



Electric vehicles are presented in all segments and classes in Belarus, and the number of innovations continues to grow

6



What is artificial intelligence, why is it unique and whether people should 'risk losing control of civilisation'?

7

INTERNATIONAL

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A fragment of the *To the Heroes of the Border, Women and Children who Stepped into Immortality with Their Courage* monument, located on the territory of the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial Complex. The author of the sculptural composition is the sculptor-architect, laureate of the Lenin Prize Valentin Zankovich.

Forever in our memory

In Belarus, June 22nd is the Day of Nationwide Remembrance of Victims of the Great Patriotic War and the Genocide of the Belarusian People. Today, the country remembers those who, at the cost of their lives, fulfilled their duty to defend the Motherland, all the dead, tortured in fascist captivity, who died in the rear from hunger and deprivation.

At dawn on June 22nd, 1941, thousands of Hitler's guns and mortars opened fire on border outposts, military camps, airfields and the location of the Red Army troops. About 19,000 border guards of the Belarusian Border District met the enemy on the western borders of the great Motherland. Of these, more than 16,000 have died or are considered missing. The Belarusian border guards have something to be proud of: not a single frontier post left its positions without an order, did not surrender to the mercy of the enemy. It was in the first heroic battles on the border that the foundation of the future Victory was laid.

In the first hours of the war, Brest took over the massive attack and bombardment. This day is especially solemn in the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial Complex. Thousands of people gathered here to honour the memory of the fallen and thank the heroes for giving us this beautiful land and giving us the opportunity to continue the work of our fathers and grandfathers — to build a peaceful and independent Belarus. → 4



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After arriving at one of the enterprises of the military-industrial complex in Minsk Region the Head of State asked if the responsible persons had fulfilled the task on launching the production of domestic ammunition.

“Dear Comrade Commander-in-Chief, your instruction to set up the production of the most in-demand types of ammunition in the Republic of Belarus have been fulfilled,” Chairman of the State Authority for Military Industry Dmitry Pantus said. According to him, the relevant work started in November 2022, and today the enterprises affiliated with the State Authority for Military Industry and the Industry Ministry produce more than 50 parts for this type of ammunition.

The Head of State was briefed on the launch of mass production of RS-122mm rockets in Belarus. Then Aleksandr Lukashenko got acquainted with the technological process of assembling rockets and noted that today not only high-precision modern weapons play an important role in clashes, but also simpler ones — machine guns, automatic guns, grenade launchers.

“Rockets, high-precision weapons, jets, helicopters, Leopards, Bradleys are destroyed in the same way as Soviet tanks and infantry fighting vehicles (we have recently seen this during the first stage of the counteroffensive)... It is good that we have decided against expensive things which we would not be able to produce, but would have had to buy. On the ground, all this armament and also machine guns and grenade launchers solve very big problems.

Without these [simpler weapons] there will be no victory on the frontline,” the President stressed.

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, armament such as, for example, multiple launch rocket systems, Shkval torpedo systems (modernised Grad systems) are in demand today. Ammunition is also needed for them.

Mass production of ammunition has been launched in Belarus following the President’s instruction. Very soon this production will reach its full capacity.

The President paid special attention to ammunition storage conditions. He recalled that the country still had many storage facilities for nuclear weapons which remained from the past. After assuming the office of the President, Aleksandr Lukashenko visited one of these storage facilities, which then housed ammunition for the Topol systems. Then, amid a difficult economic situation and under significant external pressure, the President had to make the decision to renounce nuclear weapons.

“In the light of the current situation we have to bring them back,” the Head of State said.

After visiting the enterprise, Aleksandr Lukashenko spoke with media representatives. Reporters noticed that according to the Western mass media, Russia is seeking to deploy tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus ahead of the NATO summit in Vilnius on July 11th-12th. They interpret these actions as an attempt at nuclear blackmail. The President was asked to dot the

Tactical ploy

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, got acquainted with the organisation of the production of rockets in Belarus during his working trip to the Minsk Region



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I’s and explain why Belarus needs nuclear weapons and what the conditions for their storage and use are.

“It is not about Russia at all,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said. He stressed that nuclear weapons will be deployed in Belarus at his personal request to Russia to guarantee the security of the country.

“First I asked the Russian President, then insisted in a friendly manner that they give me back these weapons [tactical not strategic]. They’d be enough for the time being,” the Head of State explained.

According to the President, currently there is no need to deploy strategic nuclear weapons, for example, the Russian Topol missiles in Belarus.

The Belarusian leader added, “Topol is an intercontinental missile. Am I going to fight the United States? No, I am not. These [tactical nuclear] weapons are enough for me for now.

That was my request. It was not Russia that imposed this decision on me. Why? Because, as you all say, no one has even fought with a nuclear power. I do not want anybody to fight with us. Is there such a threat? Yes, there is. I have to prevent this threat.”

The President recalled that one of his first proposals to Russia was to equip several Belarusian multiple-launch rocket systems Polonez with nuclear warheads. The task turned out to be too complicated. Therefore, the decision was taken to prepare storage facilities and deploy tactical nuclear weapons.

The conditions created for the storage of such weapons, with all necessary requirements met, are comparable to a surgery block in a hospital, the Head of State said. Belarus fulfilled all the requirements, and even the Russian representatives were surprised to see everything done at such a high level.

Speaking about the reasons for the deployment of Russian tactical nuclear weapons in Belarus, the President said,

“Why do we need them? To make sure not a single foreign soldier sets their foot on the Belarusian land again.”

The reason for the use of such weapons, according to him, can be only one — an aggression against Belarus, “A response will be immediate. I have declared this several times already.”

However, of course, we would like to avoid situations where it would have to be applied.

“God forbid that I have to make a decision to use these weapons. But there will be no hesitation in the event of an aggression against us,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

Speaking about the elections in the United States, the Head of State noted that it is not that important as to who will become the next candidate and win the election race, “Biden or somebody else. He does what they say. Does he make his own decisions? Appropriate people make decisions. So the unbelievable things can happen there.”

According to polls, Joe Biden is losing to Donald Trump. But this fact does not mean anything, the President stressed.

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted, “We have seen how they hold elections in the United States. By mail or for money. It’s a nightmare! We are innocent. Our ‘dictatorship’ is innocent compared to their ‘democratic’ elections. It’s a nightmare. If all these nuances are taken into account, then we see that anything can happen there. But if Trump wins...

Everyone says nice things when campaigning. An election campaign is one thing. Solving issues is a whole another story.

The machine in the United States is working, and no President will be able to go against this machine. His powers are different to, for example, those of Lukashenko or Putin.”

At the same time, the Head of State believes that Donald Trump is more decisive and can make decisions in defiance of those who control the situation, “He will have to fulfil his promises to end the war (in part, if not in full). He put it too directly: ‘I would end the way in a day’. We will root for him to come to power and stop the NATO machine, which is fighting against Russia today.”

The President also told reporters why he decided to pardon Roman Protasevich and Sofia Sapega.

“As for Roman Protasevich, everything is clear here. Certain conditions were set before him. Keeping in mind what happened before and after, we agreed with him on certain things. This man did everything he promised. He did it not because he wanted to save his life or avoid going to jail. No, this is not the case. He admit-



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ted that what he did was wrong. He did not take part in combat, he did not kill anyone. We checked it,” Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The situation with Sofia Sapega was different. She is a Russian citizen, and there were plans to extradite her to Russia before the trial. But the process dragged on, the Head of State said. The President added that her parents were kept in the loop.

“Some say, she fell in love and decided to get involved. Yes, she is guilty. But she is not our citizen, we have enough of our own. But morally: she fell in love with a guy, and after that he was pardoned and released, and the girl will serve time there?” said the President.

During a visit of Governor of Russia’s Primorye Territory Oleg Kozhemyako to Belarus, the decision was taken to pardon Sofia Sapega so that she could return home.

Answering reporters’ questions, Aleksandr Lukashenko commented on the rumours about the disease he had suffered, “Everything that has been written is a lie.”

The President said that he had an adenovirus. This is a fairly common disease.

“Not as contagious as the coronavirus, but there is nothing good and pleasant about it. These are lies. Don’t believe them. I was on my feet, running, jumping, even playing hockey. But I realised that working through it was not a good idea because it takes longer to recover. This is what happened to me. Don’t worry, I’m very much alive and intend to stay that way!”

Elections in Belarus will be held in an open and honest manner

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, discussed the preparations for the 2024 election campaign at a meeting with CEC Chairman Igor Karpenko

“The elections are round the corner. There are a lot of novelties, especially in terms of the Belarusian People’s Congress. The matter is about the parliamentary elections and the corresponding presidential decree. I have read the materials that you have submitted. There are no remarks on any of the issues. Especially about the need to issue a decree. Today, I will instruct the President Administration to take a sit down with you and work out (together with the government) the best the time frame for adopting this decree,” the Head of State noted.

The President also added, “I think your proposal in this regard is reasonable. A lot of people were involved in working it out. You thought it through before submitting. Therefore, the issue of the decree on elections is not a problem. Consider it resolved.”

Another item that was discussed during the working meeting with the Head of State was the interaction with state bodies in the preparation and conduct of the election campaign.

“This is a good proposal. Nothing should be discarded. We have extensive experience and practice in holding elections in terms of involving government bodies and other state institutions. Everything is at your disposal. You are responsible for the organisation. All government bodies and structures, me included, will help you implement the plan that we have agreed together. A single voting day is a new thing. We elect all councils vertically. Therefore, there will be a lot of work. We will carry out this work on time... As for information

support, we also have a lot of experience. But there are a lot of new things. We need to use the internet and to create new content, as you suggest. We need to do it to make it convenient for people,” the Belarusian leader said.

The President suggested getting down to this work, starting from inviting voters, including sending text messages.

The Head of State touched upon the issue of inviting observers to the upcoming elections in 2024,

“The entities that invite observers are determined by law. We have nothing to hide. When the time comes, when we deem it necessary, we will invite observers. So that we are not reproached for holding elections like in the United States where people are shot after elections, where voting by mail is allowed and so on. There are a lot of falsifications there. This is all evident today. We must hold the elections in an honest way.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that Belarus has nothing to hide.

“About 80 percent unequivocally support the policy that we have determined today. What should we be afraid of? Well, we will fight for the 20 percent that are hesitating or who are against. I say this as the President,” the Head of State said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko touched on the Belarusian People’s Congress, a body that, following the referendum, has acquired a constitutional status in Belarus.

