



**6th International Forum of Ethnocultural Traditions successfully held in Polesie**



**Belarus has never had its own mines, but there are thousands of goldsmiths**



INTERNATIONAL

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Writer, local historian and playwright — Mikhail Karpechenko — has released several books on the history and literature of his native land to mark the event

## The treasure of spirituality

The tradition of paying homage to the native word on the first Sunday of September dates back more than a quarter of a century: the first Belarusian Written Language Day was held in Polotsk in 1994. Later, such historically significant cultural centres of the country as Turov, Novogrudok, Nesvizh, Zaslavl, Mstislavl, Mir and many others were the centres of the celebration. It is an honourable and pleasant obligation to host Belarusian Written Language Day. On the eve of the event, cities undergo significant changes and get a new modern look in memory of the grand event. This year, it's been the turn of the city of 'white nights' — Belynichi in the Mogilev Region — to feel the holiday spirit. → **5**



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As is traditional, the Head of State spends September 1st in one of the country's educational institutions. This year, the distinguished guest was welcomed by Baranovich State Vocational and Technical College of Service Industry. Here, specialists who (it's no exaggeration to say) we are in need of, are trained. Among them are tailors, seamstresses, hairdressers, salespeople, supervisors, cashiers and fashion designers. Their job, as Aleksandr Lukashenko said, brings people comfort, beauty and joy. "I take pride in you, young people, who are down-to-earth and choose a profession that is necessary for society," he stated.

By Yevgeny Kononovich  
Polina Konoga

### Time to get started

September 1st is a solemn day but it's impossible to avoid serious topics even in such a festive atmosphere. The summer was too hot — in every sense. However, it came to an end and Aleksandr Lukashenko addressed the young people, teachers and their parents, saying, "It is time to channel our energies in a creative direction. For us, September 1st is traditionally the start of a new working year not only for educational institutions. We often choose this date to plan and launch new projects and programmes in a variety of areas. It is time for everyone to get down to work... Every teacher will be protected by the state. It has always been like that. We also expect teachers to play a bigger role in solving strategic tasks. We will have to pay close attention to the nurturing role of education in the near future. It is a lesson we've definitely learned today."

In the President's opinion, it's most important to emphasise the legal awareness of young people. They must know the laws. Secondly, they should be taught how to analyse, see through populist slogans, collect facts, compare and draw appropriate conclusions. Thirdly, our children should grow up as true patriots of our country.

### No rush to criticise

Answering a question from journalists about the sanctions imposed on Belarus by the Baltic States, Aleksandr Lukashenko said that our country will re-

spond with economic solutions, "We are not going to fight for access over there. We will simply try to resolve the problem with economic leverage."

The President added, "They say it may be more expensive for Belarus [to reroute Belarusian cargoes from Baltic ports to Russia]. Certainly, we will lose a bit of profit. But we can strike a deal with the Russians on tariffs and they will still reap a benefit due to the sheer volume of our cargoes."

At the same time, the Head of State noted that more 'mature' countries understand that they should not seek quarrels with Belarus because it could close its borders near Brest and Grodno and then German freight will not be able to go to China so easily. This is why the weaker Baltic States were ordered to make a stand against Belarus. "They were told to attack, so they've started yapping from under the fence. That's in my opinion of the situation," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The President advised the politicians in Lithuania, Latvia and Estonia to be more careful in relations with Belarus because their own nations may see this attitude to their neighbouring country in a different light.

Moreover, our Baltic neighbours have enough problems of their own, including in Lithuania which is one of the most active critics of our country. "Let them [Lithuanian politicians] explain to their people how they have reformed the country in such a way that it now has less than half the population that was there in Soviet times. They should be more careful

# To be true patriots



than to criticise Lukashenko and Belarus, because they may find they are stabbing themselves in the back," Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed.

### Interconfessional world

Recently, many have been discussing the refusal for Metropolitan of Minsk and Mogilev Archbishop, Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz, to enter Belarus. Taking into consideration the fact that none of the departments commented on the situation, the reporters asked the President to share the details. He said that, at present, all those entering and leaving the country are closely monitored. It appears that the Head of the Catholic church left for Warsaw for consultations and, having received instructions, was returning to Belarus but got onto the list of banned persons, which is common for Belarus and Russia. The issue is being carefully studied but there is a possibility that Tadeusz Kondrusiewicz has more than single citizenship (apart from Belarusian).

The President commented, "We are looking into the matter. We want to study the issue. If everything is following to the

law, we will act accordingly. It does not matter whether he is the main Catholic, Orthodox, or Muslim. He has to live by the law. If you mix church and politics and call for believers, Catholics, who are wonderful people, to follow your opinion, there is double responsibility for that," said Aleksandr Lukashenko.

He also shared his position on different faiths, "We have not closed Roman Catholic churches, even if they were engaged in anti-Lukashenko, anti-state propaganda. On the contrary, we are trying to support and protect them... The Roman Catholic churches have always had their doors open in the country and will always do so, because prayer, believers, and their path to the church is sacred. I have always said that every Belarusian should have their own road to the church, and we keep it sacred. We will never allow any attack of the state on the Catholic or Orthodox churches, Muslims, or Jews. Inter-denominational peace, inter-ethnic peace is our pride. We have always been proud of it."

### Thank you for peace!

When driving away from the College, the President no-

ticed the people gathered and asked to stop the car. They welcomed him very warmly — expressing support and thanking him for peace.

"Why were you chosen for 5 years? I want 10 or 15!" a woman proclaimed.

"Let me serve at least 5 years!" Aleksandr Lukashenko joked.

When talking to those present, the President said that we should strive to live better, but we should also appreciate that there is no uncontrolled crime in the country — as some states experience. "Nobody will give us more than what we earn. If we start stabbing each other in the backs, do you know what will happen as a result? It will be at least a civil war. However, don't worry, it won't happen," he said.

The Head of State also thanked the older generation and urged them to communicate more with youth who, according to him, don't know what difficulties the state had to face when it was formed. "Without you, without experienced people, the country wouldn't exist. You are supporting this country. There is peace today thanks to you," Aleksandr Lukashenko stated.

## The President's personnel decisions



Valery Vakulchik



Ivan Tertel



Anatoly Sivak



Vladimir Kukharev

Former KGB Chairman, Valery Vakulchik, has been appointed the new Secretary of State of the Security Council. Instead of him, the State Security Committee is now headed by Ivan Tertel, who since June 2020 led the State Control Committee. Vasily Gerasimov, who held the post of First Deputy Chairman of the State Control Committee, was appointed Acting Chairman of the department.

When Valery Vakulchik was appointed to a new position, the President characterised him as an executive, decent, very reliable and a loyal person to the state and people.

As for his activities in the new position, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed

that during this perestroika period for the security forces, it is necessary to ensure not only continuity, but also the collective work of the special services.

As far as new leaders of the KGB and KGK are concerned, they will have to work closely together. The Head of State emphasised, "Especially on the fight against corruption, financial offenses and crimes and embezzlement, because the budget, state property and property in general are in the field of vision of the State Control Committee. These problems are not far from the State Security Committee. There must be a very good coupling here for the work to be more efficient."

Last week, the President reviewed personnel issues, with the Head of State appointing a new Secretary of State of the Security Council and replacing the leadership in the State Security Committee (KGB) and State Control Committee (KGK), as well as the Deputy PM and Mayor of Minsk.

Anatoly Sivak, who headed the Minsk City Executive Committee, was appointed as Deputy Prime Minister. The now former Deputy Prime Minister Vladimir Kukharev will henceforth lead the Minsk City Executive Committee.

Aleksandr Lukashenko also agreed on the appointment of new heads of local executive bodies in several districts of the Gomel Region. Addressing the managers, the Head of State said that he did not consider the situation in the country problematic or complicated, noting that the situation in Belarus was largely influenced by external interference in the country's internal affairs and the management of protest actions from abroad, "This comes from Poland, the Czech Republic, Lithu-

ania and Ukraine, which worries us the most. You have heard the statement of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of Russia Lavrov, who openly (he is generally a very restrained person in this respect, cautious) stated what was happening on the border. We react to any negative gestures towards Belarus. The most important thing for us is to prevent any kind of fire from starting in Minsk, because it always happens in this way: it starts from the capital and spreads to the whole country."

