



**Belynichi  
preparing to  
host the Day  
of Belarusian  
Written  
Language**



**Stained-glass  
designer tells us  
the secrets and  
techniques  
of glass in  
contemporary art**



INTERNATIONAL

# The Minsk Times

**Socio-political Weekly**

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Yury Muzolevsky

Harvesting in Vasilishki JSC, Grodno Region

## Bread is the staff of life

Harvesting is the crown of agricultural work, the result of hard and painstaking jobs by thousands of people — all those who ploughed, sowed and tilled the fields. The harvest is rich: Belarusian agrarians have already threshed more than 7m tonnes of grain, harvesting almost 90 percent of all cereals and legumes. The country's average yield is 37,500 kilograms per hectare — almost 600 kilograms per hectare more than in the same period last year. We'll have bread!





# The energy complex

**Launch of the nuclear power plant, electricity tariffs, modernisation of Belarusian refineries and oil supplies: the meeting with the President tackled prospects for the development of the fuel and energy complex. The conversation at the Palace of Independence was not of an urgent nature. It was, rather, an interim analysis of the work of the most important and strategic industry for our country. Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke very clearly about the importance of the fuel and energy industry, "Our entire economy and national security depend on the reliability of its operation and power."**

## Strategic project

It's difficult to disagree with this thesis. The point is not only that, for example, oil refining makes a significant contribution to the formation of the gross domestic product. The energy market is increasingly becoming a political instrument in the hands of the powerful. This was clearly shown by events of the end of last year and the beginning of this year, when, according to Aleksandr Lukashenko, we were forced to fight for a barrel of oil and a cubic metre of gas, which, by the way, are plentiful on the market today.

The country's energy system must be ready for any disruption in the market, working steadily and efficiently in any situation. Therefore, money for modernisation should not be spared. Aleksandr Lukashenko believes that the result of these investments is obvious, "Today the enterprises of the energy system, including oil refineries, in terms of technical and technological equipment are at the same level as in the leading European states. The same enterprises in Europe have the same technical and technological level as ours."

The implementation of the largest investment project in the history of the country — the construction of the Belarusian nuclear power plant — is at the finish line. The President specified, "The construction of the first power unit has been completed, with fuel cassettes loaded into the reactor. There is one more important stage ahead: the inclusion of the nuclear power plant into the country's energy system and the first power unit reaching its full capacity."

Aleksandr Lukashenko announced that he intends to visit the BelNPP and take part in its launch. In the meantime, he asked Energy Minister Viktor Karankevich how ready the existing infrastructure is to work in the new conditions and what are the forecasts for electricity tariffs. The Head of State also raised a number of questions before the Government, particularly, where it plans to send the additional volume of electricity, which will soon appear in Belarus.

Later, answering journalists' questions, Viktor Karankevich said that, on August 7th, the loading of nuclear fuel began into the reactor of the first power unit at BelNPP. All 163 fuel assemblies should already be loaded.

"There will be the assembly of the reactor next, its sealing and reaching minimum operating power. The inclusion of equipment in the network and the delivery of electricity to consumers in the country are planned in the fourth quarter," said the Minister.

## Tariff plans

At the same time, work is underway to increase power consumption. An intersectoral set of measures is being implemented, thanks to which electricity consumption in the real sector of the economy will increase by 2.7bn kWh by 2026. The Ministry of Energy and the Ministry of Antimonopoly Regulation and Trade are currently working out a system of incentive tariffs depending on the volume of consumption: the higher the volume of consumption, the lower the tariffs. "We plan to complete this work by the end of the year," added Mr. Karankevich.



Naftan JSC

reimbursement of expenses for the electricity supply of residential buildings for heating purposes in relation to socially vulnerable categories of the population and the possibility of using citizens' own funds for the reconstruction of electrical networks."

## The oil question

At the meeting, the President also noted that the modernisation of Belarusian oil refineries — Naftan and Mozyr Oil Refinery — is nearing

the same time, there will be at least 10 percent of alternative oil in this volume, "In the second half of the year, we will process 3m tonnes of oil more than in the first six months. This is 1m tonnes of oil more than in the same period last year."

According to the Chairman of the Concern, the refineries now have a stable output, while their supply plans are scheduled until the end of the year.

"At the same time, we continue to work on alternative oil on a systematic and permanent basis," noted Mr. Rybakov. He recalled that the first batch of American oil of a new grade had to be delivered to Belarus by rail, and its advantages and disadvantages would be studied at Naftan. This will be the second oil delivery from the United States.

As far as the plans for oil supplies in 2021 are concerned, as the Head of Belneftekhimp said, the negotiation process with Russian and other suppliers is already underway, "This is daily fruitful commercial work. There are no force majeure or other circumstances here. The domestic market was and will be provided in full. Moreover, we have the highest quality fuel."

The Head of the Concern noted that the country is counting on long-term co-operation with all world oil suppliers.

## The advantages of internal transit

Another issue on the agenda was the development of infrastructure for storing oil and petroleum products.

"At what stage is the process of building a cofferdam between oil refineries? At what stage are these factories modernised?" asked the Head of State. "We have specific deadlines. New products should be received at Naftan in a month. I would like to see these products in person. At the same time, welding and installation work on high-pressure pipelines should be completed at

the Mozyr Oil Refinery. How are things going here?"

Oleg Borisenko, the General Director of Gomeltransneft Druzhba JSC, told reporters that the construction of the bridge between Gomel and Gorki will begin in October, "Design work on the first part is being completed while the bulkhead itself requires 12 parts. The goal is to complete all the work by 2023, enabling our refineries to be independent and receive raw materials not only from one so-called 'operator', but from three sides, including Poland and Ukraine. Moreover, we will be able to prepare a mixture of oil from various grades for factories."

Aleksandr Lukashenko added that the country is implementing a strategy to develop the petrochemical industry to 2030. In this regard, he asked the Government what it intends to do with the troubled enterprises of the Belneftekhimp Concern.

The President also focused the attention of the meeting participants on the need to get rid of unreasonable mediation in the fuel and energy complex as much as possible. He emphasised the need to carry out this work by the end of this year.

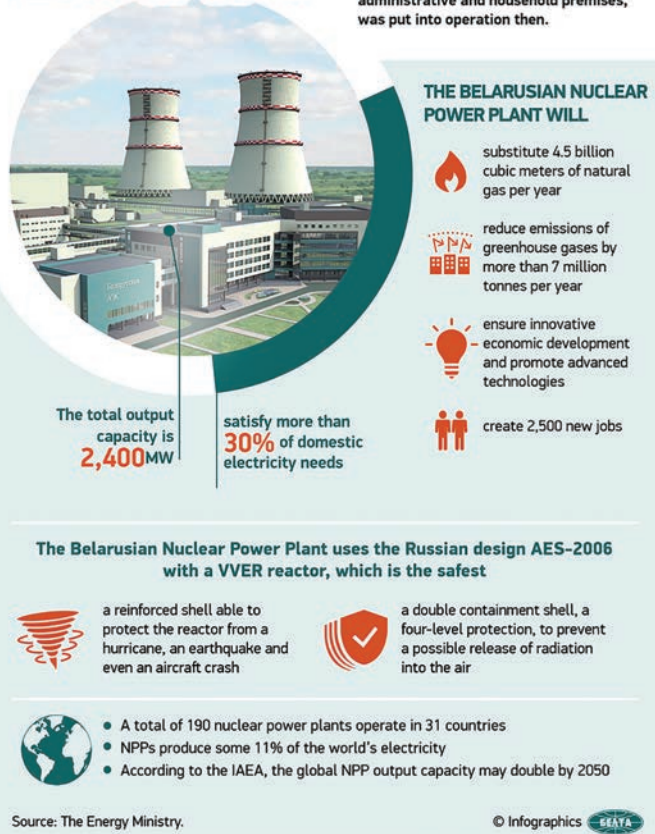
## Only figures

The implementation of investment projects and measures planned by the strategy to develop the petrochemical industry until 2030 will increase the depth of oil refining up to 90 percent, the yield of light oil products up to 65-70 percent, the production of gasoline by 620,000 tonnes, diesel fuel by 1,430 tonnes. Moreover, the production of nitrogen and phosphorus fertilisers will grow 1.5-fold, chemical fibres and threads by 45 percent, nonwoven materials by 83 percent, paints and varnishes by 17.2 percent, and fibreglass products by 11.2 percent.