“We are laying a certain foundation in this matter. We are gaining experience. We must be very attentive to this. A lot

has been defined in the Constitution and in the laws: numbers, elections, nominations, and so on. There is no controversy here. We need to hold the elections to the Belarusian People’s Congress in an open and honest manner.

“There will be different people in the Belarusian People’s Congress. Its members will have all kinds of opinion, but there will be no enemies there. We don’t need enemies. Neither does our society. The points of view must be different so that we make the right decision,” the President explained.

Summing up, Aleksandr Lukashenko emphasised, “Having read your report and proposals, I, for example, do not see any other approaches. We need to start this work now.”



CEC Chairman Igor Karpenko

CEC Chairman Igor Karpenko informed the President in detail about the preparations for next year’s electoral campaigns.

After the report, in a conversation with journalists, Igor Karpenko recalled

that a serious campaign was ahead in 2024. In particular, the single voting day will be held on February 25th. CEC Chairman told, “Serious work has been done to introduce amendments and additions to the electoral legislation on the basis of the changes that were made to the Constitution. Many new laws have been introduced. Such as about the Belarusian People’s Congress, about the foundations of civil society. All this, of course, left its mark on the functioning of the electoral system in the new conditions, in new realities, in the new legal framework that was laid down.”

According to Igor Karpenko, in general, the President agreed with the voiced approaches, “In particular, we agreed that sometime in November we will submit a draft decree of the Head of State on holding elections on a single voting day. But before signing this decree, we will carry out a number of procedures that are provided for by the electoral legislation. In particular, before September 1st, together with the territories, we will have to determine the number of voters and the number of constituencies for the election of deputies to local councils. Before October 1st, we will have to form constituencies for the election of deputies of the House of Representatives. Before November 1st, we will have to form constituencies for the election of deputies of local councils.”

Igor Karpenko concluded, “In general, the President approved the approaches. Including at the invitation of international observers, to conduct a unified information policy and to ensure security during the election campaign.”

The Belarusian Head of State noted that this visit will contribute towards the strengthening of bilateral relations.

“We can state today that relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan are at a very high level, but, as sportsmen say, there is still room for improvement,” the President said.

Belarus, according to the President, is very closely watching the process of transformation of governance institutions and society in Kazakhstan and, as they say, take note of a lot of things.

“You are doing the right thing by strengthening both the independence of your state and security, which is important today. You should know that Belarus has always been your friend, and you can count on us,” Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

During the meeting, the Belarusian leader also conveyed greetings and warmest wishes to his Kazakh counterpart and good friend Kassym-Jomart Tokayev.

“When there is an opportunity, please convey my warmest regards to Nursultan Nazarbayev, the first President of Kazakhstan, with whom we worked a lot,” Aleksandr Lukashenko added.

Integration centre

The President of Belarus, Aleksandr Lukashenko, met with Kazakhstan’s Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Murat Nurtleu



Kazakhstan’s Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of Foreign Affairs Murat Nurtleu and Belarusian Minister of Foreign Affairs Sergei Aleinik

The Head of State stressed that relations between Belarus and Kazakhstan are the foundation for the interaction of a number of integration structures, in particular the CSTO and the EAEU.

“Kazakhstan has always played an important role in the formation of these organisations, in their activities. So has Belarus. Looking ahead, I see Kazakhstan, Russia and Belarus as this attractive cen-

tre for other states. I recently said that there is no reason to hope that some rich neighbour will come and help us. Unfortunately, the world is selfish, nationalistic today. You (foreign ministers) see it better than I do. Therefore, at least at the moment, we must rely on ourselves and our friends, who will always come to the rescue and support,” the President noted.

Murat Nurtleu stressed that Kazakhstan highly appreciates the strategic partnership with Belarus and is committed to the further development of bilateral friendly relations.

At the end of last year, the trade turnover between Belarus and Kazakhstan amounted to \$1.24 billion (113.4 percent compared to 2021) with a positive balance for our country in the amount of \$738.3 million. The growth of mutual trade

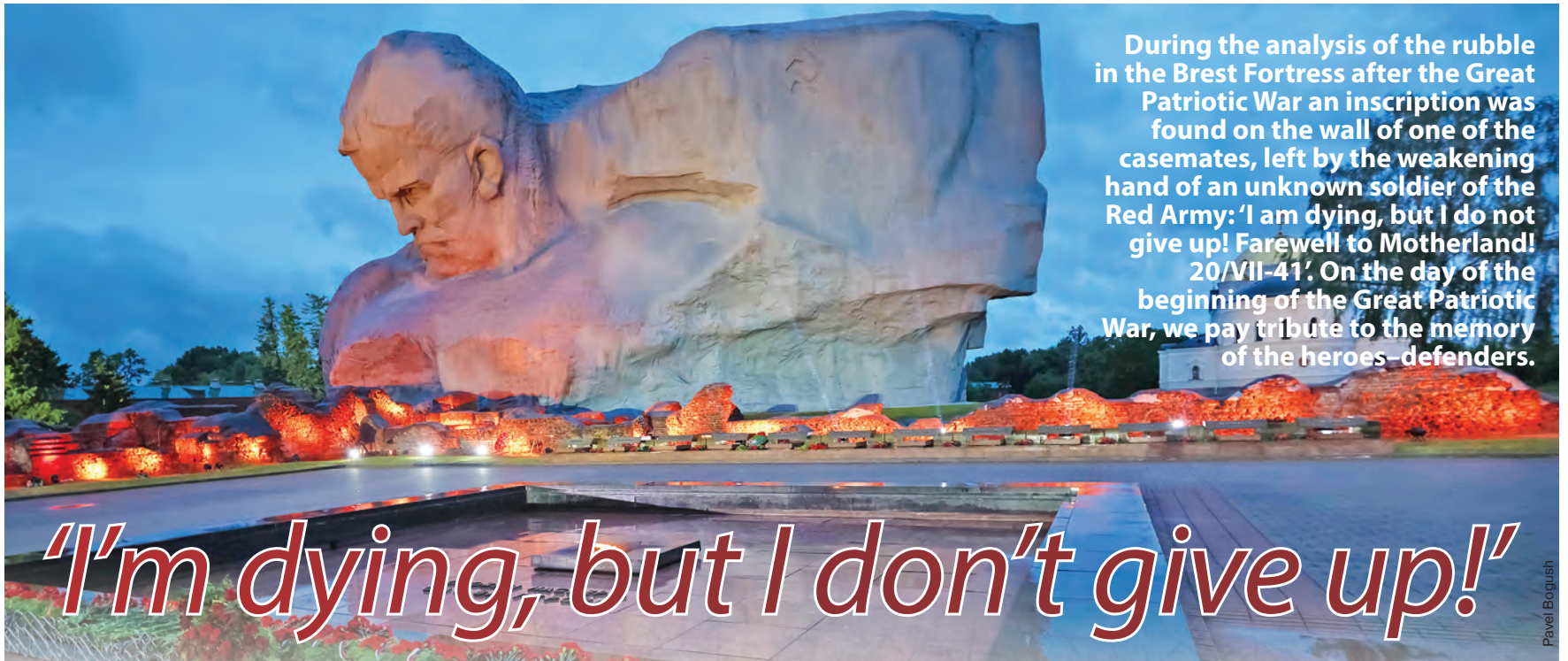
continues this year as well. In January–April, it amounted to \$387.1 million (142.7 percent compared to the corresponding period of 2022).

The main items of Belarusian exports were tractors, dairy and meat products, machines and mechanisms for harvesting and threshing crops, oil products and wood fibre boards.

In Kazakhstan, there are joint assembly plants of Belarusian machinery and equipment of MTZ, MAZ, Gomselmash and Bobruiskagromash.

Last year, the economy of Belarus received \$60.4 million of Kazakh investments. In January–March 2023, \$4.3 million of investments were attracted from Kazakhstan.

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During the analysis of the rubble in the Brest Fortress after the Great Patriotic War an inscription was found on the wall of one of the casemates, left by the weakening hand of an unknown soldier of the Red Army: 'I am dying, but I do not give up! Farewell to Motherland! 20/VII-41'. On the day of the beginning of the Great Patriotic War, we pay tribute to the memory of the heroes – defenders.

"I'm dying, but I don't give up!"

Brest Fortress — these two words are enough for our imagination to pass images of the heroic battles of the most dramatic days of the Great Patriotic War. This is the exact definition of valour and stamina, self-sacrifice and devotion to soldier's duty. It is the only hero fortress in the world. Now, probably forever.

History of the citadel

The history of the fortress dates back to the 19th century. Then in the Russian Empire the idea arose of erecting protective structures for defence at the confluence of the Bug River and Mukhavets River. Construction work began in the 1830s. And already on April 26th, 1842, the fortress — a masterpiece of military engineering construction — was put into operation. Fortifications with a total area of about 4 square kilometres were located on the coast. The citadel, as a dominant structure, was located on the main island. It was surrounded by three no less important fortifications — Volyn, Kobrin and Terespol. The defensive length of the barracks was more than two kilometres, the thickness of the walls was 1.85 metres. In total, the fortress had four gates, 21 bridges, over 6 kilometres of defensive ramparts 10 metres high. Work on its improvement was carried out intermittently, but was never completed by the World War I.

In August 1915, the Brest Fortress was occupied by German troops. On March 3rd, 1918, the Treaty of Brest-Litovsk was signed in the White Palace on its territory.

And on June 22nd, 1941, the German army attacked the fortress again, hoping to capture it in a few hours.

Heroic defence

In June 1941, seven rifle battalions, one reconnaissance and two artillery battalions were stationed in the Brest Fortress. There were also about 300 families of commanders.

The storming of the fortress was entrusted to the 45th Wehrmacht Infantry Division (about 17 thousand people) in co-operation with parts of neighbouring formations. According to the plan, the fortress should have been captured by 12:00 o'clock on the first day of the war.

On June 22nd at 4:15 artillery fire was opened on the fortress. In the first half hour alone, more than 5,000 shells of various calibres were fired. Under heavy fire, the command staff of the Red Army withdrew units to the areas of concentration. But by nine o'clock in the morning the fortress was completely surrounded. About four thousand people were blocked in it. And then this garrison took the fight. Hundreds of fighters and commanders were killed, warehouses, water supply were destroyed, communications were interrupted. The enemy had almost a tenfold superiority in forces. Its goal was, using the surprise of the attack, first of all to capture the Citadel, then other fortifications and force the Soviet garrison to surrender.