The President also appointed Vyacheslav Rossolai as Deputy Chairman of the State Military-Industrial Committee.

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# We are brothers. We can't be put against each other

By Polina Konoga

## Time to draw conclusions

On the way to his office, President Lukashenko spoke about his small homeland and drew the guest's attention to the paintings featuring his school and the house where he grew up, as well as the famous Trofimova Krinita where he once swam along with Vladimir Putin and Dmitry Medvedev. At the very beginning of the conversation in his office, the Head of State said that he was very pleased to meet Mikhail Mishustin in Belarus.

"I am deeply grateful to you for the last few weeks or even month and a half, during which our governments have been in intensive negotiations. We reached the relevant agreement with the President of Russia, Vladimir Putin, even before the Presidential elections. As the Prime Minister of Belarus, Roman Golovchenko, reported, you've secured considerable progress in resolving painful issues," he told the Russian Prime Minister.

Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that, due to attacks by the so-called opposition, all these are now visible and tangible for us. It's a lesson for both countries to draw appropriate conclusions. The Head of State noted that the prime ministers of Belarus and Russia have done a great job in bringing our positions closer to each other. In addition, a meeting between Aleksandr Lukashenko and Vladimir Putin will be held in the near future — to finally set the record straight regarding sensitive and painful issues for the two states.

## New tricks by the West

The Head of State spoke in detail about the situation that is now unfolding around our country, "You can see what is going on near us. We see what is going on around Russia. We were forced to respond to NATO's unfriendly steps near our borders. All the evidence is available despite their excuses — the redeployment of American army units, other units from the depths of NATO territory towards the Belarusian border, particularly F-16 aircraft. I think they redeployed 16 or 18 aircraft."

Belarus had to react to what is happening. "We deployed virtually half of

**A Russian governmental delegation led by Prime Minister Mikhail Mishustin has visited Minsk, becoming the first visit of Russian guests in such an expanded format to Belarus since the recent Presidential elections. Aleksandr Lukashenko met with the distinguished guest at the Palace of Independence, to discuss the most pressing issues — including the development of the Union State, independence and the influence of external forces.**



the Belarusian army. We've actually taken control of the western borders with Lithuania and Poland. And as I often say, we've virtually surrounded Grodno in order to stand up against these threats. Maybe this demonstration has produced results," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

He also shared the information — which had been detected by the intelligence services a while ago — in detail, saying, "I have been following the developments in Russia and I have noticed that they in the West have come up with a new gimmick. It is once again 'Novichok' [chemical nerve agent], poisoning. I should tell you that, before Ms. Merkel made a statement saying that it was an attempt to silence Mr. Navalny, we had intercepted a conversation. As far as we understood, it was Warsaw talking to Berlin. Two people were speaking. The conversation was intercepted by our electronic warfare specialists from our military intelligence. Taking into con-

Rapprochement of positions within the Union State, attempts by external forces to destabilise the situation, the falsification of Mr. Navalny's poisoning were among the issues discussed by the President and Russian Prime Minister

so that they will find out who is behind it. There was another quote: 'After all, they are having elections soon, election day in the Russian regions'. In other words, they know that Russia is having elections and they wanted to play a nasty trick in the run-up to it. We believe they will come up with something else. This is their style. This is their way of working," Aleksandr Lukashenko said.

The wiretapped talk also touched on Belarus and the President drew the conclusion that 'they will make our life tough'. "I have no doubt about it. However, you should know that we are fully determined to defend our sovereignty and independence and we will not let anyone coerce us. We are aware of who is pulling the strings. We see that they are already up to their neck in these lies and deception. However, truth has always prevailed. I believe that God is on our side," he added.

## True support

In turn, Mikhail Mishustin thanked the President for the meeting and conveyed best wishes from Vladimir Putin. The Russian Prime Minister stressed, "Russia fully supports the sovereignty, independence and territorial integrity of Belarus. Belarus is our native country. This is not only about historical, linguistic and spiritual ties, but also about our millions of citizens who are actually one nation, and you have said this more than once."

Mikhail Mishustin assured Aleksandr Lukashenko that he is in constant contact with his Belarusian counterpart, Roman Golovchenko, and active work is underway on the entire agenda of the Union State, the EAEU, as well as on emerging issues. "I want to say that we have made progress on many topics — including the issue of the Union State's future which will be based on the independent position of our states, but with the corresponding economic measures that we've agreed on, in particular, the removal of various barriers to trade," he said.

Aleksandr Lukashenko asked about co-operation in the field of coronavirus control and also reminded the visitors that Belarus will be the first country where Russia will deliver its COVID-19 vaccine.

# Economy must produce results

**The President discussed issues of sustainable operation of the national economy last Saturday, at a meeting with members of the Security Council. It was noted that, during this difficult period, it is vital to maintain economic stability in the country and to ensure the smooth operation of enterprises. Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed the special importance of the topic under discussion.**

"I have always said and would like to remind you once again that our main task, issue and concern is the economy. If there is a strong economy, then everything else will be present. If there is a weak economy, then there is no point relying on ideology, security or peace in the country," the Head of State said.

According to him, a lot has been done recently to ensure that the economy functions normally, "We must admit that the agreements with Russian and intergovernmental consultations are producing a positive result."

Aleksandr Lukashenko also noted that the situation in Belarus against the

background of the pandemic is much better than elsewhere. Therefore, it is necessary to prevent its deterioration and take advantage of the existing opportunities in terms of export of goods. "The key is what I have always been saying: the pandemic is one aspect: it will eventually end completely resolve. We still have nothing to complain against God for, he has pitied us. Although you can see that the second wave is rolling across Europe, while we are situated in the centre of Europe. We wander the streets close to each other. What can be said about social distancing, and so on? We are doing everything we can to say

goodbye to this disease and so far, we are coping," he stressed.

In this regard, the President noted that the situation in Belarus is much better than in other countries, "I looked at the last day's figures to see that we have very good negative dynamics for pneumonia: more people are checking out of hospitals than are checking in."

Speaking about the economy, the Head of State stated that countries cannot open because of the pandemic, production is not promoted. "We did not stop, we continue manufacturing and we have a chance, which we are using today, to sell our products — with good

added value and good profit," he added.

Aleksandr Lukashenko referred to the latest UN data showing that the world is experiencing an intensive growth in demand for food, "Obviously, the demand for other products is also growing. That is why it is very important for our enterprises to function in order for the economy to work. The main issue that we must discuss now is not only the security and stability of our state, but also how we, people in uniform, should ensure the normal functioning of enterprises so that the economy gives us results."

Based on materials of belta.by



# Many years of partnership

## Gomselmash launches supplies of GS12A1 grain harvesters to Armenia

By Irina Sergeeva

The GS12A1 grain harvester is a modification of the GS12 harvester. High productivity is secured by a 330hp engine. Two such harvesters are already successfully working in Armenia. According to the company, harvesters were made taking into account the wishes of Armenian agrarians.

Armenia's Deputy Minister of Agriculture, Vilen Avetisyan, and the Chief of the State Agricultural Equipment In-

stitution of the Ministry of Agriculture, Anania Soghomonyan, visited grain fields in the Martakert District where Gomselmash combine harvesters are in action. "Anania Soghomonyan said that the combine harvester meets the best analogues of world producers in its class. In Armenia, many agrarians consider it more appropriate to use Belarusian agricultural equipment. They have long worked with it," the company said.

Gomselmash has been actively supporting and developing its export-oriented



policy. Another batch of machine parts for the GS12A1 grain harvester was recently sent to the assembly plant in Kazakhstan.