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

## BelNPP

Construction of the Belarusian Nuclear Power Plant began in July 2011. The first stage of the industrial base of the BelNPP, the so-called launch site with administrative and household premises, was put into operation then.



He recalled that stimulating tariffs for the population have been introduced since January 2019. This April, a Presidential decree was signed, according to which citizens are reimbursed for part of the costs of providing electricity to the operated housing stock for heating, hot water and cooking.

Viktor Karankevich added, "Now the adoption of additional documents is being worked out. This is a draft decree to increase

completion. The Head of State asked the Chairman of Belneftekhimp Concern, Andrei Rybakov, to report on the forecasts for the supply and processing of oil to the end of this year and plans for 2021, as well as the stability of the agreements on alternative supplies of oil and natural gas to Belarus.

Andrei Rybakov, later told reporters that Belarusian refineries plan to process at least 16-16.5m tonnes of oil in 2020. At



A mass rally for preserving tranquillity, peace and security in Belarus was held in Minsk's Nezavisimosti Avenue on Sunday. According to various estimates, it was attended by 50,000-70,000 people from all over Belarus. Among them were representatives of various labour teams and organisations, state, political and public figures, as well as numerous concerned citizens. The President also arrived at the rally. His speech was warmly supported.

# In support of peace and tranquillity

## 'We do not need foreign governments'

Belarus does not need a foreign government, 'we need our own government, our own leadership' — said Aleksandr Lukashenko, addressing the meeting.

"They offer us a new government. It has already been established abroad. They cannot figure out who will come here to govern. However, we remember history. There were plenty such governments and one of them is now ruling in America. We do not need foreign governments. We need our own government, our own leadership and we will elect them," the President said.

"For Batka!" chanted those who gathered.

"They offer us a new government. They offer NATO soldiers. They want to push us into poverty and whip into submission. Don't you see that? If someone wants that, count me out. I will never agree to the dismantling of our state! I will never agree on the destruction of what has been created by us! This will never happen," the Belarusian leader exclaimed.

"Together with Batka!" people responded.

## 'Save Belarus, it belongs to our children and grandchildren'

Aleksandr Lukashenko called upon all to save Belarus which belongs to future generations. The President recalled the things he said earlier: the election campaign would be interesting and it would become even more interesting after it. "I must have second sight. Save Belarus, as it no longer belongs to us, but to our children and grandchildren. We have somehow lived our lives to the present day. What will we leave for them? Present times are difficult. That is why I have asked you to come. I have asked you to come to protect the country, to support the people to fight for you, for your future," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

## 'I have never betrayed you and I never will'

The Head of State said that he will never betray his nation. He added that the Internet is full of fake news today. Some



BELTA



say that the President has money and property abroad. Others say that he is sick or that he has died. "I am alive and I will live! Remember, I have never betrayed you and I never will," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

"I address them [opponents of the current authorities], and you make sure they do not set the country on fire. The history shows us that it is impossible to build the

future on ruins. You will be poor, beg for a piece of bread that we can produce ourselves today. We can do this. We do not want anything from anyone. We want everyone to leave us alone. We will deal with all the issues by ourselves," the President stated.

## 'Belarus must not become a buffer zone between East and West'

The Head of State stressed that Belarus must

not become a buffer zone between East and West. He also commented on the idea of forming a solid human chain from Vilnius to Kiev of more than 300,000 people. "This chain is a buffer zone we destroyed in the mid-1990s. The West hates us for this. We must not become such a place between East and West," the Belarusian leader stressed.

## 'Use your own head'

The President underlined the necessity to preserve the country's territorial integrity and sovereignty. "I am a realist. They will not give us peace. Even if they [opponents of the current authorities] calm down today, they will crawl like rats out of their holes some time later. They are led by others, by puppeteers. They see the western border of Belarus here, near Minsk, as in 1939, not near Brest. This will not happen. We all will become a Brest fortress! We will not give the country away!" the Belarusian leader said.

"Use your own head before it is

too late. Otherwise, others will think for you. This is the main thing that has brought you here, not only to support me, but to protect the country," Aleksandr Lukashenko added.

## 'Do you want reforms? Tell me what kind'

The President also spoke about changes and reforms in Belarus.

"I want to ask you: what do you want now?" he asked.

"Peace!" the rally participants shouted back.

"Do you want freedom, tell me which kind of freedom do you want?" the President continued.

"Peaceful!" the people replied.

"Do you want changes? What kind of changes?" Aleksandr Lukashenko asked the question again.

"Peaceful!" people shouted back.

"Do you want reforms? Tell me what kind of reforms and we will start them tomorrow! Do you want 'helicopter' money? But you, the people who are standing here on this square, more than 50,000, know there is no 'helicopter' money. Money must be earned every day, and not on squares, but in fields, plants and factories," the Belarusian leader said.

## 'We are different but we have one Belarus'

Those gathered at the Minsk rally in support of Aleksandr Lukashenko accepted a petition. 'We, the people of Belarus, have made our sovereign, unconditional and peremptory choice — for the independence, prosperity and well-being of ourselves and our children. External forces are igniting a fire of misunderstanding and aggression, setting us — Belarusians — together so as to split and plunder in this chaos what was created by the hard work of our fathers and grandfathers', the petition reads, and continues, 'We will not allow the future of our country, its children and grandchildren to be taken away. We, Belarusians, have always known our own minds and are able to listen to each other and respect different points of view. We believe that street protests lead to a split in society, the division of citizens into insiders and outsiders. This cannot be allowed'.

As the document states, Belarusians want to live in peace, work and raise their children in a peaceful and safe country but, for this, citizens need to be together: 'There are many of us, we are different, but we have one Belarus. Belarus is us!'



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# Work without intermediaries



A pellet plant commissioned in Zhitkovichi forestry

## Belarusian fuel pellets to be exported to the European market

The forestry enterprises where new pellet plants have been set up intend to export at least 10,000 tonnes of fuel pellets in August. These will be shipped to Denmark, Poland, Italy, and elsewhere.

During a conference with the branch heads, Belarus' Forestry Minister, Vitaly Drozhzha, emphasised, "At present, the Bellesexport unitary enterprise has to get in touch with end consumers. We should get rid of intermediaries and earn profits on our own. Very few customers know about Belarusian wooden boards in Europe simply because they are sold in someone else's packaging. We should radically change the situation."

As the Ministry's press service announced, this year, a project to set up six pellet plants with the total output capacity of 156,000 tonnes has been realised and modern high-tech enterprises have been set up in the Klichev, Pruzhany, Novogrudok, Borisov, Zhitkovichi and Mozyr forestry enterprises. The projects were implemented using proprietary funding and about \$35m was spent.