Being surrounded, experiencing an acute shortage of ammunition, medicines, food and water, the soldiers of the Brest garrison and their families showed exceptional stamina and courage.

The defence of the Brest Fortress lasted about a month:

- the first period — from June 22nd to June 30th, when fierce, bloody battles took place on all the fortifications of the fortress. From June 29th to June 30th, a general assault on the fortress took place.

- the second period — from July 1st to July 20th — the last pockets of resistance, when lone soldiers continued resistance, the last of which — Major Pyotr Gavrilov — was captured on the 32nd day of the war — July 23rd, 1941.

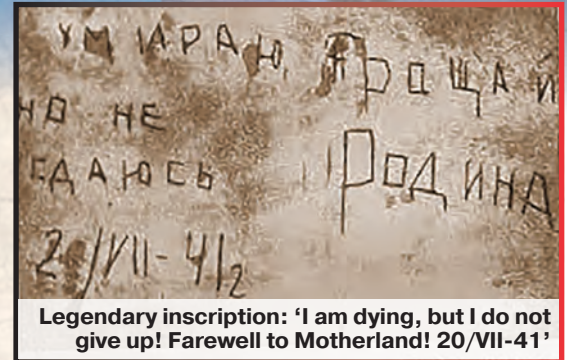
According to the German doctor who examined him, the major was in an extreme state of exhaustion: '...the captured major was in full command uniform,

It's impossible to forget

Now the Brest Fortress is known throughout the world as a monument to the courage of the Soviet soldier who took the fight on the first metres of the border of his homeland. And although this battle was unequal, it was the first step towards victory in May 1945. The defenders of the fortress — warriors of more than 30 nationalities — fulfilled their duty to the Motherland to the end, accomplished one of the greatest feats in the history of the Great Patriotic War. About 200 defence participants were awarded orders and medals. On May 8th, 1965, the fortress was awarded the honorary title 'Hero Fortress' with the Order of Lenin and the Gold Star medal.

On September 25th, 1971, the Brest Hero Fortress Memorial Complex was created on the territory of the fortress to perpetuate the feat of the defenders. Battle sites, ruins, surviving fortress buildings, sculptural compositions and museum expositions are united here in a single ensemble: the Museum of the Defence of the Brest Fortress (1956), Museum of War — Territory of Peace (2014), Chronicle of the Brest Fortress (2019), East Fort Defence (2020). In the Museum 5 Fort branch — the Fort No. 5 of the Brest Fortress exposition (2021).

The memorial complex is one of the most recognisable and visited tourist sites of the Republic of Belarus. Sculptors involved — A. Kibalnikov, A. Bembel, V. Bobyl, architects — V. Korol, V. Volchek, V. Zankovich, Yu. Kazakov, O. Stakhovich, G. Sysoev. The architectural and sculptural ensemble of the memorial includes the main monument, the bayonet-obelisk, the sculptural composition *Thirst*, the Ceremonial Square, 3 rows of memorial plates with the burial places of the dead, the ruins and surviving structures of the fortress and the museum. Being built as a military facility, having survived the fires of two world wars, today the Brest Fortress remains a place of memory and peace.



Legendary inscription: 'I am dying, but I do not give up! Farewell to Motherland! 20/VII-41'



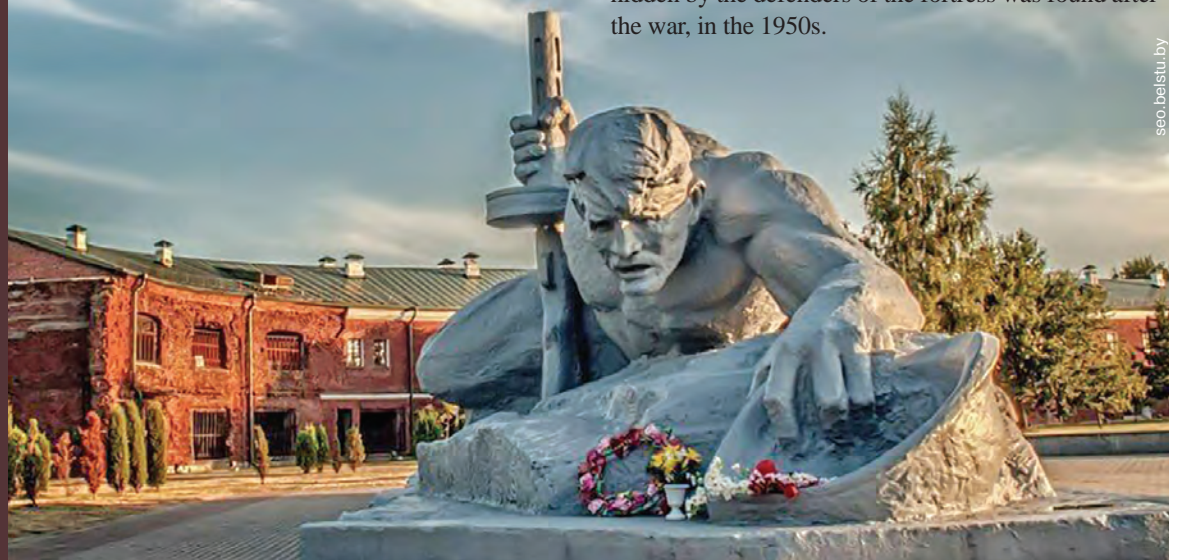
Major Pyotr Gavrilov



Post card. Brest Fortress. June 23rd, 1941

but all his clothes turned into tatters, his face was covered with powder soot and dust and overgrown with a beard. He was injured, unconscious and looked emaciated to the extreme. It was, in the full sense of the word, a skeleton covered with leather... The prisoner could not even make a swallowing movement: he did not have the strength to do so... But this man, in whose body life was barely glimmering, only an hour ago in one of the casemates of the fortress single-handedly took the fight, threw grenades, fired a pistol and killed and wounded several Nazis'. (from S.S. Smirnov's *Brest Fortress*)

None of the banners of the military units that fought in the fortress went to the enemy. One of the banners hidden by the defenders of the fortress was found after the war, in the 1950s.



The sculptural composition *Thirst* depicts a Soviet soldier who, leaning on a machine gun, is trying with all his might to reach the river and scoop up water with a helmet



Revived history

More than three thousand exhibits and not a single replica — the Tikunovs dynasty of border guards opened a unique military museum called *Voentekh* in Brest

By Maksim Korotkin

A gas mask from the times of the World War I, complete sets of uniforms of Soviet border guards, a Japanese guntō sword... More than three thousand exhibits are presented in the private Brest museum *Voentekh*. The creators of the unique object were representatives of the border guard dynasty of the Tikunovs — father Nikolai and son Aleksei.

The cherished dream of showing the public a part of its collection and arousing interest in the history of the country began to come true a year and a half ago in an unusual place — the museum opened its doors to the Brest Laguna market. Since then, the number of exhibits has tripled, and many residents and guests of the Brest-on-the-Bug got acquainted with unique artefacts. However, interest in the history of military affairs appeared a very long time ago, recalls Nikolai Tikunov, “For many years of service in the border troops of the USSR, I also visited the outposts where museums were located. I often acted as a guide when various delegations arrived. And when I retired, I took up the formation of the collection. But the initiative was taken by my son Aleksei: during his service in Smorgon, a sapper shovel made in 1917 fell into his hands. He wanted to learn more about the equipment, uniforms, technology of that time. So we began to collect the necessary information and the first exhibits. Later, after the end of Aleksei’s military career, we continued to work with redoubled energy.”

A pavilion with an area of over 200 square metres in the Brest market was allocated to enthusiasts in 2021 thanks to



Pavel Bogush



the help of Natalia Ilnitskaya, General Director of the Laguna company.

Now there are more than three thousand exhibits: more than 115 dummies in full military uniforms, banknotes, chevrons, awards, first-aid kits, communications equipment, gas masks... Among the rarities, for example, is the Soviet album of the Japanese fortifications in Manchuria, the circulation of which is only one hundred copies. There was a place for more than a dozen motorcycles — both German DKW and Soviet Moscow, Minsk. The uniqueness of the museum is that only originals are presented here — no replicas and remakes.

The collection is not limited to the period of two world wars — there are exhibits related to military conflicts in Vietnam, Afghanistan and Iraq. A separate place is occupied by the ‘border’ block with samples of uniforms, equipment and means of providing the border troops of the USSR and the Republic of Belarus.

Another feature is that it is not forbidden to touch the exhibits with your hands. If you want to try on a helmet, a steel helmet or a Red Army uniform, you are

welcome. By the way, the exhibits are in demand among filmmakers. Tikunov Jr. acted as a consultant during the filming of three episodes of the *State Border* film, the actors of which used uniforms from the Brest collection. The autograph on the border cap was left by Andrei Frolov, the lead actor of the series. Nikolai Tikunov draws attention to the fact that collecting military rarities has an important goal,

“Schoolchildren often come to us on an excursion in whole classes, and we should work with them first. We tell the younger generation about historical events, about how our grandfathers and great-grandfathers created and defended the country. The museum becomes one of the centres of military-patriotic education of young people, who should know and be proud of the history of the Motherland, and, if necessary, stand up for it.”

OPINION

General Director of the Laguna company Natalia Ilnitskaya,

“The Tikunovs are true patriots of Belarus. They have formed a wonderful collection and introduce it to many people. According to the most conservative estimates, the museum was visited by more than eight thousand people. The collection also contains amazing items that you will not see elsewhere. I immediately supported the idea of placing the museum in the Laguna market: I myself am engaged in the preservation of historical memory. I created an open-air museum in the village of Mukhavets, Brest Region, — the Alley of Memory, where the dismantled monuments to the soldiers of the Red Army who died on Polish territory during World War II found shelter. Today it is very important to engage in patriotic education of the younger generation so that young people remember who won the Victory and gave them the opportunity to live in a peaceful country.”