According to the company, today, more than 30 percent of grain harvesters in Kazakhstan are of Kazakhstan-Belarus production and, this year, supplies are more active: in H1 2020 alone, more than 300 vehicles were shipped.

Gomselmash and AgromashHolding KZ have assembled ESSIL grain

harvesters in Kazakhstan since 2007. AgromashHolding KZ produces a range of such harvesters and offers maintenance services across the country.

Gomselmash harvesters are used in the fields of Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan, the Czech Republic, Slovakia, Romania, Bulgaria, Argentina, Brazil, China, South Korea and the Baltic States. The company operates an extensive distribution chain, joint ventures, and assembly enterprises.

# Protection above all



A production shop at Mogotex

The protective suit is made of 'PROTO 65' membrane fabric developed by Mogotex specialists in strict compliance with the sanitary and hygienic requirements defined by the Healthcare Ministry.

This spring, the company has already supplied 50,000 metres of such fabric to its Russian partners for the production of protective clothing in the Russian Federation. In the future, shipments are planned to both Russia and Ukraine.

In parallel, work was carried out on testing 'PROTO 65' and preparing the necessary documents to establish the production of protective suits at Mogotex JSC.

"The suit consists of a jumpsuit and full shoe covers. The jumpsuit has a hood, a zipper with a protective flap with touch and close fasteners. The safety valve creates a stiffening rib that does not allow the zipper to

break; this significantly increases the reliability of the jumpsuit. The joints of the suit parts are sealed with a special tape," the company has announced.

The material — a non-porous (hydrophilic) membrane — combines full water resistance and moisture removal, and increased protection against the penetration of microorganisms in case they get onto the protective clothing.

The breathable properties of the membrane are enhanced when the human body temperature increases.

The suit is reusable and can be used in medical and veterinary institutions, utilities, municipal services and other organisations when there is a threat of spreading infections transmitted by contact and airborne droplets.



## Mogotex has developed a reusable protective suit for working in conditions of dangerous infections

At the moment, the company is preparing a package of documents for state registration of non-sterile protective clothing as a medical device.

Mogotex JSC is the largest manufacturer of textile products in Belarus, a recognised leader in the Russian market, as well as in countries both near and far. The company processes such raw materials as polyester yarns, viscose yarns, cotton yarns, polyester-cotton yarns and polyester-viscose yarns. The company produces a wide range of raincoat fabrics, for special and uniform clothing, for the specialist equipment and leather goods industry, lining, decorative textiles, furniture, curtains, knitted items, technical fabrics and home textiles.



## Innovative alliance

### China-Belarus Great Stone Industrial Park joins free trade and innovation alliance

"China's domestic free trade zones and some key foreign special economic areas have initiated the establishment of a free trade and innovation alliance in Shenzhen. The alliance pledged to build a community of common responsibilities in response to the global and regional campaigns and initiatives such as the Belt and Road Initiative, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 — The Africa We Want," the Park staff have announced.

The alliance includes 47 of China's domestic free trade zones. The Great Stone has joined the alliance as a foreign special economic area. Other alliance members include Nigeria's Lekki Free Trade Zone, the Cambodian Sihanoukville Special Economic Zone, the Djibouti International Free Trade Zone in East Africa, the Sri Lankan Hambantota Port Industrial Park, the Ethiopian Eastern Industry Zone, the Thai-Chinese Rayong Industrial Zone, Egypt's Suez Economic and Trade Co-operation Zone and others.

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## NEWS IN BRIEF

### A residential complex constructed by Belarusian builders opens in Russian Obninsk

Prosto Kosmos new residential complex in the Zaovrazhie district was built using the most modern technologies and materials. It includes two houses with 473 apartments in 24 layouts. There are recreation areas, playgrounds and sports grounds, as well as parking spaces and an arboretum. The complex provides a barrier-free environment for people with disabilities and the concept of 'smart home' has been implemented, with access control to the site, a modern lighting system, fast free Wi-Fi, and a mobile application.

The Belarusian builders are planning to construct the second phase of the project on the neighbouring site, which will include 10 houses.



### New Embraer-175 to be added to Belavia's fleet

"Now the acceptance of the aircraft is being carried out in Brazil; in other words, the verification of compliance with regulatory requirements," noted the Ministry of Transport and Communications.

The aircraft will be delivered under a lease agreement signed by Belavia and Nordic Aviation Capital in April 2018. In line with the document, the aircraft fleet has already been replenished with one Embraer-175 and three Embraer-195.

Moreover, in February 2020, a lease agreement was signed for the supply of three new generation Embraer E195-E2 aircraft. The arrival of the first of three completely new aircraft from the manufacturing plant is expected this December, and the next two — in early 2021.



### Belarusian schoolchildren become prize winners of the European Geography Olympiad

The gold medal was won by Denis Rabchuk, a tenth grader from Brest gymnasium No. 1 and he also became the overall winner of the additional cartographic competition *HERE GEO Challenge*. The eleventh grader of gymnasium No. 33 in Minsk, Dmitry Shpartov, was awarded a bronze medal. The certificate for the participant was presented to the tenth grader of gymnasium No. 2 of Vitebsk, Dmitry Mikhasko.

The leaders of the national team were teachers at the Belarusian State University: Lyudmila Fokeeva and Dmitry Kurlovich.

The Olympiad included three rounds: theoretical, practical and multimedia.



Belynychy, in the Mogilev Region, has become the capital of the 27th Belarusian Written Language Day — gathering thousands of guests and participants for a vibrant national holiday. The festival was traditionally held on the first weekend of September and offered many interesting events.



Belynychy has been noticeably beautified by the holiday — welcoming its guests with reconstructed buildings and gaily decorated streets. The city centre was transformed into a large pedestrian square.

Among the important events was the festival of books and printed media where all those attending could not only get to know Belarus' new books but also buy them. A printing 'factory' was a real centre of attraction for both children and adults since everyone could try themselves out as a book printer from the past. According to a local resident, Svetlana, many new things were available. "For children, this is a real adventure, while adults can learn how our ancestors printed the first books. I've tried and can now assert that it's a hard job to print even a single page," smiled the lady.

A new sculptural composition by sculptor Aleksandr Minkov — 'The Appearance of the Icon' — was presented to the city on the occasion of Belarusian Written Language Day. It will be kept at the church in honour of the icon of the Mother of God of Belynychy. Mr. Minkov admits that this new work has a personal story for him, "I was baptised in this church many years ago."

The sculptor started working at the beginning of the summer. The granite slab weighing almost 4 tonnes came to Belarus from Ukraine. Mr. Minkov finished his work on the angel embracing the Belynychy icon of the Mother of God shortly before the festival. "Technically, the most difficult part of the production was to make a neat pattern similar to vytynanka [paper cutting] that frames the angel's wings. Thankfully, everything was a success and I'm very happy that part of my soul and my creativity will remain in Belynychy from now on," said the sculptor.

Opening of the restored and beautified Belynychy District Art Museum named after V. Byalynitsky-Birulya was a significant event. The Deputy Prime Minister, Igor Petrishenko, commented, "We've opened an important cultural object: the Byalynitsky-Birulya Museum. It will be not just for residents of the district, but for the whole of our country. Children from all around Belarus will be able to visit it on excursions, and a variety of thematic lessons and classes will be held here. We must all know the history of our country. We must honour and not forget it."

The renovated museum has four halls. One of them is dedicated to the Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya, while another hall will tell its guests about the history of local places: part of the exhibits were provided by the Mogilev Regional Museum of Local Lore. The third hall is devoted to the spiritual heritage of the area and this is the main novelty of the museum. The 'Ascent to Golgotha' fresco is the pride of the collection; in the 1970s, it was saved by restorers from the destroyed Carmelite Monastery in Belynychy. The fourth hall is planned to host changing exhibition projects.

After the opening ceremony, participants and guests went to the main stage of the festival where Aleksandr Lukashenko's greeting was read out: 'I sincerely welcome the participants and guests of Belarusian Written Language Day! This celebration is a special event in the cultural life of Belarus and its venues feature a multi-voiced dialogue of 'pen' masters — writers and poets — about the fate of words and culture,

# With love of the native language



Andriy Sazonov

the present and future of our people. Here you can find the literature, music, painting and other arts that enrich our creative lives.