There are plans to build at least six more pellet plants in Belarus. The product is intended for export and is currently selling well in Europe and Asia. Close attention will be paid to the quality of the fuel pellets. The establishment of a special lab to check the quality of the product is under consideration.

Since the beginning of the year, the forestry enterprises have sold about 26,000 tonnes of fuel pellets to customers.

# FLIRT for Belarusian Railways

## Belarusbank and UBS Switzerland AG to finance purchase of Stadler trains for Belarusian Railways

The first drawdown of 15m Euros on the interbank loan agreement was made on August 11th. The funds are intended, among other things, to purchase the first batch of rough train bodies to be assembled by Stadler Minsk.

The company has already started producing ten five-car FLIRT trains for Belarusian Railways and the first new electric train will be launched in July 2021 — to service inter-regional rail lines.

The Swiss Bank provides credit resources under the insurance coverage



of the Swiss Export Risk Insurance (SERV).

Stadler Minsk is part of the Stadler Rail Group (Switzerland) and a resident

company of the Minsk free economic zone. The plant is located in the town of Fanipol. It uses the most advanced technologies to manufacture single and

double-decker, electric and diesel-electric trains, tramways and metro cars. Stadler Minsk caters for customers in the CIS, Europe and Latin America.

## Foreign investments

Foreign investors injected \$4.5bn into the real sector of Belarusian economy (apart from banks) in January-June 2020, BelTA learned from the National Statistics Committee



Among the main investors in Belarus were economic entities of Russia (43 percent of the total), Cyprus (11 percent), and Austria (8 percent).

Foreign direct investments (FDI) made up \$3.2bn, or over 70 percent of total foreign investments.

In January-June 2020, Belarusian organisations (apart from banks) invested a total of \$2.3bn abroad. Belarus mainly invested in the economic entities of Russia (77 percent of the total), Ukraine (8.2), the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland (4.9).

FDI accounted for more than 96 percent of all the investments that went abroad.

## Hot July

### Belorusneft builds four bored wells in July

The Svetlogorsk drilling department has completed their task. All the wells but one are over 3km deep. The exception is 2,880m deep.

"Going as deep as 3,118m below the surface, well No. 362 was built in the Rechitsa area. Built in the Marmovichskoye field deposit, bore No. 155 is 3,480m deep. Well No. 9 was built in the Leteshinskoye field. It is 3,265m deep," the company has announced.

The Belarusian industrial group Belorusneft was founded in 1966. The company specialises in exploration, prospecting and development of oil fields, well drilling, extraction of oil and associated petroleum gas. Belorusneft also offers oil industry services in other countries. There are over 60 oil fields and about 850 oil wells in use in Belarus.



Based on materials of belta.by



In August, Miory, in the Vitebsk Region, is talked about using words like, “Fantastic!” This small and little-known regional centre in the outback is home to a huge metallurgical enterprise — unique to Belarus and the CIS. This is an extraordinary event for both Miory and the country as a whole.

This is a state project, with 380m Euros of investment. In line with a special Presidential decree, state funds were allocated to provide external communications: roads, railways, electricity and natural gas supply. The enterprise covers an area of 40 hectares and more than 200km of cables have been laid. It boasts the most modern equipment and will produce mainly tinplate — fully satisfying the domestic market and exporting around 80 percent of the output. There are already orders and co-operation agreements in place.

The main shop is for the metal rolling. It consumes the bulk of the plant’s electricity. Suffice to say that, at the RCM mill, rolls reach up to 25 tonnes in weight and they are rotated by an electric motor with a power of 5MW. It is here that intense pre-launch work has been carried out in recent months.

We are witnessing the long-awaited launch. German and Belarusian specialists are at the control panel in front of the reverse rolling mill. The first roll of hot-rolled sheet metal weighing 17 tonnes is sent by automatic command along the conveyor from the launch pad to the mill loading mechanism, from which a cold-rolled sheet of specified parameters soon appears. The first stage, the official launch of which will soon be announced separately, will give 150,000 products a year. With the commissioning of the second one, it will increase to 240 tonnes.

Specialists from Germany, Russia, Kazakhstan and Belarus are involved in the construction of the plant and its equipment.



Leonid Matelenok

# From scratch

## The first trial batch produced at Miory Metal Rolling Plant



Kazimir Blazhevich

The construction organisations of the Vitebsk Region — power engineers, gas and railway workers — and, of course, the Miory Region have taken an active part. A special contribution was made by Miory PMS which, within a strictly allotted schedule, did a great job of preparing the site for the plant.

A significant part of the specialists are locals, from Miory. Among them is also the Gen-

eral Director of MMPZ-Group JSC, Piotr Shimukovich. To date, 6 penthouses for 8 apartments each have been built for workers from all over Belarus and those coming from elsewhere, while two more similar buildings and a 40-apartment house are under construction.

Igor Kuznetsov, the Chairman of the Miory District Executive Committee, doesn’t hide his good mood regarding

the work being completed at the plant, “To be honest, the plant producing sheet metal and tinplate is the main project not only of the outgoing five-year plan, but, probably, of my whole life. This is a product by which there is hope for improving the well-being of the inhabitants of the Miory District. As soon as the enterprise reaches its design capacity, the revenue side of the budget

will increase by 25 percent — which will guarantee our stable development for decades to come. Additional funds will improve the infrastructure of the cities of Miory and Disna, solve social issues and support the village. Hope for an improvement in the demographic situation is connected with the Metal Rolling Plant: at present, about 30 percent of our people are pensioners. The enterprise can employ over 600 people and will also attract visiting experts. In addition, we rely on the employees of a medical centre which we’ll definitely build in Miory.”

Recently, the plant was visited by the Chairman of the Belarusian State Committee for Science and Technology, Aleksandr Shumilin; he represents the Government and oversees the process. The official met with the team, asked about housing, working conditions, salaries and how the plant’s management solves pressing social issues.

“The facility in Miory was built under the state investment programme. There were no such enterprises and industries in the country before. It is one of the most modern and meets all international standards. With its unique products, we are entering world markets once again demonstrating that Belarus is one of the leading countries, producing, as you know, heavy dump trucks, wheeled tractors, medical equipment and spacecraft,” notes Aleksandr Shumilin.

### NEWS IN BRIEF

#### 27th Minsk International Film Festival *Listapad* will be held on November 6th-13th



This information is posted on the website of the film forum. The festival is planned to be held in an offline format with movie screenings on the big screen, in addition to lectures, meetings, ceremonies and fruitful communication between industry professionals and movie lovers. The organisers note that, taking into account the epidemiological situation, everything possible will be done to ensure comfortable and safe meetings with the audience. The forum is established by the Ministry of Culture, the Belarusfilm National Film Studio and the Belarusian Union of Cinematographers.

#### Amkodor has developed new traction batteries for its machinery

Amkodor-Radian Production Unitary Enterprise has joined the National Academy of Sciences’ Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering to develop modern lithium-ion batteries for Amkodor machinery — using domestic innovative



materials such as graphene and an organic expander for the negative plate paste. The batteries are equipped with a touch screen display to ensure easy access to the information on technical parameters. The programmable battery management system increases the productivity and speed of electric loaders by an average of 20 percent over standard models, while minimising maintenance costs.