Pavel Bogush



Charged up for success

Apron electric bus, multifunctional urban electric truck, new model of electric forklift: what are the advantages of Belarusian electrical engineering



Today, sales of electric vehicles are growing all over the world. Belarus follows the global trends. This technique is presented in all segments and classes. And the number of innovations continues to grow. At the recent Electric Transport Day, the Industry Ministry announced the appearance of a Belarusian passenger electric car this year. Leading enterprises of the automotive industry presented their new developments. These are the MAZ apron electric bus, the first Volat electric bus of the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant, the multifunctional city electric truck of the National Academy of Sciences, a new model of the AMKODOR electric loader and others. What are the advantages of domestic electrical engineering?

By Vera Arteaga

In high readiness

Those who have ever been to the Minsk-2 National Airport are well acquainted with the first generation of the MAZ apron bus. The one that brings passengers to the planes. Today, the Minsk Automobile Plant is producing a new generation of such a bus, according to Oleg Smolyanko, Deputy Head of the Sales Department for MAZ Passenger Vehicles, it was only made on electric traction, “This is the second generation of the apron bus, designed at airports to transport people to aircraft. The body of the diesel bus, which we showed earlier, is taken as a basis. Diesel counterparts are already in operation. An electric motor and electric batteries are added to the standard body. Development and electrician are of domestic origin. The battery is designed for 126 kWh, the electric motor has a power of 60 kW.”

The novelty, which will soon conquer both domestic and foreign airports, has a lot of differences. And it’s not just electric. As well as design, modified rear axle, air conditioning system, thermal curtains on the doors. It is not surprising that there is considerable interest in the apron electric bus, Oleg Smolyanko explains, “At the exhibition of innovative transport and equipment SPbTransportFest in St. Petersburg, Pulkovo Airport, which plans to take the electric bus into trial operation, became interested in our new product. Now we are negotiating. Interest was also expressed by our Minsk-2 National Airport.”

The leaders in the production of electrical engineering in Belarus in 2023 were joined by the Minsk Wheel Tractor Plant, which based on its bus created an electric bus of the Volat line. It should be noted that the middle-class electric bus has no competitors, this is also noted at the enterprise, there are no competitors on the Belarusian market yet.

According to MZKT design engineer Aleksandr Metko, in this model the diesel engine has been replaced with an electric

motor of our own design with a rated power of 125 kW, six battery packs with a total capacity of 192 kWh are installed, “This gives us a power reserve of 200 kilometres. But the trials are still going on.”

At least a few models of new electric trucks may appear on our market. One of them — a multifunctional urban electric truck of the Joint Institute of Mechanical Engineering of the National Academy of Sciences — is in a high degree of readiness. The car is undergoing certification tests at the test site in order to be able to drive on public roads. The Vitovt electric truck manufactured by one of the leaders in the electric vehicle industry — BKM Holding — is completely equipped with an unmanned control system. And it also has an increased power reserve — up to 200 kilometres, says Vyacheslav Kuznetsov, a leading sales specialist of the foreign economic activity department of the BKM holding.

Another expected novelty is expected in the passenger segment. According to the First Deputy Industry Minister Aleksandr Ogorodnikov, the Belarusian electric car will appear this year.

Demand is growing and will continue to grow

Demand for Belarusian electrical engineering is growing. First of all, due to reorientation to Russian and CIS mar-

kets, Vyacheslav Kuznetsov comments, “However, in general, the geography of our enterprise is large — from the CIS countries to South America.”

According to him, a special demand, is for trolleybuses with an increased power reserve. For example, 32100D of BKM-Holding was created specifically for Kaliningrad. Its power reserve has been increased by 50 kilometres. This is convenient, the specialist emphasises, that the expansion of the trolleybus fleet with such equipment allows cities to lengthen routes without additional infrastructure costs.

Oleg Smolyanko agrees with him, “As for electrical engineering, the largest sales are made by trolleybuses with autonomous running. This is understandable, since most cities have retained the contact network, which makes it possible to operate this type of transport without additional investment in infrastructure.”

He believes that the electric bus is first of all good where there are no such communications. In general, compared to 2022, the demand for electric buses and car kits has grown, and to a greater extent in foreign markets. On car kits — by a long way.

The development of the electric direction at MAZ is going on both for passenger and cargo vehicles, sums up Oleg Smolyanko, “In the future, this type of transport will increasingly become part of everyday

life. As for the ‘passenger’, we started with autonomous trolleybuses. Now we are making an electric bus entirely from our Belarusian components. We are planning to introduce it this fall.”

Fast and super-fast recharge

Relying on electric transport, Belarus is actively developing the relevant infrastructure. The number of electric charging stations is growing, says Belorusneft Deputy Director General for Construction and General Affairs Andrei Kotik. According to him, in 2023 we will overcome the milestone of 700 charging stations. By the way, according to this indicator, our country occupies a leading position in the CIS, emphasised the Deputy Director General, “Next year we will install 105 more. Meanwhile, 15 state-of-the-art super-fast charging complexes will be built in addition to that.”

The popularity of battery powered cars has increased exponentially in recent years. And not only abroad, where sales of electric cars are predicted to grow by 35 percent in 2023. According to last year, more than 10,000 electric vehicles have already been registered in Belarus.

Hence the increase in power consumption by charging stations for electric vehicles. In 2022 alone, this figure increased by more than a third compared to 2021, from 10 to 14 million kWh. The positive dynamics continues in 2023: in four months, electricity consumption by charging stations increased by 6 percent.

This means that more and more people prefer an environmentally friendly and economical mode of transport.

The implementation of the Comprehensive Programme for the Development of Electric Transport, among other things, includes work on the development of the component base, Aleksandr Ogorodnikov recalled, much attention is paid to it,

“We are pleased to say that more and more Belarusian components appear in our passenger electric transport every year. And we don’t feel vulnerable to unfriendly countries.”



Wit works woe 2.0

Artificial intelligence: a blessing or a threat?

Today, the concept of 'artificial intelligence' (AI) has firmly entered our lives. However, many people are not fully aware of its essence and possible areas of application. Scientific discussions and developments in the field of AI, as a rule, remain outside the information space, and several published facts give rise to diametrically opposed assessments. At the end of March 2023, an open letter was published in the media by experts and representatives of the IT industry of the world, in which the authors warned that AI systems with human-like intelligence could pose a danger to society, and asked whether people should 'risk losing control of civilisation'. So what is artificial intelligence, and why is it unique?

By Nikolai Buzin,
Doctor of Military Sciences, Professor,
Assistant to the Chairman of the House of
Representatives of the National Assembly

On the way to superbeing

Paradoxically, AI is a product of technological progress and the result of a person's desire to understand the world around him. The term 'artificial intelligence' was first proposed by the American scientist John McCarthy in 1950 as 'the ability of machines or computer programmes to learn, think and reason like the human brain'. The idea, revolutionary for its time, found both supporters and opponents.

The desire of enthusiasts to create an artificial thinking system was transformed into real scientific programmes that were actively supported at the state level. The results of close attention to the problem and decent funding for research have been the development of a direction and the development of cybernetic machines capable of reasoning like a person, solving applied problems and improving themselves.

Initially, AI was considered nothing more than a means of supporting managerial decision-making, it was actively used in scientific activities, financial analytics, production processes, energy, military affairs, to process large amounts of information.

With the development and improvement of technology, the development of new computers with better characteristics, the scope of AI has expanded, and the list of tasks to be solved has become ever wider.

Today it is customary to distinguish four main stages in the development of AI:

'reactive' thinking, limited perception (memory), theory of mind and self-consciousness. At the first stage, the priority was the current scenario and the speed of the reaction. This allowed the IBM Deep Blue chess computer to beat Grandmaster Garry Kasparov six times in a row in the late 1990s. The AI predicted the opponent's possible moves much faster than the human brain, which gave it a real advantage.

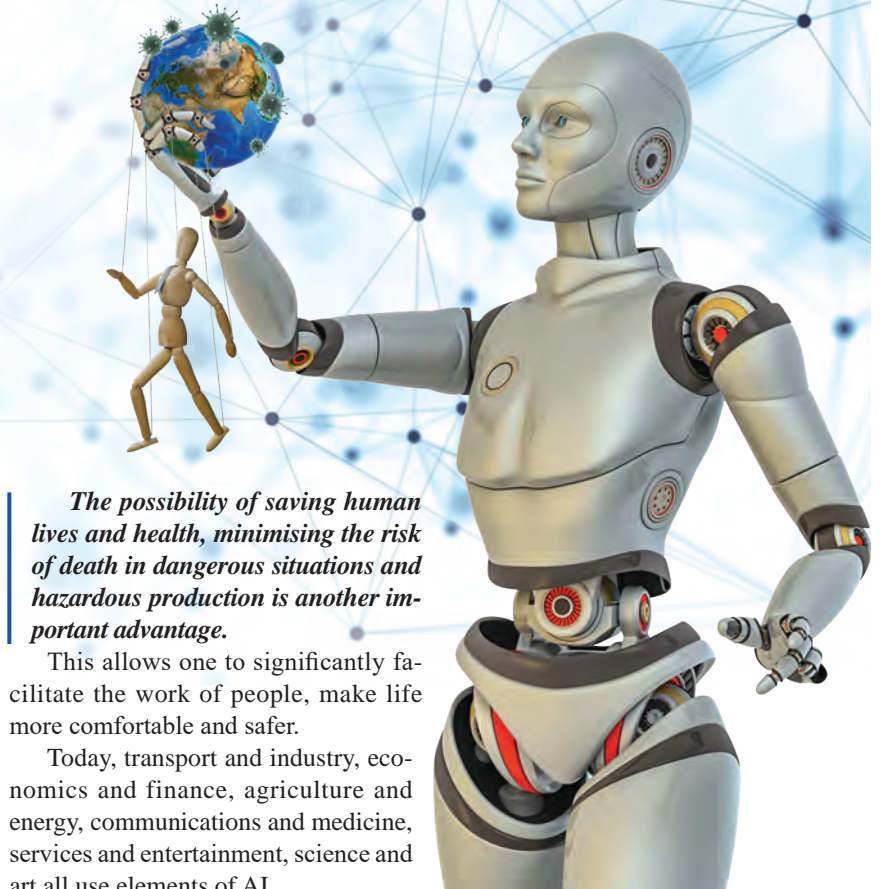
The second stage was characterised by the limited capabilities of the system, but made it possible to create robotic production, control systems, unmanned vehicles, and significantly develop the sphere of entertainment and communications. The third is our modern reality, when machine learning algorithms are introduced into the system that reproduce the real physical world, thoughts and emotions. These are augmented reality, analytical projects, autonomous tools, humanoid robots.