This year, one of the most famous holidays of independent Belarus is welcomed by ancient Belynychy — a well-known centre of spirituality in Belarus, an original corner of the Mogilev Region with a rich history and extremely beautiful nature, known for its talented painters, including artist Vitold Byalynitsky-Birulya. I believe these September meetings are a good occasion for each participant and guest of Belarusian Written Language Day to understand once again that Belarusians,

whatever their views, are always united by their native language, common destiny and Motherland. We must preserve this precious legacy for our heirs. I sincerely wish everyone good health, well-being, and new achievements in life and work'.

No less important was the laying of the Alley of Cities-Capitals of Belarusian Written Language Day. More than 20 maples



were planted in the city park by the festival's honorary guests and each tree has a sign indicating the name of the city and the year when it hosted Belarusian Written Language Day. The city of Kopyl, in the Minsk Region, took over the baton for the next festival.

Of course, the best editions of art and educational books, publications for children and youth, encyclopaedic literature, albums and periodicals were presented at the festival's exhibitions. Each district of the Mogilev Region took part in the thematic section — *The Fate of My Land Through the Word* — presenting the development of the Mogilev Region since the times of Spiridon Sobol to modern printed publications.

Craftsmen from all over the area and other regions gathered in Belynychy for the holiday, bringing their handmade clothing and jewellery, household items and various themed souvenirs. The leading enterprises of the food industry of the region presented their produce: dairy, meat and bakery,

sweets and more. Industrial enterprises of the region also came to Belynychy — presenting their products and the history of their development.

The event was very lively and interesting, finishing with a big festive concert — featuring pop stars and honoured groups of Belarus: Anatoly Yarmolenko, Alena Lanskaya, Olga Plotnikova, Aleksandr Solodukha, Aleksei Khlestov, Ruslan Alekhno, *Pesnyary* and others.

Based on materials of belta.by



Aleksey Stolyarov



# Where the bird of happiness flies

How people with belief in the warbler gave new life to a large area

**Two districts of the Brest Region — Bereza and Drogichin — have chosen the swamp-loving aquatic warbler as their symbol. The bird has been preserved primarily owing to the establishment of the Republican Sporovsky Biological Reserve: it was the first in Belarus to receive the international status of a Ramsar protected site. Since the creation of the reserve in 2006, it has been managed by Vadim Protasevich. Vadim was born in the swamp area and has devoted all his life to this land.**



Vadim Protasevich

By Valentina Kozlovich

## Protas' descendant

Vadim Protasevich was born in the village of Kokoritsa, in the Drogichin District. It's known as a Belarusian Venice, or Cuba Island. After reclamation, Kokoritsa became closer to the land but was previously on a true island. Locals say that, in ancient times, two men were exiled to the edge of the Sporovsky swamp for a crime they'd committed: Zinovy and Protas. They inhabited the swamp and became forefathers of the Zinovich and Protasevich families who are still prominent in Kokoritsa.

Vadim Protasevich, a descendant of Protas, lives in Bereza now. After graduating from the Grodno Agricultural Institute, he worked in a district inspectorate of natural resources and environmental protection and, in 2003, headed the management of the Sporovsky Reserve. Three years later, he was appointed Head of the reserve.

"Many of our tourists want to visit Kokoritsa and we develop a route for everyone. Apart from watching birds, many are interested in local life. Just imagine: some guests have not even seen how a cow is milked," Mr. Protasevich says.

In addition, swamp 'buggies' are being made. Vadim's brother Nikolai still lives in Kokoritsa and is among the few who are expert at a craft which was once common for all local villagers.

## Life on the wing

In Bereza, on the bank of the Krechet River, a sign for the warbler has been unveiled and, at the district centre of crafts, a bird has been cut from a tree — as a souvenir.

"In the 20th century, the aquatic warbler was a bird 'sex symbol', as it had a very stormy 'private life', inhabiting 20 countries in Europe. However, in the early 21st century, the total population decreased by 95 percent and Belarusian swamps remained some of the few places where it settled. Something had to be done, as the Sporovsky swamp was overgrown, and the warbler doesn't nest in such terrain. We



Republican Sporovsky Biological Reserve

have been successfully working on this problem for the past decade. As part of international technical assistance projects, equipment capable of working in the swamp has been purchased. Small shrubs can be mown using rotary mowers: part is taken for processing, while the rest is simply mulched and left in the swamp," he explains.

Birds are the main attraction of the reserve and bird watching is its major tourist draw. Ornithologists from all over the world come to observe birds every year and, apart from the aquatic warbler, they can enjoy such rare species as the great eagle, meadow pipit, corncrake, swamp owl, woodpecker and black-tailed godwit. So, it's not easy to find Vadim Protasevich in his office as he is constantly conducting excursions.

## Scything with pleasure

The *Sporovskiyе Senokosy* (Sporovsky Haymaking) eco-festival was initiated a decade and a half ago as a local event but, over the course of time, it's been supplemented with a new colour — becoming international and branded. Mr. Protasevich believes it's now a family event.

As one of the main organisers of the festival, Vadim comments, "What people used to do in rural areas every summer is becoming a new sport. Whole families take part: young and old move

shoulder to shoulder. We allocate plots of 100 metres in length on the reserve's swamps especially for the competitions. Pairs participate in the team championship. Judges strictly observe each one, and each mane left behind (as the remains of the grass are called) adds a penalty time. Both men and women show a high class of skill."

Cutting down the shrubs and mowing the grass on the territory of the reserve has also had a positive impact not only on the population of the reed warbler, whose density increased 1.5 times in some areas, but also on 11 species of nesting birds and 31 species of protected invertebrates.



village councils of the Bereza District and their specialists will help those who want to develop and implement business initiatives in handicrafts, retail trade, organic farming, tourist services and so on.

## Useful in the land of their birth

Would there be such projects, competitions and festivals, if someone else were in place at the head of the reserve, and not Vadim Protasevich? If it wasn't for his desire to help his homeland, not to let the Sporovsky swamp and the aquatic warbler disappear.

He laughs on hearing this question, saying that not everyone would agree to such a position. "Everyone who works here needs to love the swamp. Otherwise, nothing will work," Vadim says.

He tells us the names of people without whose help he would not have done anything. After thinking for a while, he recalls that, this spring, the swamp was on fire. A large area was damaged but when he saw the moccasin flower on the site, tears came to his eyes: life was going on.

"This year has been generally difficult with the fire, coronavirus. We need to live it through and believe in the best," he says.

A short detail that must be added: Vadim Protasevich was the winner of the 2009 *Person of the Year* contest in the Brest Region. He was recognised for achievements in the field of environmental protection. Titles of this kind are not distributed easily.

**The Sporovsky Biological Reserve is located on the territory of the Bereza, Drogichin, Ivanovo and Ivatsevichi districts in the Brest Region, occupying 19,384 hectares. It's the largest area of lowland swamps of Polesie in the floodplain of the Yaselda River, unique in area and natural conservation for the central part of Europe. There is a lake of the same name in the reserve. Sporovsky's flora is very diverse: over 600 species of vascular plants account for 35 percent of all those growing in our country. 20 species are listed in the Red Book of Belarus. Sporovsky is an important territory for birds, being home to 123 species of nesting birds (32 on the Red Book list).**

**25 species of mammals (without small rodents and bats), 6 species of reptiles, 8 amphibians, 34 fish and more than 245 species of insects live in the reserve.**

# Polesie colour

6th International Forum of Ethnocultural Traditions successfully held in Polesie

In the Petrikov District, among the endless tributaries of the blue Pripyat, the Polesie residents gathered their friends for the *Call of Polesie* ethnocultural festival. Thousands of guests came from 10 countries — to be welcomed by 11 districts of the Belarusian Polesie region (eight from Gomel and three from Brest regions). The latter presented the achievements and colour of their small homeland on stylised farmsteads. Artistes from Belarus, Russia and Ukraine sang and danced on a large common stage. The holiday spirit was in the air.