#### Children from Egypt to recuperate in Zubrenok

The Head of State, Aleksandr Lukashenko, signed a decree envisaging the allocation of funds from the reserve fund of the President of Belarus to finance the costs of organising recreation and health improvement for 18 children from Egypt at the National Children’s Educational and Health-Improving Centre Zubrenok in August 2020. The programme of the children’s stay includes sanatorium and health services at the camp, as well as



excursions and cultural events in Minsk and regions. Inviting children from Egypt will contribute to the further development of bilateral co-operation in the humanitarian and educational sphere.

#### National Literary Prize winners announced

More than 80 authors were presented in seven nominations of the competition and the winners were chosen by secret ballot. As a result, the ‘Poetry’ nomination was led by Valery Grishkovets (*Favourites. I Remain Forever...*). Igor Prokopovich was recognised as the best publicist for his *Postavy Land* work, while Ivan Saverchenko won ‘The Best Work of Literary Criticism and Literary Studies’ category with his *Magic of the Word* work. In turn, *The Key to Great Treasure* book-quest by Yekaterina Khodasevich-Lisova was recognised by the jury as ‘The Best Work for Children and Youth’.





# Sweeping away the dust of ages

Archaeological research is being conducted throughout the country, as the season is in full swing. These projects are overseen by the National Academy of Sciences, universities and museums. What interesting artefacts do Belarusian archaeologists find during excavations, apart from ancient coins, dishes and jewellery?

By Valeria Gavrilova

## Open-air museum

“In connection with the epidemiological situation, certain restrictive measures have been taken this year. These are related to the issues of business trips, the number of people and participation in excavations by students and schoolchildren. However, this measure has not significantly reduced the volume of archaeological research. Belarus’ National Academy of Sciences has so far issued over 150 permits to conduct excavations in all regions of the country; in 2019, 220 such licences were issued. Rescue studies on the sites of new buildings have not stopped,” said Vadim Lakiza, the Deputy Director for Research at the Institute of History of the National Academy of Sciences.

An archaeological open-air museum is being built in the area of the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. It is assumed that, in the future, the new tourist site will include six museum complexes that will reflect the peculiarities of the development of the material and spiritual culture of Belarus in different historical periods — from the Stone Age to the Middle Ages. Large-scale research work was carried out in the construction zone this year under the leadership of Vadim Lakiza and Ruslan Kniga. “Scientists have studied three archaeological sites: of the Stone, Bronze and

Early Iron Ages. Very important materials have been obtained for characterising the material and spiritual culture of the primitive people who inhabited these lands several thousand years ago,” Mr. Lakiza noted. “Among them are fragments of ceramics, a stone



Restored Mesolithic dwelling on the site of the Archaeological Museum

drilled axe and a Scythian arrowhead. On the basis of these materials, the artefacts are being reconstructed and will be included in the exposition of the open-air archaeological museum.”

## Excavation in construction areas

The area of the future construction of the Gomel-Gorki oil pipeline in the Gomel and Mogilev regions has also become a place of research. The expedition of the Institute of History — led by Anna Timofeenko — has surveyed the territory for about 200km: forests, meadows, floodplains and river terraces. Dozens of new

archaeological sites from the Stone Age to the Middle Age, hundreds of interesting artefacts, including stone and flint tools, fragments of moulded and pottery ceramics and metal products were discovered.

Mr. Lakiza notes, “The main outcome was the development by our specialists of a set of measures for the further protection of identified heritage. This includes excavations, and archaeological observations directly during the construction of the oil pipeline, and changes in design documentation so as not to affect the most valuable cultural layers. This is fully con-

sistent with the legislation in the field of protection of historical and cultural heritage both in our country and all over the world.”

On the construction site of the Nezhinsky Mining and Processing Plant in the Lyuban District, two archaeological sites near the village of Obchin are being investigated: from the Stone Age and the Middle Age. Each new item discovered during excavations is very important. These are various flint tools, stone products, ancient dishes, objects of material culture made of iron and even an arrowhead.

As for Lyuban itself, a new monument was discovered there. In addition to being quite ancient (it belongs to the Mesolithic / Neolithic period), it is also valuable because part of the cultural layer is covered with peat. This makes it possible to reveal long-buried objects made of bone, horn and wood. Under peat, without oxygen, organic matter remains for a long time. Materials for inclusion in the register of archaeological sites of Belarus have been prepared. Negotiations are underway with the customer of the construction (Slavkali JSC) about the transfer of the construction site and the conduct of archaeological excavations. In Belynichi, Mogilev Region, under the leadership of Aleksandr Vashanov, rescue operations were carried out at

of Belynichi, which were not known from written sources,” adds Mr. Lakiza.

Archaeologists under the leadership of Olga Levko are at work in Polotsk, where a cadet school is being built north of St. Sophia Cathedral. The remains of a temple from the turn of the 12th-13th century and several 12th-18th century wooden buildings have been discovered. Scientists have found weights, seals, oriental and European coins and fragments of amphora. Among the finds, a 10th century pectoral cross of the Scandinavian type is of special interest.

New building sites are also being examined in other cities of Belarus.

## Ancient settlements

Excavations are being carried out in the area of the Krivinsky peat bog near Beshenkovichi, under the leadership of Maksim Chernyavsky. It is one of the most unique complexes of the Neolithic and Bronze Age in Eastern Europe. The settlement was covered with a layer of peat, under which there were wood and bone products, amulets and amber. Belarusian archaeologists annually go on an expedition to the Krivinsky peat bog, where they carry out excavations and always find old artefacts.

Another expedition of the Institute of History is led by Nikolai Krivaltsevich. Archaeologists work near the village of Kokoritza in the Drogichin District. An ancient settlement of the Stone and Bronze Ages is also being explored there, where organic matter and various artefacts from the Neolithic and Bronze Ages have been preserved. “This site was studied under an international project. However, due to the pandemic, our foreign colleagues from Poland and Estonia could not come to the excavations. The media will definitely be talking about this archaeological site more than once,” states Mr. Lakiza.

## Belarusian Gennady Korotkevich wins Google Code Jam for the seventh time

By Arina Novikova

Gennady Korotkevich, a graduate student at the University of Information Technologies, Mechanics and Optics in St. Petersburg, has been the Google Code Jam champion since 2014. This time, he is ahead of rivals from Canada and the United States.

Google Code Jam annually gathers more than 50,000 participants from all over the world, being one of the most popular and prestigious programming championships. This year, according to the organisers, 96,000 people were registered.

Anyone can participate in the Jam but, after a series of rounds, only the top 25 reach the finals. The winner is decided within four hours. Traditionally, all competitions, except for the finals, are held online. However, this year, due to the pandemic, all stages have taken place online. The championship consists of a set of algorithmic problems that must

# Stability is a sign of skill



be solved in a fixed time. In 2020, the finalists had to solve five problems.

The Belarusian was named the top competitor, with 173 points. He spent less time on solving problems than the other participants. “Accordingly, Gennady Korotkevich extended the winning streak of Google Code Jam to achieve seven top results in a row. Interestingly, the winner has become the only participant of the finals who solved the Hexacoins Jam problem,” the organisers said.

The top three feature Kevin Sun from Canada and Andrew He from the United States — scoring 131 points each. However, the silver medallist managed to solve the problems faster than his opponent, who was eventually placed third.

Gennady Korotkevich is a graduate of the Gomel gymnasium. He has won many Russian and international programming competitions, including Google Code Jam, Yandex. Algorithm, VK Cup, Russian Code Cup and the Facebook Hacker Cup.



# City of white nights

Traditionally, the Day of Belarusian Written Language is held in cities that are historical centres of culture, science, literature and printing. This year, on September 6th, the celebration will be hosted by the town of Belynichi, in the Mogilev Region, with preparations in the city in full swing.