In fact, AI is on the verge of understanding the processes taking place around it, which indicates the practical implementation of the task set by the people — the creators in the middle of the twentieth century. The next stage — self-awareness — can bring AI to the level of independent reproduction and form a new reality in which an artificial superbeing will appear.

Undeniable advantages

One of the indisputable advantages of introducing AI is the minimisation of errors and the exclusion of the 'human factor' from technological chains.

Machines make accurate decisions based on previous information they gather over time using sets of algorithms. Thus, there is a reduction in error and an increase in accuracy, which ultimately improves overall efficiency.



The possibility of saving human lives and health, minimising the risk of death in dangerous situations and hazardous production is another important advantage.

This allows one to significantly facilitate the work of people, make life more comfortable and safer.

Today, transport and industry, economics and finance, agriculture and energy, communications and medicine, services and entertainment, science and art all use elements of AI.

It is no coincidence that the global software market is growing annually by 154 percent, and, according to expert forecasts, by 2025 it will exceed \$22 billion.

Is it good or bad? Let's try to look at the problem from the other side.

Metaverse and other threats

According to most analysts, the introduction of new technologies and AI in the future will play a decisive role in the formation of global security threats. Given the weakening of moral foundations in society, it can become the basis of a new balance of power in the world, lead to a fundamental transformation of social thinking, and even provoke a geopolitical catastrophe.

Along with the undoubted advantages of AI technology, it can be: a weapon of mass influence on individual and mass consciousness on a global scale, a catalyst for the formation of a new world order, the basis for the transformation of the economy and employment, a means of cyberterrorism, a tool for biotechnological influence, a military-technical factor in transforming the essence of interstate confrontation.

Even today, virtual states have a real budget exceeding \$3 trillion, and the number of their adherent users is more than 2 billion people. In the absence of legal regulation of the field of AI technology, it can be considered as an effective means of geopolitical and economic influence in the global digital space.

The robotisation of the economy is gradually changing the structure of the employment sector. The reality may be that a narrow circle of people gains unlimited control over material production and reduce jobs in the labour market. The consequences of such a scenario may be: social upheavals, an increase in the number of unclaimed professions, a drop in the standard of living of the population, a reduction in income.

According to a study by the World Economic Forum 2023, the overall reduction in job vacancies in the labour market will be more than 2 percent over the next 5 years.

No less global consequences due to the introduction of AI are predicted in the military sphere. In the future, 'universal' cyborg soldiers, advertised by American Hollywood, can become an army reality. Already today, many AI technologies are embedded in real weapons. These are unmanned aircraft and helicopters, reconnaissance and air defence systems, ground, sea and air-based strike weapons, cybernetic and beam weapons.

The ideas of remote influence with minimal use of personnel are being implemented in most advanced countries of the world. Since 2018, similar military programmes have been initiated in the US, China, India, the UK and France.

Prevent 'roboticisation' of consciousness

With the emergence of new world centres of power, AI technologies are becoming an important geopolitical factor. Created by the human mind, they can become both a powerful tool for development and a source of global problems.

Today, as never before, the moral and ethical components of society, its maturity and ability to take responsibility, solve philosophical and purely practical issues are relevant. The problem is complicated by the fact that it is global in nature, and its solution is in conflict with the goals of Western elites to 'roboticise the consciousness' of the individual, to achieve total control over society.

In this regard, such aspects of national security of the state as scientific and technological, social, informational, biological and military acquire a special role. Efforts should be made to ensure that AI remains a reliable means of creation and development, and does not become a tool for the destruction and destruction of civilisation.



Path to dictatorship

The transformation of Poland into a totalitarian state threatens the entire region

Recently, President Andrzej Duda signed a high-profile law creating a State Commission to study Russian influence on Poland's internal security in the period from 2007 to 2022. The Polish leader's statement that the document was adopted after all caused a flurry of emotions both within the country and abroad. And this is not surprising, because the new law brings the ruling PiS party several steps closer to building a totalitarian state. True, serious changes had to be urgently made to the document soon, but the very fact of the adoption of the law speaks volumes.

vying with each other and not hesitating in expressions rushed to comment on it.

"Andrzej Duda is scared. This means that he is not an independent politician. The signing of this shameful law excludes us from the community of democratic countries," considers the co-founder of the Polish Initiative party Dariusz Jonski.

"Poland does not have a President. This is just a cowardly servant of the chairman of the party," Civic Platform politician Martin Kervinsky does not hide his anger.

"This is a mockery of the core values of the Polish Constitution. We will not participate in this farce," the representative of the New Left Together party Adrian Zandberg is convinced.

Various opposition forces are clearly aware of the danger posed to Poland and its people by Duda's law-making, behind whose back the hand of the old intriguer Jaroslaw Kaczynski is clearly visible, clinging to power with a stranglehold.

The start of the work of the commission will mean only one thing — the dark times of the 'witch-hunting' and total denunciation are coming in Poland, which will lead the country straight into the arms of the old unkind totalitarianism and state fascism.

Unexpected but true

However, the situation with the new law is far from being as unambiguous as it might seem at first glance. On the one hand, the British, and especially the Americans, are accustomed to giving the Polish leader an indulgence for any meanness against his neighbours in exchange for full support for any Western initiatives. On the other hand, the adopted law unexpectedly turned out to be inconvenient for the star-striped overlord on the other side of the ocean.

State Department spokesman Matthew Miller said the law could be used 'to interfere with free and fair elections in Poland'. It is clear that the phrase about interference in the elections from Washington can only cause Homeric laughter, but the discussion of the topic at such a high level clearly indicates that the United States is dissatisfied with Duda.

In fact, the chest opens simply: the States have their own man among the opposition. This is the mayor of Warsaw, Rafal Trzaskowski, an influential and popular politician who has made it a rule to meet regularly with the American ambassador Mark Brzezinski. The presence of such an important 'big shot' in the opposition community, and even supported by Washington, unnerves PiS. The party reasonably believes that if one day they lose the favour of the White House, he will easily give the shortcut to the

rule of Poland to the promising Trzaskowski. That is why they are intensively digging under him: many associates of the mayor have already paid for being close to him, but they are still afraid to touch the politician himself.

This example vividly illustrates the well-known axiom: the United States never puts all its eggs in one basket. Strategists from the State Department thought out in advance the situation in which PiS could be out of work, and hedged themselves by acquiring an asset in the opposition environment. So even the defeat of the ruling party in the elections by no means guarantees that Poland will be relieved of the American hassle.

The creation of a commission combining the functions of a court and a prosecutor was immediately criticised in the EU. The European Commission turned out to be in solidarity with its overseas colleagues, and EU Commissioner for Justice Didier Reynolds even threatened Warsaw with immediate consequences if the analysis of the law raises doubts about the adherence of its drafters to democratic values.

However, the joint efforts of Washington and Brussels have borne fruit. On Friday, Duda submitted to Parliament a list of changes to the 'Law of Tusk'. The Sejm is invited to approve the possibility of challenging the decisions of the commission in the Court of Appeal in Warsaw or in the same judicial body at the place of residence. In addition, the changes will also affect the powers and composition of the commission — if the parliament says 'yes', then deputies and senators will lose the right to sit on the commission, and the ability to infringe on those accused of rights will be deleted from the list of options.

One step away from the abyss

The adoption of a resonant law, even in a truncated form, is an important step on Warsaw's path to building a totalitarian state. From now on, the PiS party gets into its hands a ready instrument of repression of all those who disagree with its policy. Such a quick signing of this bill by Duda suggests that the ruling elites of Poland, which has entered a period of pre-election turbulence, are quite soberly assessing their prospects during the electoral campaign and are striving to quickly neutralise the opposition. At the same time, the introduction of amendments no less quickly confirms the serious dependence on the opinion and interests of Western curators.

The transformation of Poland into a totalitarian dictatorship cannot but cause justified fears on the part of Belarus and Russia.

A large, hostile state, which has territorial claims and historical 'grievances' against both our countries, is rapidly militarising and creating battalions of fugitive traitors on its territory. Getting such a radical state machine into the hands of a reliable repressive and punitive apparatus threatens first with a cleansing of dissidents from the internal political field, and then with splashing out aggression beyond the Polish borders.



By Anton Popov

Challenge to dissent!

The essence of the legislative 'masterpiece' of the current Polish elite, already nicknamed by the people as the 'Law of Tusk', is to eradicate any dissent and, in the long term, to eliminate the few effective instruments remaining in the hands of the opposition to oppose the Duda-Morawiecki duet. One of the main tasks of the commission being created will be to test Platformy Obywatelskiej (PO) chairman Donald Tusk for his policy towards Russia between 2007 and 2014, when he was prime minister. PiS functionaries are convinced that the liberal ex-premier artificially tied Poland to Russian energy resources, thereby undermining its national security. True, no one can clearly explain to the people why he did this, however, the media controlled by the ruling party are pumping the population with might and main with hatred towards the PO, which is now in opposition.

Among the main provisions of the first version of the law were such very specific provisions as depriving those accused of working for Russia of the right to hold positions related to the distribution of public finances or a ban on issuing a security certificate. The latter threatens with the complete exclusion of the person from public life. The commission, according to this wording, was supposed to be a prosecutorial and judicial body, consist of deputies and senators and work in a preemptory mode.

The fuss with the 'Law of Tusk' looks especially interesting amid the upcoming parliamentary elections. They will be held in Poland this autumn, and the top of the ruling party has every reason to fear for their outcome. Indeed, over the past few years, PiS has stubbornly drowned its reputation either in economic problems, or in an indefatigable desire to get involved in a direct conflict with Russia and Belarus, or in endless quarrels with the EU.

It is quite natural that during this time the opposition parties have gained weight and are widely popular in Poland. The creation of the commission allows in one fell swoop to cross out all the efforts of opponents of PiS — after all, now any of them can be accused of working for Russia and seriously ruin their reputation.