By Stanislav Galkovsky

This year, Lyaskovich prepared for the forum in a special way, involving a large-scale reconstruction of the festival site. Several sites of the Open-Air Museum historical and ethnographic complex were built — enabling participants and guests of the forum to visit a mill, a weaving house, fisherman's and hunter's houses, a potter's workshop and a cafe styled in the folk tradition.

Lyaskovich has changed, as regular participant — Aleksandr Klachko, a beekeeper from the Lelchitsy District — admitted. He has participated in all the *Call of Polesie* events and explained, "I offer everyone our Polesie honey; it's been collected from meadows and forests. This year, the site for the holiday is special, with a European chic. However, it all started simply in the natural clearing, now major festivals and large-scale concerts can be organised here."

This time, there have been many events marked as 'for the first time'. Among them were exhibitions of artisans and masters of Polesie, and master classes. *The Bread of My Polesie* interactive show was also amazing.

A graphic designer from the Khoyniki House of Culture, Tatiana Sakhankova, has come for the first time. "I've heard a lot about the festival, but I was only accepted here this year as a participant. We are attracting all guests to our stand — to be treated to Khoyniki delicacies, charmed with local food and invited to visit," she explained.

Hospitable Polesie residents from the Petrikov District were also in attendance. Olga Silivonets, a production designer of the People's Theatre at Kopatkevichi, said, "I'm here for the second time and the *Call of Polesie* is ever changing. This time, the venue is simply amazing! Importantly, we all get to know each other, making new friends. This is not a mere festival of Polesie culture, but also of friendship!"

Vasily Kazachok, a well-known potter from the village of Gorodnaya in the Stolin District, demonstrated his art at the festival — making pots of all shapes and sizes, with colourful local names: 'glechik' or 'krinka'. The master craftsman admitted that it's not only the

pots that matter. "The most important thing is the Polesie identity. If we fail to preserve our roots, crafts, songs, rituals, costumes and language, who will we be: Belarusians, Polesie residents? In this regard, Polesie is woven from such colourful cultural threads that it is unacceptable for Belarus and the whole of Europe to lose this unique heritage. Therefore, such festivals are vital."

Next to the clay pieces, there were the carved sculptures by woodcarver Aleksei Batan from Petrikov. His works of art decorated the venue. He explained how he was guided by his inspiration. "Both the spoon and the statue must have a soul. If you do not put it in, a piece does not come to life and the wood does not give off heat. We have the best places for inspiration here, see how the eyes of all the participants are



Ivan Yarivanovich



Songs were everywhere — to any taste and in any language, and the Ukrainians became the highlight of the concert. Among them was a winner of the *X-Factor* show — the *Lisapetny Batalion* folk band led by Natalia Falion. The woman spoke of Belarus with love, "We were invited to the previous three *Call of Polesie* festivals but our arrival was all time disrupted. Now we are here, singing under the

blue sky of Belarus, and it's great! I really want this holiday to expand its format and not only Ukrainian bands come to perform, but also regions of our country to be presented. I would like Polesie residents from all its corners to meet here."

In the evening, models from two regions competed for the 'Polesie Beauty — 2020' title, offering much enjoyment: beautiful smiles, long legs and bright outfits! The festival ended with an evening show and fireworks but it will remain in the hearts of Polesie people for a long time.



However, we do meet the most unexpected guests here. Among them was a representative of the Embassy of Sudan in Belarus, Ali Hasan, who did not hide his positive impressions, "This is my first time in this area. There is stunning nature, so much greenery and reservoirs! I looked at your traditional crafts, they differ from ours, as the climate and culture differ, but there are also common features, for example, in pottery and fishing. The festival leaves a great impression, good weather and the festival lifts the mood!"

The festival has by now become a traditional event and is extremely popular. The Chairman of the Gomel Regional Executive Committee, Gennady Solovey, commented, "Its success relies on three components: its unique nature, rich historical and cultural heritage and authentic folk rituals and crafts. These are supplemented by the hard-working and hospitable character of the Polesie residents, and their big hearts able to sincerely love and enjoy life."

INSIDE

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# New technologies

There are currently around 130 geothermal power stations operating in Europe, a 5 percent increase compared to 2019. That number could double in the next five to eight years.

The challenge is how to ensure they are safer, more reliable, more cost-efficient — and, crucially, that they are as environmentally friendly as possible. To this end, European scientists have been designing and developing new technologies that are currently being tested in Iceland.

Nesjavellir Geothermal Power Station is the second biggest such facility in Iceland. It produces around 120 megawatts of electrical power.

Drilling operations are ongoing, always looking for new resources of heat deep underground. Temperatures can reach 460°C below the surface and the pressure

levels are extremely high; it's a tough, demanding environment for drilling.

Vilhjalmur Gudmundsson, the Marketing and Sales Director with the company Iceland Drilling, says the process of extracting the energy puts enormous pressure on — and restricts the lifespan of — the equipment and infrastructure used in the process, “The problem in geothermal energy in general is that you are dealing with a lot of heat. And when you need to maintain wells, sometimes you need to cool the wells down. That will eventually destroy the casings, because of the expansion.”

But the fully-automated rig is testing new technology to try to minimise these issues, bring down maintenance costs and increase the efficiency of the drilling operations. The technology was developed by scientists as part of a European research project, co-ordinated from the Isor Iceland GeoSurvey Institute in Reykjavik.

Isor is one of the partners in the European Union's Geowell Project, along with other renowned research institutions including IRIS in Norway, GFZ in Germany, TNO in the Netherlands and BRGM in France.

# Honoured with a statue

**A statue of Diana, Princess of Wales, commissioned by the Duke of Cambridge and the Duke of Sussex, will be installed on what would have been her 60th birthday, Kensington Palace says**

It will be placed in the garden of the London Palace on July 1st, 2021. The statue was commissioned by the princes in 2017 to mark the 20th anniversary of their mother's death and to 'recognise her positive impact'.

The statue has been created by artist Ian Rank-Broadley, whose portrait of the Queen appears on all UK coins. Further details of the design will be announced later, according to Kensington Palace.

When they announced the commission, the princes said they hoped the permanent sculpture would help all those who visited Kensington Palace to 'reflect on her life and her legacy'. “Our mother touched so many lives,” they said.



# A deep dive at the exhibition in Monaco

The Oceanographic Museum of Monaco is offering visitors a chance to go on a virtual deep dive to the bottom of the sea, in its newly unveiled immersive exhibition

The interactive installation is the museum's latest attempt to raise awareness around the need for ocean conservation, so that we don't lose precious marine species as climate change gets worse.

Guests are immersed in a 360 degree underwater exhibition, which projects the Great Barrier Reef onto all four walls in real-time. Described as a 'virtual replica' of the iconic Australian reef, the projection is a rare chance to meet all kinds of species. From fluorescent corals to humpback whales, you're being invited into their very own habitat.

While they cover only 0.2 percent of the world's seafloor, coral reefs are home to 25-30 percent of marine biodiversity. These oases of life, essential to humankind in many ways, face mass extinction as a result of marine pollution and rising sea levels. Not only is plastic pollution a global problem, but with sea levels get-

ting higher and higher, pesticides and nutrients used in agriculture can end up in coastal waters, resulting in oxygen depletion that kills marine plants and shellfish.

Inside the exhibition, rooms come alive in both daylight and night mode.

Immersive exhibitions such as this have the power to offer an enhanced level of interaction with life under the sea. Through a combination of real and computer-generated images, the experience comes to life and is described as 'ultra-realistic'. Much like a diver on their exploration, different species can be seen moving naturally around the room and will communicate according to your behaviour, movements and gestures.

“We wish to offer a selection of the most beautiful diving moments in record time, to move and challenge the audience to consider the future of these ecosystems in danger,” says Eva Muller, the Head of the Exhibition Department.