The church in honour of the Belynichi Icon of the Mother of God

By Olga Korneeva

Belynichi area is a place with a rich history and an unusual sacred destiny. According to one of the legends, the foundation of the city and its name are associated with the miraculous icon of the Belynichi Mother of God... It is said that, at the beginning of the 13th century, it was brought by the monks of the Kiev-Pechersk Lavra, who fled from the troops of Khan Batu. Once, during a night-time stop at the Drut River, a glow began to emanate from the image of the Mother of God. It was decided to establish a monastery on the site, and the city was named Belynichi: 'white nights'. Centuries ago, the shrine was revered throughout the Grand Duchy of Lithuania, and was worshiped by Orthodox, Catholic and Uniate believers. Today the image of the Belynichi Mother of God adorns the city's coat of arms, but the icon itself — one of the most revered relics of Belarus — disappeared without trace in the mid-1920s along with the cross of St. Yevfrosinya Polotskaya. However, local people believe that she still protects their land to this day.

One of the highlights of the Day of Belarusian Written Language will be the opening of a new sculpture — 'The Appearance of the Icon' — near the church in honour of the Belynichi Icon of



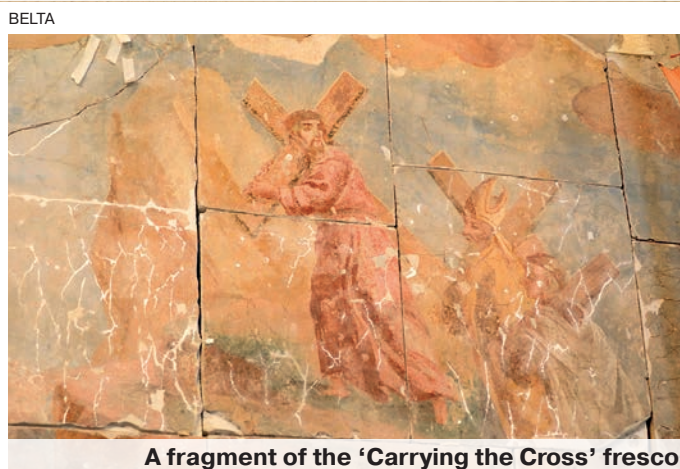
'The Appearance of the Icon' sculpture

the Mother of God. A granite angel, 3x2m in size, holds a bronze shrine, as if embracing it with its wings, decorated with a pattern based on the Belarusian 'vytinanka'. Mogilev's artist, Aleksandr Minkov, admitted that he created this gift to the city with special feelings, because many years ago he himself was baptised in the local church.

"I wanted to make an interesting composition that would be associated with this city. So the idea of an angel with an icon was born. Moreover, I tried to add something original and interesting: I've managed to make a 'vytinanka' pattern on the angel's wings. This is a very unusual way of working with stone, and I have not found similar sculptures anywhere," said Aleksandr Minkov.



Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya Art Museum



A fragment of the 'Carrying the Cross' fresco

In the middle of the 17th century, a Carmelite monastery was founded in Belynichi, where a grandiose stone church was built. For many decades it was the largest centre of religious life in the eastern lands of the principality. In Soviet times, the cathedral was blown up, and secular institutions have been housed in the surviving monastery over the years, so the unique old frescoes depicting biblical subjects disappeared under numerous layers of paint. After a large fire it was decided to demolish the building completely, but the restorers miraculously managed to cut

the voluminous canvases from the walls with their surviving stories. For many years they were kept in the museums of Mogilev.

This invaluable heritage will return to Belynichi again in 2020. On the Day of Belarusian Written Language, a new museum building will open, where the Spirituality Hall will appear for the first time. Its central exhibit will be the fresco 'Carrying the Cross', or 'Climbing Golgotha', which was rescued from the destroyed Carmelite monastery in the late 1970s by the restorer Yuri Malinovsky and his colleagues. Later, the

*The concept of the Day of Belarusian Written Language envisages showing the unity of the Belarusian printed word with the history and culture of the Belarusian people, reflecting the historical path of writing and printing in Belarus*

craftsman was engaged in the conservation and restoration of works of art, and he has now sited the fresco under the arches of the new museum.

With the appearance of new premises, the concept of the Belynichi Museum has changed slightly, but one of the main expositions will still remain — the gallery of Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya — a famous landscape painter who glorified his native places all over the world. His paintings will be placed here and personal belongings will be shown while episodes from the artist's life will be screened. In addition, there will be a large hall for imported exhibition displays. A school of young artists will operate at the museum, with scientific conferences and seminars.

Another hall of the museum will be dedicated to the history of the Belynichi area from antiquity to the present day.

Furthermore, on the Day of Belarusian Written Language, Belynichi's rich past and the legacy of its famous figures from different eras will certainly be in the spotlight.

## Minsk Tractor Works (MTZ) resumes factory tours

By Irina Sergeeva

Tourists will be able to see the tractor manufacturing process, from mechanical processing of nodes to final assembly of machines on the main assembly line. Visitors will also see an exposition of tractors and will be able to sit in the tractor cab.

"In addition, for those who want to feel like a part of a large mechanism, a tractor assembly service is available. Under the guidance of experienced craftsmen, they will be able to install a steering wheel and take part in other technological operations — to finally receive a certificate confirming partic-

## Industrial tourism revives

ipation in the assembly of a specific model," the company's press service has announced.

Tourists will be also offered the chance to drive a BELARUS 3522, the company's most powerful mass-produced tractor. All safety measures will be in place. The staff will measure the temperature of visitors and offer them sanitisers, with the facemask regulations met.

Minsk Tractors Works launched factory tours nearly four years ago. Over this time, the company has welcomed more than 12,000 people from 66 countries and 127 communities of Belarus. The bulk of foreign tourists came from Russia, Estonia, Latvia, Germany and Lithuania.



BELTA



# Arctic could be free of sea ice by 2035



**The temperature of the Arctic matters to the entire world: it helps to keep the global climate fairly cool. Scientists now say that by 2035 there could be an end to Arctic sea ice.**

The northern polar ocean's sea ice is a crucial element in the Earth system: because it is highly reflective, it sends solar radiation back out into space. Once it's melted, there's no longer any protection for the darker water and rock beneath, and nothing to prevent them absorbing the incoming heat.

High temperatures in the Arctic during the last interglacial — the warm period around 127,000 years ago — have puzzled scientists for decades.

Now the UK Met Office's Hadley Centre climate model has enabled an international research team to compare Arctic sea ice conditions during the last interglacial with the present day. Their findings are important for improving predictions of future sea ice change.

What is striking about the latest research is the date it suggests for a possible total melt — 2035. Many studies have thought a mid-century crisis likely, with another even carefully specifying 2044 as

the year to watch. So a breathing space of only 15 years may surprise some experts.

During spring and early summer shallow pools of water form on the surface of the Arctic sea ice. These 'melt ponds' help to determine how much sunlight is absorbed by the ice and how much is reflected back into space. The new Hadley Centre model is the UK's most advanced physical representation of the Earth's climate and a critical tool for climate research, and it incorporates sea ice and melt ponds.

# Paris gets rid of cars

**Paris is to ban all combustion-engine cars — including those fuelled by both diesel and petrol — by 2030**

Authorities unveiled the plans in a radical escalation of a strategy to cut carbon emissions in the world's most-visited city.

The expanded proposal marks an acceleration of attempts to wean the country off gas-guzzlers and switch to electric vehicles in a city which often imposes temporary bans due to surges in air pollution.