'Witch-hunting'

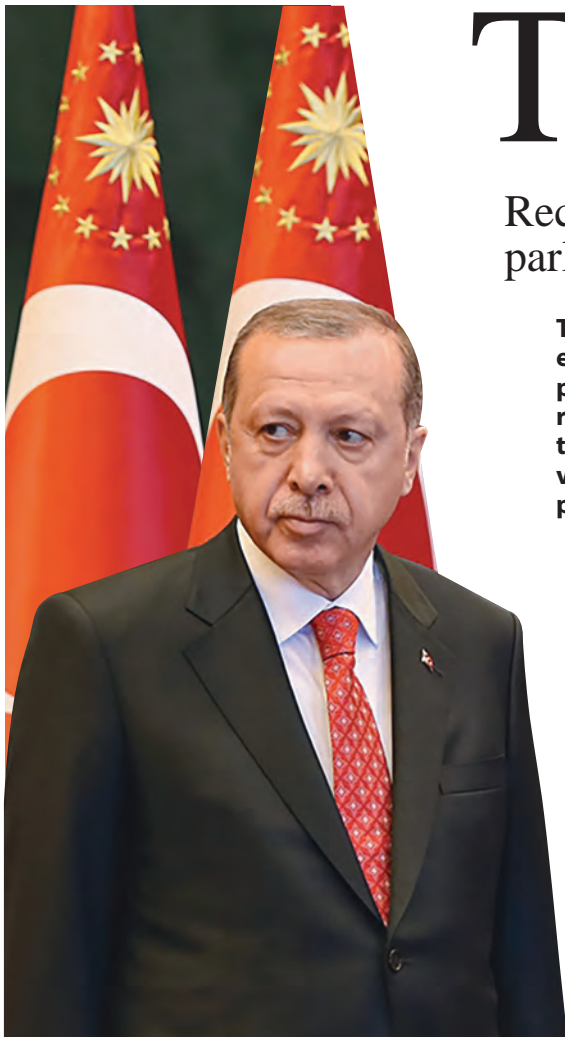
Not surprisingly, the adoption of the law caused a flurry of indignation. Opposition politicians and journalists



Turkish march

Recep Tayyip Erdogan took an oath in front of Turkish parliamentarians on June 3rd and entered a new presidential term

The 69-year-old Turkish President received 52 percent of the vote in the second round of presidential elections, defeating opposition leader Kemal Kılıçdaroglu. Even before the final results of the will of the people, Erdogan announced the start of a large-scale political reform, and after the inauguration, he radically changed the composition of the government, dismissing 15 out of 17 ministers. He announced the adoption of a new Constitution and announced the 'complete transformation' of Türkiye after his victory. Thus, there was a reason to take a closer look at the policy of the Turkish leader, as well as the prerequisites and results of his victorious march through the arenas of political battles.



By Maksim Korotkin

'Maidan' is a Turkic word

Erdogan has been personally familiar with the new, modern meaning of the term 'maidan' — a coup d'état since 2016, when the Turkish President had to resist the 'conspiracy of the military'. So he certainly had a good idea of all the possible consequences of winning the elections in 2023. And, we must say, the situation in the country on the eve of the election campaign quite fit into the framework of Sharpe's famous training manual: a strong, liberal-minded candidate from the opposition (as a result, Kemal Kılıçdaroglu won 45 percent of the vote in the first round and 48 percent in the second); a positive economic background for the protests (a strong fall in the national currency, damage from a devastating earthquake); growing dissatisfaction with Erdogan in the collective West (refuses to impose sanctions against Russia).

Oddly enough, in this situation, the second round of voting was more profitable for the incumbent Head of State than for the opposition. Two weeks of respite brought down the protest mood and gave the President's supporters an opportunity to concentrate on protecting public order and negotiating with the dropped out candidates.

Kemal Kılıçdaroglu acted desperately, throwing the last trump card on the table: he accused Russia of interfering in the Turkish elections.

The fact that the opposition, if it comes to power, will impose sanctions against Moscow, was known before. According to the logic of things, this should have been followed by a minimal loss of the opposition in the elections, the withdrawal of people to the streets, the demand for a recount, litigation, the recognition of Kılıçdaroglu as the President by the world media. But this time it didn't work out. The West did not give the go-ahead to such a scenario.

They preserved the status quo

There are several reasons for this. Firstly, Kemal Kılıçdaroglu would hardly be able to fully fulfill the promises. The fact is that in the same May, the Republican Alliance, led by Erdogan's Justice and Development Party, won the parliamentary elections and won the majority of seats in the Mejlis. Under such conditions, Kılıçdaroglu would be a clearly weak President, despite significant electoral

support, and Erdogan, as the leader of the new opposition, would gladly shift a bunch of social problems onto his competitor.

However, both Erdogan and his supporters reacted more than condescendingly to the activities of Kılıçdaroglu. The question here is that, in fact, among the ruling elite, the leader of the Republican People's Party himself is not particularly held for the opposition. Erdogan considers Gulenism, a political movement named after the preacher Fethullah Gulen, to be the main danger for Türkiye.

The Gulenists are long-standing and strong 'clients' of the United States in Türkiye, their movement was actively supported when the 'pro-American' Heads of State were in power: Turgut Ozal, Suleyman Demirel, Tansu Ciler had mutual understanding with the Gulen movement.

The preacher himself left Türkiye back in 1999, a warrant for his arrest was issued in 2014, but, judging by the reaction of the Turkish authorities to the events, his work lives on.

However, it is very likely that no one needs political turbulence in Türkiye now, so the incumbent President was given the opportunity to win relatively calmly. In principle, for the West, the results of the Turkish elections fit perfectly into the win-win paradigm, an acceptable result for any outcome. If Kılıçdaroglu wins — well, there is a new lever of pressure on Russia and less unpredictability in foreign policy. Erdogan's victory is also not bad: despite some waywardness, he is well known, his way of thinking and capabilities are perfectly represented. The main thing that is required from Türkiye, he fulfils.

Torrential balance

This main thing lies in the geopolitical position of Istanbul. The exceptional significance of the city, which is projected onto the entire region, to say the least, lies in the control over the Bosphorus and Dardanelles: this is the most important military-economic artery in the world. According to the Montreux Convention of 1936, Türkiye is a kind of guarantor of the free passage of merchant ships through the straits. But if Istanbul sees a military threat against itself, it has the right to close the straits for warships. The thing is that this is a rather fragile balance, although it still works today.

The global significance of the straits for world stability lies in the fact that the world power that controls the straits becomes a strategic hegemon.

Rise without a flip

Even without waiting for the election results, Recep Tayyip Erdogan announced the drafting of a new Turkish Constitution and unequivocally announced the 'complete transformation' of the country after his victory. What does the Head of the Turkish State mean? First of all, we need to remember that during the years of Erdogan's leadership, the Turkish political landscape has already changed a lot. Many people remember that in 2003 he came to power as prime minister: Türkiye was then a parliamentary one and the Head of State was elected by deputies. In 2014, he won the first direct presidential elections, Türkiye became presidential. By strengthening his power, Erdogan strengthened the country's position in the interna-

tional arena. If 20 years ago the elites were very much oriented towards the United States, now the Turkish leader is much more independent in his decisions. In 2009, an agreement was signed in Nakhichevan on the establishment of the international organisation Turkic Council. In 2021, Erdogan announced a name change: now this association is called the Organisation of Turkic States and includes, in addition to Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan and, as observers, Hungary, Turkmenistan and Northern Cyprus.

Analysts have long been talking about the promotion of the concept of 'Turkic World' and the gathering of Turkic-speaking peoples under the hand of Türkiye.

In 2021, Erdogan even caused a local scandal by taking a picture with the so-called map of the 'Turkic World', which was presented to the President by Turkish nationalist leader Devlet Bahçeli. Thus, in the picture, which has spread all over the world, Erdogan and Bahçeli are holding a map, on which a huge territory is included in the 'Turkic World', including a significant part of the lands of Russia.

Regardless of what is behind this photo, it is based on the understanding of the fact that Erdogan has clearly established himself as a politician of a regional scale. It must be assumed that his future plans are to go beyond the region. The status of the key negotiator on the Ukrainian issue and the démarche when Sweden and Finland are admitted to NATO clearly speak of this. And NATO membership only helps Erdogan in this: the Turkish leader uses the status of a US ally in the military bloc as a lever to influence the pursuit of his own interests.

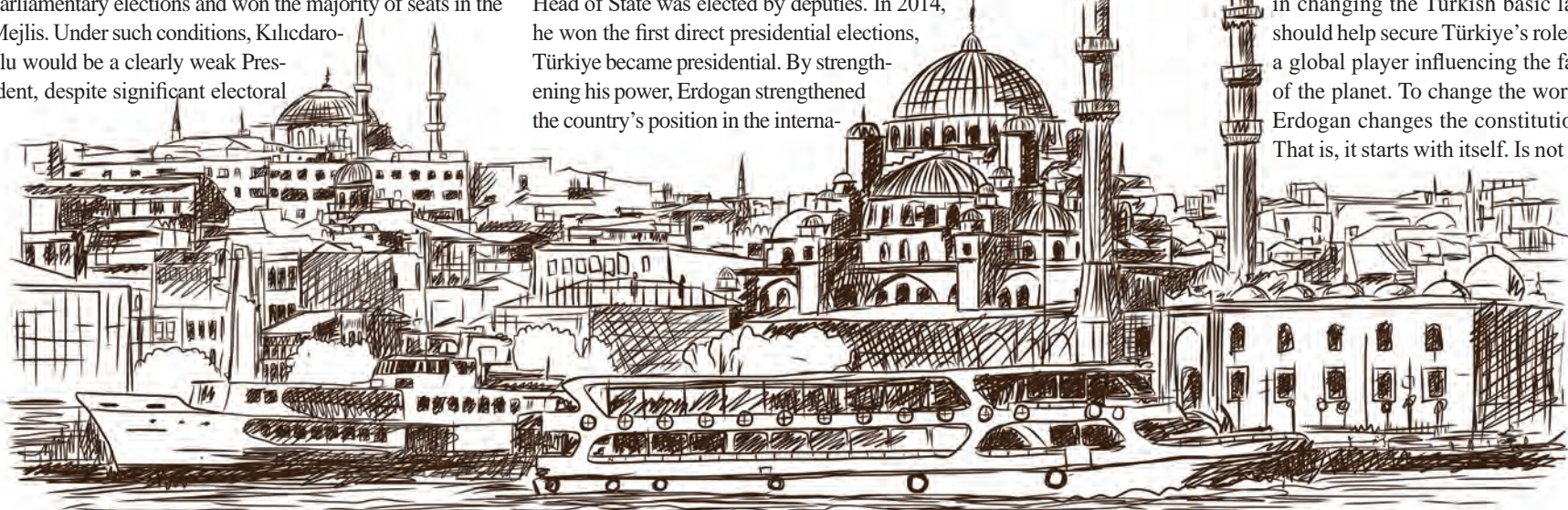
The East is a promising direction

It is somehow customary to 'forget' economic projects for political battles. In his official congratulations to Erdogan on his victory in the elections, Russian President Vladimir Putin considered it necessary to mention the gas hub and the Akkuyu Nuclear Power Plant under construction in Türkiye. These are the most interesting projects, thanks to which Türkiye, which is not rich in energy resources, is moving into the category of energy powers. The state has an exceptionally advantageous location for the logistics of energy flows. Both Russia and Iran are interested in transport corridors through Türkiye, and even, to some extent, the Arab countries, not to mention the Transcaucasus.