# Batagay crater: a dip in the past

**A large crater in Siberia is getting bigger due to the way permafrost interacts with the environment**

Known to locals as the 'gateway to the underworld', Batagay is the largest thaw slump on the planet. Once just a gully on a slope logged in the 1960s, the scar has expanded year by year, as the permafrost thaws and meltwater carries off the sediment. Now more than 900 metres wide, it epitomises the vulnerability of permafrost in the Arctic, where temperatures have shot up twice as fast as the global average over the past 30 years.

But it is also a time capsule that is seducing scientists with its snapshots of ancient climates and ecosystems. “It's a mind-blowing place,” says Thomas Opel, a paleoclimatologist at the Alfred Wegener Institute. Dates from ice and soil gathered at Batagay show it holds the oldest exposed permafrost in Eurasia, spanning the past 650,000 years, Mr. Opel and colleagues reported at the European Geosciences Union's online

general assembly. That record could reveal how permafrost and surface vegetation responded to past warm climates. “It gives us a window into times when permafrost was stable, and times when it was eroding,” Mr. Opel says.

Global warming is inflicting wounds across Siberia. Outbursts of pent-up methane gas in thawing permafrost have pocked Russia's desolate Yamal and Gydan peninsulas with holes tens of metres across. Forest fires during the past three summers have torched millions of hectares across Siberia, blanketing the land with dark soot and charcoal that absorb heat and accelerate melting.

An abiding question is how much carbon the thawing soil will release to the atmosphere, and whether the lush growth of Arctic plants in the warming climate will absorb enough carbon to offset the release.



Materials prepared with aid of information agencies



# Goldmine

Belarus has never had its own mines, but there are thousands of goldsmiths

By Maria Kucherova



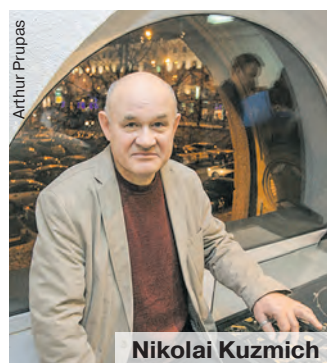
## In search of the lost relic

No one doubts that the Cross of Yevfrosiniya Polotskaya is the pinnacle of jewellery art of the entire Ancient Rus.

“Bogsha is not an accident. His skills did not come out of nowhere, and he probably had students,” says historian Andrei Kishtymov. “This means traditions and school. This art could not disappear without a trace after Bogsha.”

The most famous Polotsk treasure of 1984 was found during the reconstruction of the Lower Castle. These are 6 gold items of 958-alloy: 5 bracelets and a neck chain, weighing 334.36 grams. They date back to the 10th century! This means that even then the goldsmith craft was developing.

“In Polotsk, a remarkable 8 jewellery workshops from the 12th-13th and 17th-18th centuries were excavated,” says archaeologist Sergei Tarasov. “In those days, jewellery craft was almost the main occupation in the principality; not modelling and firing pots, not farming or leather. In the 12th century, there was a huge estate of jewellers in 2,000sq.m. It is by the number of working tools, not to mention the items themselves, that archaeologists record that this is nothing



Nikolai Kuzmich

else but a jewellers’ workshop. It is curious that, unlike the Kiev jewellers, who worked in a narrowly focused manner (or only with glass or bone, or enamel or amber), the Polotsk masters did everything at once.

“Moreover, jewellers were educated people and were literate, with inscriptions and letters being found on dishes, bones and spindles,” notes Sergei Tarasov. “The uniqueness of the Cross of Lazar Bogsha is also in the fact that it is the only signed item with a clear date, the customer and the master-craftsman. I’m sure Bogsha did not sign it arbitrarily. The inscription is also that of the order of Yevfrosiniya. From her life, we can confidently say that nothing was done without her knowledge. All the murals in the Saviour Church and all frescoes were ordered by her. She said what to write, where and how. In my opinion, Lazar Bogsha is for 12th century Polotsk like Faberge for the 19th century. His signature on the product is like a quality mark.”

The fate of one of the main spiritual shrines is sad. Despite the renowned curse that the Cross cannot be taken out of the Polotsk Convent, it passed from hand to hand for centuries, it was hidden, walled up, transported and finally lost during the war in 1941. The search for it is as fruitless as the epic with the Amber Room. When, in the early 1990s, the Brest jeweller and the only Belarusian enamel artist, Nikolai Kuzmich, un-

dertook to recreate the lost shrine, the ancient cloisonné enamel technology had to be understood from scratch, using historical samples that have been preserved in the Armory Chamber, archival photographs and descriptions, with the help of tips from historians and art historians.

“It took more than 5 years to create the image of the Cross. The details were restored from black-and-white photographs while colours and stones were selected from historical records. Still it was far from perfect. After ten years, having gained experience, I completely redid the front part of the Cross,” recalls Nikolai Kuzmich.

The painstaking work can be judged by the fact that the size of the face of the saint in the picture is only a few millimetres! The miniature was created from the thinnest strips of gold, literally 1mm high and 0.04mm thick. They were bent,

laid with tweezers and soldered onto a plate. For each colour point (for example, for the iris of the eye) there was a separate gold cell. There are dozens of such partitions per centimetre.

Then enamel powder of different colours was poured into each cell, and the entire plate was put into the oven. The enamel melted and bonded firmly with the gold. On items of the 11th-13th centuries, neither partitions nor enamel are completely noticeable to the touch — there is only a perfectly smooth surface. Some historians believe that Bogsha was short-sighted, otherwise how could he make such miniatures without microscopes, lenses, glasses?

## ‘Silver items for the Tsar’

After Lazar Bogsha, no other names were recorded on the items. But, according to the historian Anatoly Titov, there are more than one and a half thousand if we count from Lazar to the beginning of the 20th century. This is exactly how many jewellers were included in his book *Goldsmith Craft of Belarus*, information for which he collected for more than 40 years.

Did you know that our master jewellers worked in the Armory Chamber of the Moscow Kremlin? In the Silver and Gold Chambers? In the archives, you can find information about Fiodor Prokofiev: ‘He was taken from Polotsk, he was a Pole, a standard bearer’. Being a silversmith, in 1660-1678, he worked in the Silver Chamber, making a silver washstand decorated with enamel for the Tsar’s children Ioann and Piotr Alekseevich.

“During the Russian-Polish wars of the 17th century, Belarusian jewellers (and craftsmen in general) were a tempting trophy,” Anatoly Titov says. “The archives contain many names of Polotsk, Vitebsk and Shklov jewellers — captured by Moscow horsemen in the 1650s. For example, a whole dynasty of silversmiths Yakovlevs, Ivanovs, Mikulaevs, Polocheninovs.”

Skilled jewellers have always been appreciated. However, their works are often anonymous. How many names of goldsmiths of the past can we remember? Faberge, Cartier, Tiffany, Swarovski... However, Polotsk goldsmith Lazar Bogsha was the first to go down in history, creating in 1161 a reliquary for Yevfrosiniya, in which great Christian relics were kept. In total, the archives store more than 1,500 names of jewellers from Belarus, including many ‘masters of His Royal Grace’.



Sergei Tarasov

“In the 1980s, I worked at the Hermitage,” continues Mr. Titov. “Its Director Boris Piotrovsky showed me in the storerooms the chest of the wife of King Stefan Batory — Anna Jagiellonka — and allowed me to take a picture. I was astonished: a huge chest made of gilded silver sheets — a centimetre thick — inlaid with precious stones. It weighed about 30kg! The Poles gasped when they saw the photo. This is a magnificent cultural monument. Do you know how it got to the Hermitage? From Nesvizh, of course.”

A unique silver goblet is also kept in the Armory Chamber. The evidence that it is connected with Belarus is the engraved signature, from which it follows that this is a gift from the Minsk bourgeoisie for the wedding of King Zygmunt III in 1605.

