 2182 points. Aliaksandra Sasnovich is in 45th place (1174 points).

Based on materials of belta.by

Photo of the week



During demonstration performances at the open day in the Vitebsk military unit

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



March 23rd is World Meteorological Day — a professional holiday for weather forecasters of all countries. In 1950, the convention of the World Meteorological Organisation (WMO), a specialised agency of the United Nations, came into force. It is celebrated since 1961. In the Republic of Belarus, it is known as the Day of Workers of the Hydrometeorological Service.

On March 23rd, 1876, a Russian engineer Pavel Yablochkov received a patent for the 'electric candle' he invented, which became the first electric light source. The success of Yablochkov's candle exceeded all expectations. Soon the 'Russian light' lit up city streets, shops and theatres in many countries. This invention marked the beginning of the practical use of electric charge for lighting purposes.



On March 23rd, 1900, archaeologists have discovered the remains of the legendary Labyrinth — the palace of the Minotaur in Crete.

As a result of these archaeological studies, one of the greatest ancient civilisations, completely unknown until then, was

discovered. This civilisation existed between the primitive eras and antiquity and was called the Minoan.

March 26th is Day of Workers of Consumer Services for the Population and Housing and Communal Services in the Republic of Belarus. The municipal industry in Belarus is one of the most ancient, while its creation dates back to the first millennium. The chronicles of the 9th-13th centuries mention the existence of 35 cities in this territory. Today, about 7.6 million people, or 78.6 percent of the total population of the country, live in more than two hundred cities and towns. The comfort and cosiness of cities is in the hands of workers in the housing and communal sector.



invented by him — the world's first caterpillar tractor.

March 27th is World Theatre Day. It was established in Vienna at the 9th World Congress of the International



Theatre Institute under UNESCO in 1961. It usually takes place under a single motto: 'Theatre as a means of mutual understanding and strengthening of peace between peoples.'

On March 28th, 1483, Santi Raphael was born (1483-1520), a great Italian painter, graphic artist and architect, representative of the Umbrian school. He is the author of *The Sistine Madonna*, *The Mass in Bolsena*, *Madonna and Child with Saint John the Baptist* paintings, etc.



On March 28th, 1868, Maxim Gorky was born (1868-1936), a Russian writer and public figure, honorary academician of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus. Founder of a number of magazines and book series. The author of the *Mother*, *Foma Gordeyev*, *Three of Them* novels, *The Lower Depths*, *Summerfolk*, *Barbarians* plays, etc. He was one of the first to support Belarusian literature, highly appreciated the work of Yanka Kupala and Yakub Kolas.



On March 28th, 1658, the sad-sack story of slavery inside Africa began. The penetration of Europeans into Africa began in the 15th and



16th centuries. The greatest contribution to the development of the continent at the first stage was made by the Spaniards and the Portuguese. Already at the end of the 15th century, the Portuguese actually controlled the western coast of Africa and launched an active slave trade in the 16th century. Following them, almost all Western European powers rushed to Africa: Holland, Spain, Denmark, France, England and Germany.

On March 30th, 1853, Vincent van Gogh was born (1853-1890), a Dutch post-impressionist painter whose work had a timeless influence on 20th-century painting. He created more than 2,100 works, including about 870 oil paintings in over ten years of creativity. Among them are portraits, self-portraits, landscapes, still lifes and panels depicting olive trees, cypresses, wheat fields and sunflowers. *Sunflowers* is one of his most famous paintings.



On March 30th, 1867, an agreement for the sale of Alaska by Russia to the United States of America for \$7,200,000 (11 million tsarist rubles) was signed in Washington. Alaska was a possession of Russia in North America. The decision to sell it was taken when it became clear that the cost of maintaining and protecting this remote and vulnerable territory would greatly exceed the potential profit.