In fact, the creation of an energy hub in Türkiye and the focus on producers from the East make it a serious Eurasian player.

At the same time, Türkiye will remain a key partner of the West: this is NATO membership, the transit of resources, and the containment of the flow of illegal refugees. At the same time, Ankara has good chances for co-operation with the EAEU, as well as for

joining the SCO and BRICS. It is clear that Erdogan is planning a new breakthrough in the development of the country. And it must be assumed that the goals laid down in changing the Turkish basic law should help secure Türkiye's role as a global player influencing the fate of the planet. To change the world, Erdogan changes the constitution. That is, it starts with itself. Is not it?



Summer is the time for festivals, a productive time for inspirational discoveries, creative realisation, and new meetings. Most recently, a new project of the Palace of the Republic and the Presidential Orchestra, a large-scale four-hour ROCK orchestra FEST took place for the first time at the Dinamo stadium. The capital does not give up its creative festival positions, but the regions do not lag behind. Verkhnedvinsk, Braslav, Molodechno, Postavy, Mir, Liozno, Volkovysk... These are just some of the Belarusian cities that have their own signature festivals.

The festival summer in Belarus will acquire a special sound in the Year of Peace and Creation



Aleksandr Kulevsky



Aleksandr Ruzhchek

Festivals are never too much



Aleksey Stolyarov



Aleksandr Ruzhchek



Aleksey Stolyarov



Aleksandr Kulevsky

By Valentin Pepelyaev, Kristina Khilko

The inextricable link of times

Unique rituals, holidays, forums that take place in villages with a glorious history and cosy modern agro-towns help to preserve the traditions of ancestors, remind of the inseparable connection of times, and are the cultural foundation of the nation. Examples can also be given endlessly: *Pavlovsky Karavai* in the agro-town of Novoselki, Slonim District, the *Falvarak Minulaga* festival of folklore art in the village of Merchitsy, Pinsk District, *Krashynski Perezvon* in the agro-town of Kroshin, Baranovichi District. Recently, *Pesni Sunichnykh Barou* (strawberry festival) regional holiday-competition of amateur poets and composers was held in Liozno, as well as the *Sound Live* music festival in Volkovysk...

Creative mood

The fact that many festivals take place in small towns seems to be extremely important. This helps to preserve their uniqueness, contributes to the development of the regions, and does not allow the creative 'blood' of local talents to stagnate. In addition, any holiday is an occasion to 'prink', tidy up the infrastructure, etc.

How warmly Novopolotsk, declared the Youth Capital of Belarus, hosted the Republican Festival of Artistic Creativity of Students and Students *ART-Vakatsiyi-2023* in May. How many emotions gave the *Youth — for Peace and Creation!* regional festival in Vitebsk. Timed to coincide with the International Children's Day. And in July, on a Slavic scale, for the 32nd time in beloved Vitebsk, the *Slavianski Bazaar*, known for its special creative atmosphere, will swirl.

Molodechno tuning fork

More recently, the 'city of the Sun' Molodechno was in the spotlight — the National Festival of Belarusian Song and Poetry was held here. For the 22nd time, however. Molo-

dechno does not lower the bar of the holiday, on the contrary, it is becoming more and more respectable. This is one of the tuning forks of the country's festival life.

At the festival this year, a memorial plaque was installed on the building of the amphitheatre of the Palace of Culture of Molodechno in honour of the People's Artist of Belarus Mikhail Finberg. And the main brainchild of the maestro — the *Maladzechna-2023* National Competition for Young Performers of the Belarusian Pop Song again opened up new names for us.

Postavy pastoral

Zviniac Tsybalyak and *Garmonik* took place in Postavy on June days. You have missed a lot if you have never been to this international festival of folk music, did not walk at sunset along the cosy streets of the pearl of the Lake District, did not admire the local lakes and the Myadelka River, did not rejoice together with everyone at the festival in the town square, did not enjoy the enchanting music at a morning concert under the arches of the local Neo-Gothic ancient Church of St. Anthony.

This year, more than three hundred musicians from Belarus, Russia, Kazakhstan and Latvia took part in the festival.

Charm of castles

The legendary castles are not left out of the festival movement. In the middle of June, *Music Evenings in the Mir Castle* were held, which are traditionally organised by the TV channel ONT. Summer musical evenings also started in the middle of June in the Gomel Palace and Park Ensemble. Then the piano sounded in Tatiana Starchenko's programme *Summer Evening. Frederic Chopin*. The concert *Oh, if I Could Express it in Sound...* is scheduled for July 13th. The *At the End of Summer...* programme, which the organisers will present on August 23rd, will complete the cycle.

And from June 23rd to June 25th, the *Evenings of the Bolshoi Theatre at the Radziwill Castle* annual forum of opera and ballet will be held for the 13th time in Nesvizh.



Under the starry sky of a cosy city, the *Don Quixote* audience will see the ballet in three acts, *The Barber of Seville* comic opera. An interactive and entertaining programme will be organised for the kids, Prokofiev's *Petya and the Wolf* musical fairy tale will be performed by the brass quintet of the theatre. Music of the 16th-20th centuries will be played under the arches of the ancient Church of the Body of God.

Alexandria Gathers Friends again

In the agricultural town of Alexandria on the banks of the Dnieper River, on the most mysterious night of the year, Kupala bonfires burn, the river is decorated with wreaths of meadow herbs and flowers, and favourite songs are played under the starry sky. Mysterious rituals drive away evil spirits and bring happiness and luck. Guests of the holiday on July 8th can expect an air show, master classes, exhibitions of folk craftspeople, quests — you won't have to get bored. The culmination of the *Alexandria Gathers Friends* will be a gala concert, where Belarusian and Russian performers will perform.

Festival with a taste of cherry

At the most delicious open-air event in the country in July, guests of Glubokoye will taste juicy and large cherries and take a selfie with the sculpture of Baron Munchausen. According to local legend, it was in Glubokoye that a famous adventurer shot cherry pits at deer from a gun. And you can meet the Cherry Queen at the *Cherry Festival*. She hosts in her signature residence — a wooden tower in the shape of a cherry blossom, 'blooming' right on the shore of the lake.

Reflecting in the lakes' mirror

One of the most picturesque places in the country — Braslav Lakes — will turn into a resort capital from July 28th to July 30th. Who wouldn't want to swim in clear water, take a boat ride, or sunbathe on a hot, sultry day? *Viva Braslav* will be played by popular Belarusian and Russian rock and pop groups and performers. The location also adds to the instagrammability of the festival — from the wall to the central beach, you can take a swim after dancing to your heart's content. There are many bonuses for vacationers — balloon flights, yoga, workout competitions and a huge area of food courts.

There are not many festivals, and all of them are waiting for their audience. By participating in them, we always discover something new in ourselves.

Faster. Higher. More precisely

The past handball season, although it turned out to be slightly inferior for us due to political isolation (the Belarusian national team was left without the World Cup, where it was quite capable of fighting at least for reaching the quarterfinals, and the clubs were not able to take part in European cup tournaments), but the fans didn't miss much. The national team periodically met and held friendly matches, HC SKA Minsk and HC Meshkov Brest staged a real show in the national championship with an incredible denouement, and the Final Four of the SEHA League, which was recently held with pomp in St. Petersburg and completely exceeded all expectations. In the decisive battle for the main trophy, irreconcilable rivals HC SKA Minsk and HC Meshkov Brest once again met on the ground, giving everyone another dose of adrenaline and aesthetic pleasure. The Brest team won with a margin of one goal (32:31), but the army team deserved a triumph no less. But most importantly, the tournament opened up new names and strengthened the confidence that such a beloved and popular sport in the country does not stand still, but continues to develop.

Summing up the handball year



Igor Belyavsky (No. 47) — leader of HC SKA Minsk and the hope of Belarusian handball

THE BEST OF THE BEST

(full list of winners following the results of the Final Four of the SEHA League)

- **Symbolic team of the tournament:** goalkeeper — Konstantin Kovalev (HC SKA Minsk), left winger — Maxim Salikov (GC Permskie Medvedi), left welterweight — Dmitry Khmelkov (HC SKA Minsk), point guard — Artem Kulak (Chekhovskiye Medvedi), right welterweight — Nikolai Alekhin (HC Meshkov Brest), right winger — Maxim Baranov (HC Meshkov Brest), lineman — Aleksandr Ermakov (Chekhovskiye Medvedi).
- **The best young player** is Igor Belyavsky (HC SKA Minsk).
- **The best defensive player** is Vyacheslav Shumak (HC Meshkov Brest).
- **The best coach** is Eduard Koksharov (HC Meshkov Brest).
- **The top scorer** is Vladislav Krivenko (HC SKA Minsk).
- **Most Valuable Player** — Denis Zabolotin (HC Meshkov Brest).

By Sergei Kanashits

Winning coach

The name Eduard Koksharov is well known to everyone who is at least somewhat interested in handball. Olympic champion, world and European champion, one of the best left wingers in the history of handball, he worked wonders on the court. It turned out that the gift of a magician and a wizard did not disappear anywhere even after the nimble winger Edik reincarnated as a respectable Eduard Aleksandrovich, stepping on the coaching path. Yes, he did not achieve great success leading the Russian men's team and the Macedonian RK Vardar 1961, did not work out very well in women's handball, but the arrival in Belarus and the contract with HC Meshkov Brest, as it turned out, was the perfect solution for both sides: Koksharov promptly restarted his career mentor and again loudly reminded of himself, and the club regained its former power and managed to swim out when it was already blowing bubbles and many even sang his waste.