"This is about planning for the long term with a strategy that will reduce greenhouse gases," said Christophe Najdovski, a transport official at Paris City Hall. "Transport is one of the main greenhouse gas producers... so we are planning an exit from combustion engine vehicles, or fossil-energy vehicles, by 2030."

The French capital, which will host the Olympic Games in the summer of 2024 and was host city for the latest worldwide pact on policies to tame global warming, had already been eyeing an end to diesel cars in

the city by the time of the Olympics.

Paris City Hall, already under attack over the establishment of no-car zones, car-free days and fines for drivers who enter the city in cars that are more than 20 years old, avoided the word 'ban' and instead said it was introducing a feasible deadline by which combustion-engine cars would be phased out.

There are about 32 million household cars in France, where the population is about 66 million. Many Parisians do not own cars, relying on extensive public transport systems and, increasingly, networks of bikes, scooters and low-pollution hybrid engine cars for short-term rental.

Many other cities in the world are considering similar moves and China, the world's biggest polluter after the United States, recently announced that it would soon be seeking to get rid of combustion-engine cars too.



# 'Little wine holes'

**Bars and restaurants around the world are having to rethink the way they interact with customers during the pandemic. In Florence, some are looking to the past: using centuries-old wine windows to dole out food and drinks.**



Rising just above ground level, blink and you might miss these tiny openings, called 'bucchetta del vino', (literally 'little wine holes') in Italian. The small windows were used to sell wine-to-go during the Renaissance period, and were intended to be cheaper, direct-to-consumer alternatives to taverns and other drinking dens.

Those merchants were Florence's elites, many of whom had the foot-tall windows built into street-facing walls of their palatial residences, usually next to the main entrance. Back in the 1500s, a number of the city's aristocrats were also major wine producers in the surrounding countryside.

In May, as Italy eased its lockdown, several F&B businesses in Florence, who happened to be based in premises with existing buchette, decided to reopen them, capitalising on the design's minimal-contact aspect. Wine, Aperol spritzes, ice creams and sandwiches have since been served through the holes, at a safe distance.



# Impact of the pandemic

**The UN warned that the coronavirus crisis could have a severe and lasting impact on the life prospects of young adults without swift remedial action**

The UN's International Labour Organisation (ILO) said the career prospects of people aged 18 to 29 were taking a hit from the COVID-19 pandemic, while students faced a 'gloomy outlook' for its effects on their education.

The ILO report *Youth and COVID-19: Impacts on Jobs, Education, Rights and Mental Well-Being* said young adults had been disproportionately affected by the crisis. It was based on the Global Survey on Youth and COVID-19, a study of more than 12,000 young people aged 18 to 29, conducted online in 23 languages across 112 countries between April 21st and May 21st. The respondents were largely educated young adults with Internet access, representing students and working young people with a tertiary education.

"The study finds the impact of the

pandemic on young people to be systematic, deep and disproportionate. It has been particularly hard on young women, younger youth and youth in lower-income countries," the report said. "Unless urgent action is taken, young people are likely to suffer severe and long-lasting impacts from the pandemic."

The survey found that 13 percent had been left without any access to courses, teaching or training, while more than 70 percent said they were adversely affected by the closure of their educational establishments.

With courses moving online, the survey revealed the 'deep digital divides that exist, especially for youth in lower-income countries, as well as the gloomy outlook that young people hold as regards learning outcomes'.



# A sacrament, a thrill and pure magic

Stained-glass designer tells us the secrets and techniques of glass in contemporary art

**For many decades, Vasily Matusevich has been laying out stained-glass paintings using classical and innovative methods. His pieces include stained-glass windows in churches, the Mikhail Savitsky Art Gallery and the President's residence. We visited Vasily's studio and talked about how Belarusian stained-glass art lives today.**

By Svetlana Kravchenko

## Braid soldering, reflections and playing with the negative

The first thing you see when you enter a small studio are wide tables with pictures neatly laid out on them: pieces of glass, tied with wire, on top of a detailed sketch. Each part of the mosaic is numbered, so from the outside the work is similar to painting by numbers. But instead of canvas there's thick paper, and instead of paints — multi-coloured glass. If you analyse the process of creating a painting in stages, it turns out that stained-glass artwork is much more complicated than painting.

But first things first. Work on a stained-glass window begins with a sketch: it is drawn by hand, then scanned, perfected using design programmes, and then transferred to thick paper. It is cut into numbered patterns — later each piece of glass will be carefully cut out. Numbering helps to quickly find the desired part and determine the number per square metre; this helps decide the cost and complexity of the stained-glass artwork.

Raw materials are prepared in parallel with the sketch: they are selected according to colours, cut, broken, ground on machines and braided with copper braid. When all the pieces of glass fall into place, the solder is welded together, and the fragments will become an integral picture. This technique — one of the most popular in stained glass art — is called 'Tiffany'.

Alongside the famous 'Tiffany', the world knows so many variations of working with stained glass that there are definitely not enough fingers to count them on. Glass is sintered, painted, engraved, used as a basis for photographs and etched with acid. Both flat mosaics and volumetric figures are made of it; monumental paintings and miniature decorations are created: in general, the scope for creativity is huge.

But the most important thing in stained glass artwork is light. During the day, the distortion of the sun rays changes, so at noon they play on the corrugated glass with bright sparks, and in the evening they turn into smooth waves. At night, the light affects the stained glass in the negative, during the day — in the positive, and this changes the colours of the picture to their opposites. As a result, the image is constantly being transformed into something new. That is why, as our artist admits, he never gets tired of creating stained-glass windows.

## Government order or door partitions

In the USSR, stained glass was a ubiquitous phenomenon, with monumental paintings still adorning



Aleksey Stolyarov



buildings of social importance throughout Belarus: schools, libraries, houses of culture, state farms and even production workshops. Now you will hardly find any new stained-glass windows at construction sites. Does this mean that the art of working with glass has come to an end?

"Stained-glass artwork has not lost its relevance," says Vasily. "On the contrary, etching, fusing, deep sandblasting and bending; the stained-glass is very modern in terms of techniques and continues to develop. The language of glass is universal, so I wouldn't

say that it's disappearing. The stained-glass window is already more than a thousand years old, and for some time it will continue to exist quietly perhaps not as mosaics over the entire wall, but small inclusions in the interior. This is due to the change in the customer: before it was the state, and today it is people who build houses and apartments for themselves. In social terms, they are mostly IT people."

Moreover, the stained-glass window, besides its beauty, also has everyday use. For example,



they can close the window in the bathroom, where it is impossible to hang curtains or blinds due to high humidity: the light will enter the room in the same way while the visibility will be zero. By the same principle, ugly views from the window are replaced with a magnificent landscape or unobtrusive abstractions. It is functional and convenient. But we cannot just develop the art of stained-glass using only door partitions.