According to Mr. Titov, nothing is known about the works of the most famous Minsk master of the early 17th century — Matis Balcerowicz — as is usual for the creations of most jewellers. Everything that has



Anatoly Titov

survived in our museums: a candlestick from 1875 by the Minsk jeweller and merchant Borukh Topaz, a silver nameplate from the Chereya Basilian monastery depicting the Annunciation of 1640, a silver monstrance (tabernacle) in Grodno and silver beer goblets decorated with precious stones, golden ducats and silver thalers.

The only more or less preserved source, according to which Anatoly Titov studied the work of jewellers of the past centuries, is seals. As a rule, they were made of silver, were of an impressive size and served for at least a hundred years.

They were also tempting prey. The Minsk St. Peter and Paul Monastery was deprived of its silver seal three times, and each new one had an original image. In addition, the famous Minsk seal of 1591, according to which the city’s coat of arms was reconstructed, was also silver.

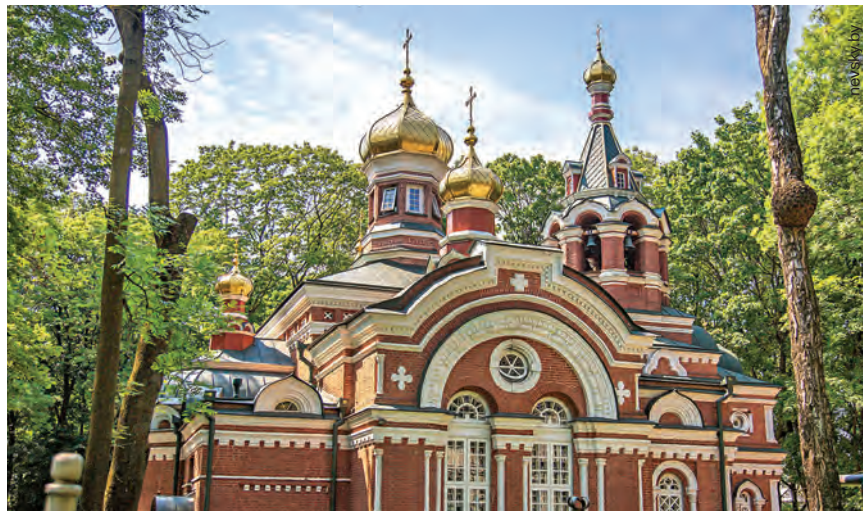
“We have always been in line with general trends,” Mr. Titov shows the seal

sample of Novogrudok in 1729, depicting the Archangel

Michael in the Rococo style. “The Archangel is depicted with short curls, in a shirt with buttons. Rococo appeared in France in the mid-1830s. That is, we even developed this art a little ahead of the curve. Why? To become a jeweller, it was necessary to work as a pupil for 5 years, then as an apprentice for the same period, to train with a jeweller in another city — Poznan, Vilna, Warsaw — for two years and finally pass the exam for the title of master, having done three things: a seal, a goblet and a ring with a stone.”



# A musical journey through the blue-eyed country



Aleksandr Tikhonovich appreciated the temple of Aleksandr Nevsky for its silence and comfort

By Sofia Arsenyeva

## Hearing the voice of the robin

Soviet pop superstars of the 1980s Aleksandr Tikhonovich and Yadviga Poplavskaya have always loved Minsk a great deal. The city reciprocates. At one of the metro stations in the capital, during rush hour, you can even hear the lively singing of the robin that has been calling out to a whole generation. Excursions are organised around locations where the video for the hit *Happy Chance* was filmed.

A special place for the admirers of Mr. Tikhonovich is the small cosy church of Aleksandr Nevsky, which is hidden in the shade of noisy trees in the centre of Minsk. The People's Artiste was a deeply religious person, actively involved in charity work and participated in the life of the parish.

## Finding the traces of opera in the forest

During his lifetime, Stanislaw Moniuszko was called the 'Slavic Schubert'. In 1824, in the Ubel family estate, a five-year-old boy sat down at the piano for the first time, and at the age of 33 he had already staged the *Idyll* comic opera in Minsk — the first in history in the Belarusian language. Prior to this, the young talented composer and conductor managed to get a musical education in Warsaw and Berlin, successfully giving concerts in front of the sophisticated metropolitan audience in St. Petersburg and making friends with Dargomyzhsky and Mussorgsky.

Moniuszko's career flourished when he began conducting at the Bolshoi Theatre in Warsaw. The legendary operas —



The museum in the village of Smilovichi is the world's only dedicated to composer Moniuszko

*Halka* and *The Haunted Manor* — which were successfully performed on the Polish stage, were inspired by Stanislaw's childhood memories of his small homeland. It's well-known that the composer came to Ubel to live out his last days. The estate, alas, has not survived. However, a majestic poplar — planted personally by Stanislaw Moniuszko in 1871 — is still growing. It is easy to find: nearby is one of the most popular health resorts in Belarus: Volma sanatorium. A few dozen kilometres from this place there is a memorial museum to the great composer.

## Finding out where Marlene Dietrich found stardom

The village of Starye Vasilishki, in the Grodno Region, is known by the most notorious rockers of Europe. Most music lovers consider it their duty to visit here and look into one of the rickety wooden

huts. After all, it was here that the legendary musician Czeslaw Niemen was born. The romantic young man with clear blue eyes and a shock of thick hair owes his popularity to Marlene Dietrich. The famous actress once performed a song written by an unknown composer, which resulted in concerts in the Paris Olympia Hall, the top spot in the radio charts and even the recognition of Czeslaw as the 'voice of the 1960s generation'.

The popularity of these Polish lyrics with a guitar did not pass by Soviet youth. The musician performed with pleasure in Moscow, Leningrad, Minsk, Yerevan, Riga and other cities. Of course, he had a special attitude towards Belarusian fans. He never stopped reminding

And so it turned out! 800-year-old oaks, herds of deer and bison, untouched forest edges impressed Mr. Dobronravov so much that on the same day he wrote the first verse of his future ode to the Belovezhskaya Pushcha. Six months later, Ms. Pakhmutova put poems to his music and the song went out to the people.

In other years it was performed by the Big Children's Choir, Bela Rudenko, *Syabry* band and others. However, the song became world famous thanks to *Pesnyary*, namely, the soulful voice of its soloist Valery Daineko.

## Remembering the anthem of the empire

Do you think that, in the 19th century, polonaises were highly appreciated only among fans of dancing at balls? Far from it! The polonaise march *Let the Thunder of Victory Rumble!* — written by the Belarusian composer, Osip Kozlovsky, in collaboration with Gavriil Derzhavin, was considered the unofficial anthem of the Russian Empire. From 1791 to 1816, it was an indispensable attribute of all public events without exception. Contemporaries considered this song 'a musical symbol of Russian power and glory' and 'almost an obligatory feature of every ceremony in the capital and provincial towns'. References to the polonaise can be found in almost all Russian writers of the Golden Age: from Pushkin to Tolstoy.

And what about its author, Osip Kozlovsky? It's well-known that the gifted provincial composer was a welcome guest in the houses of the princes Potemkin and Dolgoruky. Not a single capital city holiday went by without his participation in it. Yekaterina II herself came to his homeland: in the town of Propoisk (now Slavgorod, Mogilev Region).

## Understanding the age-old sadness

"Having visited for the first time this true miracle of nature — the Belovezhskaya Pushcha — we experienced a unique feeling of admiration and joy," admitted composer Aleksandra Pakhmutova and poet Nikolai Dobronravov. The creative couple visited the reserve in the south of Belarus in 1974 at the 'gentle but persistent' invitation of the Head of the BSSR, Piotr Masharov. He seemed to have foreseen that this visit would not be complete without creating a real musical masterpiece.



Severe bison is a symbol of Belovezhskaya Pushcha

# The Secret of Two Chests quest



Mir Castle Complex Museum has developed an unusual quest for its guests: *The Secret of Two Chests*. The organisers offer participants the chance to solve the mystery of the Radziwill princes.