Both the final series of the championship of Belarus and the decisive match of the SEHA League in St. Petersburg was not only a confrontation between two old

rivals, but also a coaching duel. HC SKA Minsk coaches Igor Papruga and Dmitry Nikulenkov outplayed the Brest duet of Dmitry Tikhon and Vasily Ostrovsky in the first part of the season. It really seemed that the former hegemon was slowly dying, and only a miracle could save them. At that very moment it happened: HC Meshkov Brest team was headed by Eduard Koksharov. By what methods he carried out resuscitation, what words and actions he used, we can only guess, but after a month, the same guys who were barely dragging their legs around the site and had no sparkle in their eyes suddenly changed. The players of HC SKA Minsk fought like heroes in every match, but never under Eduard Koksharov did they manage to defeat the Brest team. Master, what else is there to tell!

Mr. Save

Who would have thought that Denis Zabolotin could play as well as the Dane Niklas Landin, who, not without reason, is considered the best handball goalkeeper in the world today? A year ago, Belarusian fans knew absolutely nothing about this guy, but today Brest fans are ready to carry him in their arms in the truest sense of the word. Denis spent his entire

career in his native SKIF Krasnodar, and last summer he moved to the team of the champions of Belarus. In the championship of Russia, he from time to time succeeded in bright matches and Zabolotin was ranked among the gifted goalkeepers, but nothing more. A new step was needed for further growth, which the goalkeeper took a risk and did not fail.

In the second part of this season, Denis Zabolotin confidently took the place of the main goalkeeper of HC Meshkov Brest and, largely thanks to his excellent reaction, the club managed to defeat HC SKA Minsk in the final series of the Belarusian Championship. Winning the SEHA League is a result from the same row. The semi-final match against GC Permskie Medvedi is something unimaginable: 23 saves in a match is on the verge of fantasy! Zabolotin was also good in the decisive duel. As a result — the title of Final Four MVP and well-deserved fanfare. It was the best season in the career of the 24-year-old goalkeeper, and now we can safely say that the gates of the HC Meshkov Brest club are locked.

Fast and accurate

Belarusian handball has always been famous for its rapid wings — wingers

invariably performed leading games on the ground and score a lot. So it was in the days of the legendary and outstanding Aleksandr Karshakevich, and so it is now. The top scorer of SEHA League-2022/23 was 24-year-old Vladislav Krivenko from HC SKA Minsk, who scored 58 goals for every taste. In total, this reactive and creative guy has 249 goals in all tournaments of the season! No one else scored more in Belarusian clubs. Brilliant score!

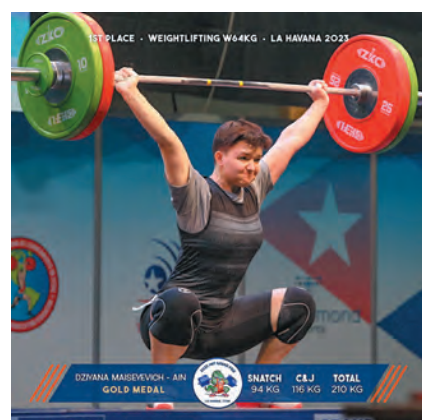
Young but not green

A 21-year-old point guard HC SKA Minsk Igor Belyavsky became the best young player of the current SEHA League draw. This pupil of Shchuchin handball school has been in sight for a long time: he has been the main playmaker of the army team for several years, has experience of playing for the Belarusian national team (including at the European Championship), and in general he has received a huge amount of advances and praises. Last season, Igor matured even more, becoming a real, mature master, which, of course, was greatly facilitated by working with one of the HC SKA Minsk coaches, Dmitry Nikulenkov, who himself was great at the draw when he was a player.

Strong both in body and spirit

Belarusian weightlifters showed their best at international competitions. It's never happened before!

The Belarusian weightlifting team returned from the Grand Prix in Havana with weighty baggage of awards. It was the first international start of our weightlifters, where weightlifters received admission after many months of suspension for political reasons. The result showed that all this time the Belarusian strongmen did not sit idle, having managed to approach the tournament, which is one of the stages of selection for the Olympics in Paris, in excellent shape. Four gold medals in the double event were won by the experienced Petr Asayonak, Pavel Khodasevich, Yevgeny Tikhontsov, as well as the young Diana Moiseevich, for whom this is the first such a resounding success. Susanna Volodko returns home with silver, Andrei Frolov and Alina Shchepanova with bronze. In addition, Gennady Laptev and Eduard Zezyulin won two silver medals in the snatch, and Sergei Sharenkov won bronze in this type of programme.



Gennady Laptev was the first of our team's athletes to take to the platform in Havana. The weightlifter, performing in the weight category up to 61 kilogrammes, failed to win a medal in the double event — he took fifth place in the total exercises, but took small silver in the snatch with a result of 130 kilogrammes. Following Andrei Frolov became a bronze medalist already in the double event, then Alina

Shchepanova won an award of the same value, and Susanna Volodko won silver... Our team already has four gold medals — they were won by Dziyana Maiseyevich, Petr Asayonak, Pavel Khodasevich and Yevgeny Tikhontsov. And if Tikhontsov, Asayonak and Khodasevich are one of the most experienced athletes in our team in Havana, then Dziyana Maiseyevich is a representative of the young, but a very promising galaxy.

This girl is only 21 years old. Dziyana 'shoot the moon' not immediately: gradually, step by step, she added in skill and results. She competed twice at the European Championships among juniors, but she was a little short of the podium: she was fifth. Last summer she became the bronze medallist of the Russian championship, then won silver at the championship of Belarus. And already at the national championship, held in Mogilev in May, Dziyana was the first with a result of 205 kilogrammes. In Havana, she man-

aged to excel: in the total of the biathlon, Maiseyevich took 210 kilogrammes. In the snatch, she recorded 94 kilogrammes. Formally, this is the second result, but the leader in this discipline — Jan Khan from Korea — has the same number, however, taken earlier by an attempt. There were no equals for the Belarusian in the clean and jerk — 116 kilogrammes. The victory in the biathlon turned out to be confident: the closest rival, the Colombian Maria Camila Lobon Viafara, overcame 205 kilogrammes, the Korean Jian Khan closed the top three — 203.

Competitions in Havana ended on Sunday. Eduard Zezyulin was the last of our athletes to take the platform, winning silver in the clean and jerk.

Let us remember that this Grand Prix is a competition that is extremely important in terms of selection for the Olympic Games. Our weightlifters got a chance to get involved in the fight for rating points and did not miss it. Keep it up!



Photo of the week

The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House team won the *Progress of the Year* nomination at the *Health 2023* Republican Spartakiad among media workers

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

On June 23rd, 1888, the Lille choir of workers performed the international proletarian anthem *The Internationale* (music by Pierre De Geyter to the words of Eugene Pottier) for the first time. The hymn has spread widely and has been translated into many languages. In 1910, *The Internationale* was adopted as the anthem of the international socialist movement at the International Socialist Congress held in Copenhagen.

June 23rd is Olympic Day Run. It is celebrated annually in different countries on different days to commemorate the anniversary of the establishment of the International Olympic Committee (June 23rd, 1894, Paris) in memory of the revival of the Olympic movement in its modern form. On this day in 1894, the International Athletic Congress approved the proposal of the French public figure and sports enthusiast Baron Pierre de Coubertin to revive the tradition of ancient Greek Olympiads.



On June 23rd, 1944, the Bagration large-scale strategic offensive operation of the Soviet troops began during the



Great Patriotic War. It became one of the largest military operations in the history of mankind and a triumph of Soviet military art. During the Operation Bagration Belarus, part of the Baltic states and the eastern regions of Poland were liberated from the German invaders.

On June 24th, 1812, the army of the French emperor Napoleon I invaded Russia without declaring war — the Patriotic War of 1812 began. During the Battle of Smolensk, Napoleon's plan to defeat the main forces of the Russian troops was thwarted. As a result of the Battle of Borodino, the Russian army retreated, but retained its combat capability. In the Battle of the Berezina, most of Napoleon's army was destroyed and soon expelled from Russia.



On June 24th, 1945, Moscow hosted the Victory Parade — a historic parade of Soviet troops on Red Square in honour of the victory of the USSR over Nazi Germany in the Great Patriotic War. Marshal of the Soviet Union Konstantin Rokossovsky commanded the parade, Marshal of the Soviet Union Georgy Zhukov received the parade. In total, about 35,000 people took part in the solemn procession.



June 25th is Youth and Students Day in the Republic of Belarus. In the country, youth policy has long become one of the priority areas in the activities of the state. Belarus has created all the conditions for everyone to fully realise themselves in life.



On June 25th, 1888, Minsk was visited by their Imperial Highnesses Sovereign Grand Duke Vladimir Alexandrovich and Empress Grand Duchess Maria Pavlovna. In the presence of members of the imperial family, the laying of the building of the City Theatre (the modern theatre named after Yanka Kupala) was carried out.



June 25th is Day of Friendship and Unity of the Slavs. The holiday was created so that the Slavs of the whole world, and this is more than 300 million people, remember their historical roots, strive to preserve their culture and centuries-old connection with each other. The Slavs are the largest linguistic and cultural community of the peoples of the world. They make up the bulk of the population of Russia,



Belarus, Ukraine, Poland, the Czech Republic, Croatia, Slovakia, Bulgaria, Serbia and Montenegro, and live in many countries of the world.

On June 26th, 1954, the world's first nuclear power plant with a graphite-uranium reactor AM-1 (Atom Mirny) with a capacity of 5 megawatts was launched in Obninsk. It was built under the guidance of the outstanding Soviet physicist and scientist Igor Kurchatov. Soon Obninsk turned into the world's first modern science city. Models of other, more powerful power plants were worked out here.



On June 26th, 2003, the Minsk City Executive Committee decided to create the Trostenets Memorial Complex in Minsk in pursuance of a government decree. During World War II, the Trostenets extermination camp, established in the autumn of 1941 southeast of Minsk, became the largest in Belarus and in the territory of the Soviet Union that was occupied by the Germans. In terms of the number of victims of fascism, Trostenets became the fourth after Auschwitz, Majdanek and Treblinka.