*Sure. The social orders that exist now require an active promoter who persuades people of the need to introduce stained-glass windows. An example*

*of the effectiveness of this approach is the Mikhail Savitsky Museum, in which stained-glass windows appeared thanks to the insistence of the then Minister of Culture. He, examining the building two weeks before the commissioning, climbed the stairs and said, "But there should be a stained-glass window here. Yes, there must be a stained-glass window!" After that, builders and artists united in the seemingly impossible and now the walls of the museum are decorated with stained-glass windows.*

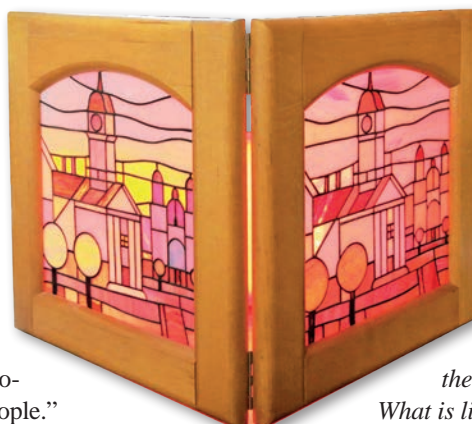
**Tell us about your biggest creative dream. Of course, you have already made a stained-glass window in the President's residence, and it's difficult to aim higher than this, but still.**

*I want to make an exhibition of stained-glass painting. But most of all I dream of a big project in the city centre. If I make two or three such objects, I will forever leave my name in the history of Belarusian art. And I don't need money; I just want to do it for my country, for the people. I feel indebted to people: they paid taxes, and the state gave me twenty years of free artistic education. As students, we were sharpened like pencils, prepared to give something in return. Then the USSR collapsed, and this need disappeared. But the feeling of gratitude and desire to repay with something good did not go away.*

**Reveal the main mystery of why do people like stained-glass windows so much?**

*How can you not enjoy the coloured glass? If you help a person to reset the 'stained-glass window only in a church' installation, he gets an interest and a desire to decorate his house with glass. Often a client makes a stained-glass window for a trial, then another one, and as a result falls in love and wants to hang the whole house with paintings. After all, this is magic! The trick is that we perceive all colours in a reflected state, but in a stained-glass window, the colour carries with it the light that passes through the glass.*

*What is light? It is a pulsation, a wave, it literally flows into a person, since it has such a strong impact. This is a sacrament, a thrill and pure magic.*





# Destiny's simple canvas

Mother, grandmother, great-grandmother and talented craftswoman — to her neighbours... Recently, Lidia Spesivtseva from the village of Usyazh, in the Smolevichi District, celebrated her 90th anniversary. All her joys and sorrows are reflected in the wrinkles on her face while her eyes sparkle with a good-natured smile. Though the years weren't easy, Lidia Ivanovna loves life and people. Maybe this is the secret of her longevity?



Lidia Spesivtseva

By Nadezhda Dekola

## Flower by flower

She was born in the village of Kleskushi in the Leningrad Region. During the war, the family lived under occupation. The Nazis shot her father and her mother had to raise three children alone. Lidia Ivanovna recalls how once, an old woman — a refugee from Leningrad — was sent to stay in their house: she showed her how to embroider and gave her thread. Since then, Lidia Ivanovna has never stopped her hobby. Even when she had no thread, she pulled them out of fabric.

"My embroideries are not that important, but people like them, and they are good to me," says Lidia Ivanovna.

We are talking with the hospitable hostess over a cup of tea with the 'Skazka' (Fairy-tale) cake. She complains, saying that, if we (journalists) had warned her earlier that we were coming, she would have baked a pie. Her specialities are pies with cottage cheese, rice and jam, as well as a sugar pie. She immediately gives us the recipe. Even at her advanced age, she does everything around the house and in the garden. When the harvest ripens, she is engaged in preserving.

Flowers are her special love. As a girl, she collected bouquets of daisies and cornflowers to bring home. Now she has roses, phlox, lilies and petunias in the garden. She has repeatedly won the competition for the best courtyard. But this all happens in summer, while in winter she sits down at her embroidery. Then flowers appear on paintings, curtains, napkins, towels and bedspreads.

"While I had to raise children, there was almost no free time left. And when I retired, I became free," Lidia Spesivtseva shows us her work of Alenka from a box of chocolates, characters of the fairytales and even a self-portrait. "If I like the pattern, I will reproduce it on fabric and embroider it. At the moment, however, a carbon copy is hard to find so I'm drawing flowers by hand."

Lidia Ivanovna admits that she can only see with one eye. Her second requires surgery to improve the lens. In the meantime, glasses help. She takes some unfinished work out

**Flowers and optimism are the secret of craftswoman Spesivtseva's longevity**



Vladimir Shlapak



of the cupboard. I watch how the next flower 'blossoms' on it stitch by stitch...

"Thread is expensive, so I unravel old knitted tops, wind up the balls and use the colour which I have now. I primarily embroider in satin-stitch. No matter how I tried, I couldn't learn to embroider in cross-stitch."

## 'Our commander'

I notice two dolls in embroidered costumes on the TV set. The hostess says that she has made almost the same outfits for all the members of the local folklore group *Maladzichki*, in which she herself used to sing. 10 sets already!

"I started with one blouse. But until I had made them for everyone, I couldn't give it back. I wanted to make a surprise for them," she tells us.

Lydia Ivanovna often recalls how she participated in concerts. It was fun and heart-warming. And now she can't as she has to use a stick... She attends the performances of the group just as a spectator. She often sheds a tear when she realises she's no longer on the stage, and has to sing along from her place. The *Maladzichki* members don't forget their friend however, and visit her on all the holidays. So, for Lidia Ivanovna's anniversary in July, they gathered with the whole staff, wearing those very costumes. They sang the songs from the club itself, along with the accordion player. She laid tables near to the house for them to eat.

Now, Lidia Ivanovna's daughter sings in the group. Her two sons also live in the village. Lidia has grandchildren and great-grandchildren who help her with everything and never let her get bored. They say that 'she is their commander. She is a hard worker'. Her husband, Nikolai Stepanovich, passed away 20 years ago — a little before he would have been 80. The hostess tells us how they loved to go to dances, how they joined the peat briquette plant together and decided to move to Belarus after Lidia Ivanovna's brother Aleksandr found his wife here: she worked at the same factory in the village of Usyazh.

"Now they often ask me if I feel my 90 years and I reply: when nothing hurts, I think that I'm no more than 70," she smiles. "I'm not actually the oldest in the village yet. My arms and legs work. Why not live some more...?"



# It's time to start

International competitions are gradually resuming globally

Interesting times are beginning in world sport. Until recently, skiers, track and field athletes and footballers were in quarantine and envied the Belarusians who continued training and even competing. At present, the international calendar is gradually reviving and trying to assess its losses and gains. The results of the first international tournaments will be the most unpredictable.

By Dmitry Komashko

## Tennis. Belarusians at different poles

For a long time, nobody spoke of exact dates for the resumption of tennis tournaments. The players were calculating their financial losses, while the organisers of the major competitions were arguing for a place in the schedule for the rest of the season: holding matches in winter and even late autumn is not the best idea. As a result, tournaments are gradually resuming — though with caution and an eye on the epidemiological situation. Among the participants are also representatives of Belarus.

Aleksandra Sasnovich played for the first time on the court in Palermo; she reached the quarter-finals and lost only to the first seed — Czech, Petra Martic (ranked 15th globally). The latter brought the



Olga Govortsova

eighth loss in a row to the Belarusian in her matches against players from the top-20. However, the result was not bad for a season which started in August.

Olga Govortsova successfully started at the tournament in American Lexington: in the first qualifying match, she beat American, Katie Volynets. Though the Belarusian failed to go further, it was a nice 'warm-up'.



Most of the world's leading tennis players took part in the tournament, which will, in fact, be a dress rehearsal for the US Open scheduled for late August. The Belarusians who were through without qualification — Arina Sobolenko and Victoria Azarenko — faced serious rivals at the start and lost: Arina — to Madison Brengle from the USA, and Victoria — to Venus Williams. At the same time, all four leading Belarusian tennis players — Arina Sobolenko, Victoria Azarenko, Aleksandra Sasnovich and Vera Lapko — were included in the application for the US Open. Govortsova is on the short reserve list for the main draw. It seems there is no shortage of events for tennis fans.

## Athletics. At a low start

Formally, the main event of the current season — the national championship — was postponed to the days

of the Olympics and has already been held by the athletes. This year, only a few will be able to attend international competitions but, nevertheless, life at the court of the 'Queen of Sports' goes on. Firstly, on August 14th, the Diamond League action resumed in Monaco, though without any neutral athletes (although Maria Lasitskene and Sergei Shubenkov would definitely

not be superfluous there), nor are any Belarusians included in the application for the third stage in a row.

However, our sportsmen still have a chance to perform at the top level this season. For example, on August 19th, long jumper Anastasia Mironchik-Ivanova went to Hungary to compete in the golden Continental Tour. According to the head coach of the national team, Yuri Moisevich, hurdler, Elvira German, and hammer thrower, Anna Malyshchik, have also been invited to perform in Hungary, but the issue of their participation is still open. The Minsk stadium of the Republican Centre for Olympic Training hosted one of the final events of this year: the tournament for the Mikhail Zhelobovsky prizes. On September 13th, the Minsk Half Marathon will start and, in October, Mogilev is preparing to host the traditional final of the All-Belarusian Cross-Country.



Arina Sobolenko

## Cycling. Border locked tight

On August 24th, France is to host the European Road Cycling Championship. The Swiss communes of Aigle and

Martigny will host the World Cup on September 20th. It's difficult not to consider this season completely lost, but there are still issues: the external borders of the European Union are closed to a number of countries due to the epidemic. The situation might improve by the World Cup but the European tournament in France runs the risk of having a noticeably truncated composition. For example, the Belarusian Cycling

Union is now thinking of sending only athletes with a residence permit in Europe to the European Championship. The list includes Yelena Omelyusik and Aleksandr Ryabushenko, cycling for foreign clubs, as well as several young athletes who train in Italian second-tier teams. Those who remain in Belarus can only hope for the local calendar. The coaches note that athletes are likely to participate in any competitions, including MTV.

## What else?

Several major competitions are scheduled for the autumn. In October, Moscow is to host the European Weightlifting Championship, postponed from July. In November, judo fighters will compete for medals at the European Championship and, in late August, we have a chance to see Belarusian rowers performing in Moscow's tournament (though the holding of this event is still uncertain).

## ARENA

### ● HC SKA Minsk got off to a good start at the Parimatch Cup in Moscow

In the decisive match, Belarus' vice champions defeated HC CSKA Moscow with a score of 29:27 (16:14). For most of the game, the Minsk players were leading but, in the middle of the second half, their opponents managed not only to catch up but get ahead. However, the Belarusians once again took the initiative, to win. Yevgeny Nikonovich was the most prolific in the SKA team, scoring five goals. The final was a rehearsal for the matches between SKA and CSKA in the European League qualification. The first is scheduled for August 29th in Minsk, and the return game — on September 6th, in the Russian capital.

In a few days, SKA Minsk will take part in the final stage of the Belarusian Cup, which will be held in Pinsk for the first time. In the semi-final on August 22nd, the Minsk players will play against Mogilev's Masheka and, if they win, SKA will meet the winner of the second semi-final match (Meshkov Brest — Gomel) in the final, on August 23rd.



### ● Belarusian draughts players lose to Mongolia in the final of the Online Draughts Cup of Nations

The competition was held in 100-cell draughts under the auspices of the World Draughts Federation (FMJD). Belarus lost to Mongolia (3:5) at the first meeting, while the return game ended in a draw — 4:4. According to the results of the online tournament, the Belarusian draughts players took 2nd place.

Eleven teams took part in the women's event. They played in a round-robin system, with the six best advancing to the playoffs. In the first match of the semi-final, Belarus drew with Latvia 4:4. In the return match, the team beat their rivals 5:3. In the semi-final matches, our players defeated the Ukrainians (6:2 and 3:5).

The Belarusian men's team lost to Guinea Bissau (4:4) in the quarter-final, after two matches, and were out of the tournament. According to the preliminary stage, Belarus goes forward with ten points. The men's tournament determined 14 playoff participants among 29 national teams, according to the Swiss system. The Belarusian athletes won five rounds and lost two.







## Photo of the week

Mir Castle is among Belarus' most eye-catching and popular tourist attractions

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

**On August 20th, 1945**, by a decree of the Council of People's Commissars of the Belarusian SSR, the Belarusian State Theatre Institute (now the Belarusian State Academy of Arts) was established in Minsk.



**August 21st** is the International Day of Remembrance of and Tribute to the Victims of Terrorism. It was proclaimed by the UN General Assembly on December 19th, 2017, to pay tribute to the victims of terrorism and those affected by it, to support them and to promote the protection and full enjoyment of their human rights and fundamental freedoms.



**August 23rd** is the Day of State Statistics Workers in the Republic of Belarus. At present, the system of state statistics bodies of Belarus is made up of the Ministry of Statistics and Analysis and territorial bodies of state statistics, as well as other subordinate organisations.

**On August 25th, 1910**, Vladimir Korban was born (Baran, Orsha District, Vitebsk Region) — a writer and Honoured Figure of Culture of Belarus (1970). From 1952, he worked in the *Vozhyk* magazine (from 1967, as its Editor-in-Chief). He is an author of fables, humorous and satirical feuilletons. He translated separate works of I. Krylov and S. Oleinik into Belarusian while also writing for children. He died in 1971.



**On August 26th, 1910**, Mother Teresa was born (1910-1997) — a missionary of the Roman Catholic Church. She is one of the founders and abbess of the Order of the Missionaries of Charity (1950). She is also a Nobel Peace Prize laureate (1979) and was canonised by the Catholic Church on October 19th, 2003.



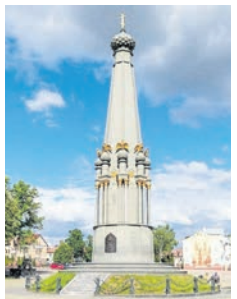
**On August 26th, 1500**, according to the legend, opposite Minsk Castle on the Svisloch River, an icon of the Minsk Mother of God was found. Miraculously, it 'sailed' here after the Tatars from the khans Shakhmat-Girey and Mahmud-Girey attacked Kiev and threw the captured icon into the waves of the Dnieper River. The icon has been kept in the Holy Spirit Cathedral in Minsk since 1945 (before that it was kept in the churches of the Nativity of the Virgin Mary, the Holy Spirit and the storerooms of the National Art Museum of the Republic of Belarus).



**On August 26th, 1945**, in Minsk, the decree of the State Defence Committee launched the construction of Minsk Automobile Works on the site of a car assembly plant.



**On August 26th, 1850**, the Polotsk monument was opened to the Memory of the Events of 1812. It's one of ten monuments created by the architect Antonio Adamini, which were planned to be installed at the sites of battles during the Patriotic War of 1812. The ceremony was attended by the heir to the Russian throne, Aleksandr Nikolaevich.



**On August 27th, 1860**, Karl Czapski (Karol Jan Alexander) was born (Stankovo village, Dzerzhinsk District, Minsk Region) — one of the representatives of the ancient Hutten-Czapski family. In 1890-1901, he was Mayor in Minsk. He headed many public and state organisations. He opened a shelter, a hospital, an outpatient clinic in Minsk, started up a power station, a tram station and paved the streets. He contributed to the opening in Minsk of the Society of Sports Amateurs and the city credit society. He died in 1904.