By Irina Sergeeva

According to history, during renovation works, the owner of Mir Castle — Prince Mikhail Svyatopolk-Mirsky — discovered an old chest that had been kept in a cellar for several centuries. The note found inside said that the treasure within was hidden by Prince Karol Stanislaw Radziwill Justus during the war against the Swedes. Despite all his efforts, Prince Mikhail couldn't open the chest, so he invited his guests to help him and solve the mystery of the Radziwill princes.

What are the quest participants likely to face? They must cook a unique dish for the Prince, meet Princess Marie Hohenlohe-Schillingsfürst and listen to her exciting hobbies and talk to a beggar woman who will tell them about the sad events of the Northern war. These are not all the surprises that the organisers have prepared.

The game involves 10-50 people. In addition, tickets will act as a pass to the museum's permanent exhibition. The forthcoming quest dates are scheduled for September 12th and 26th.

# Belarus' national volleyball team returned from 2020 Women's U19 Volleyball European Championship with bronze medal

By Sergey Kanashits

Brilliant! This is exactly the case when you want to watch and be happy: the girls in Olga Palchevskaya's team are both athletic and skilful. Without a single defeat at the group stage and having beaten such respected teams in the world volleyball hierarchy as Serbia and Poland, our squad confidently took first place and stepped into the playoffs with serious medal ambitions. There was even a chance to return home with gold, but they lacked a little luck. However, bronze medals are also a very significant result.

The last time our youth team stepped on the medal podium of the European championship in the early 2000s: at the dawn of the 20th century, Belarusians twice claimed bronze in sensational style. We can only regret that not all the leaders of that team showed themselves as well in the adult game, although some girls became the core of the national team for a decade. Anna Kalinovskaya, for example, who still plays for Minchanka at the highest level, or Olga Palchevskaya, who, almost 20 years later, once again experienced the same bronze emotions, but as a coach.

It remains only to regret that they did not put the squeeze on Turkey in the semi-finals. Our girls started off smartly, taking the lead in the first game and showing almost cosmic volleyball for their level — 25:21! Alas, further losses followed: 17:25, 22:25, 24:26. In the decisive game, as can be seen from the score, the scales could swing in any direction, but fortune didn't favour us — 1:3. However, in the match for 3rd place, our luck returned and the French national team was beaten — 3:1 (25:18, 25:21, 23:25, 27:25). The most efficient player of the Belarusian team was Ksenia Lebedkina (scoring 19 points) while Victoria Kostyuchik was the best receiver. In addition, Victoria is the sister of Vera Kostyuchik, who three years ago, as a member of the U18 Belarusian national team, also clinched bronze at the European Championships. Vera



## They showed what they were made of

Kostyuchik now plays for the famous Uralochka. Other leaders of that squad also found themselves at a high level: Anna Grishkevich (after her marriage — Davyskiba) signed a contract with the Italian club Saugella from Monza while Alina Yegorova will play for Yenisey Krasnoyarsk from this season. Many others are also in the limelight in the national championship, but they are only about 20 years old.

What are the prospects for our current stars? *The MT* correspondent asked Viktor Goncharov. For a long time, he was the head coach of Minchanka and the national team of Belarus and, in fact, these girls have grown up before his eyes, adding to their skills.

**Mr. Goncharov, how unexpected for you was this result from our girls?**

*I'm not surprised at all. I knew that this team had character and for several years the girls have been showing stable high results in Europe. Of course, the wide playing practice that they managed to get while playing in the Russian league also affected them. It was quite reasonable to predict that girls could compete even for gold medals. And*

*there was a chance in the semi-finals, in a bitter struggle, we lost to the Turkish national team, which eventually became the champions.*

**How would you assess the work of the coaching staff?**

*The highest! Everyone who had anything to do with this team at different levels and at different times have done well and worked superbly! Of course, we must separately congratulate head coach Olga Palchevskaya, for whom it was a debut at such a high level.*

**To what extent is a volleyball player ready to perform at a high level at the age of 19?**

*There are unique athletes who are developing rapidly, like, for example, Anya Grishkevich: at 19, she was already a leader not only among young people, but also among adults. In general, this is only the beginning of a long journey, and there is still a year or two to 'grow into it', as they say. Here it's necessary to look at it as a whole, taking into account physiology, psychology and anthropometric data.*

**Are there talents of Anna Grishkevich's level in the current team?**

*I would not like to comment personally; for my part it will not be entirely correct. I will say that this team is strong in spirit. I've noticed that more than once, finding themselves in a very difficult situation, the girls found strength and some kind of inner reserve to change the situation. I take my hat off to them — they are smart! Everyone is talented here: in determination, passion and character.*

**Most of these girls have a capital club 'registration', playing in the youth team of Minchanka. How good are their chances of making their way into big volleyball?**

*The road to the main team is not closed to anyone, no matter how trite it may sound. I believe that at least two players from this team will have the opportunity to play for the main squad this season. Then everything will depend on their diligence.*

Well, congratulations again: the bronze of the European Championship is great! The main thing now is not to rest on our laurels and continue in the same spirit: working and striving for new heights. The girls have atomic potential, it remains only to realise it.

### ARENA

● **Army Games 2020 winners awarded at Brest training ground**

The closing ceremony of the 'Confident Reception', 'Sniper Frontier' and 'Polar Star' competitions of the International Army Games 2020 was held at Brest training ground. The winners and prize holders were awarded.



In the 'Confident Reception' category, the first place went to the team of the Armed Forces of Belarus, second — to the Armed Forces of Russia, and third — to the Armed Forces of Vietnam.

In the 'Polar Star' event, Belarus won — being awarded with the passing cup. Second place went to Russia.

Following the results of all stages of the 'Sniper Frontier' competition, the Belarusian team also came out the best, followed by Uzbekistan and Russia.

● **Scheduled event**

The International Biathlon Union has confirmed that the new World Cup and IBU Cup seasons will start according to the schedule. Previously, there were suggestions that the first stages of the biathlon tournaments may be cancelled, but the IBU stressed that this option is not being considered. As the representatives of the organisation noted, the Union's priority is to preserve and hold all planned events. IBU also develops alternative scenarios which can be implemented in case of unforeseen circumstances. However, postponing rather than cancelling events is what is has in mind: the total number of events should remain unchanged this season. The World Cup is scheduled to start on November 28th in Finnish Kontiolahti and, before



the beginning of 2021, the calendar also includes events in Swedish Ostersund, Austrian Hochfilzen, and French Annecy. The IBU Cup starts on November 26th in Idre, Sweden.

● **2020 UCI Road World Championships will be hosted by Italy**

The championships will be held in Imola and Emilia-Romagna on September 24th-27th. Initially, the tournament was planned to be held in Switzerland, but the host country declined to compete due to the coronavirus pandemic. This time, the race will be held only in the 'elite' category. Junior competitions in the U23 category will not be held. The championships feature group road races, individual and team time trials with separate events. Athletes represent the national teams of their countries, with the exception of team races.





## Photo of the week

BELTA

An equestrian festival held in the Bobruisk District

### DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.

**On September 10th-21st, 1975**, Minsk — for the first time in the USSR — hosted the World Wrestling Championships (classical, freestyle and sambo).



The opening ceremony of the championships was held at Minsk's Sports Palace.



**On September 11th, 1855**, Yevdokim Romanov was born in Gomel (1855-1922) — a Belarusian ethnographer, folklorist and archaeologist. He was a member of the Russian Geographical Society (1886), the Moscow Society of Natural History, Anthropology and Ethnography (1886), the Moscow Archaeological Society (1890) and the Vitebsk Statistical Committee (1891). He devoted all his life to collecting and researching the material and spiritual culture of the Belarusian people.

**September 12th** is World's First Aid Day. It was initiated by the national organisations of the International Red Cross and Red Crescent.



Of course, professional first aid is provided by doctors; however, an ambulance can't always arrive on time at the scene. Therefore, the ability of each of us to provide the necessary first aid to the victim before the arrival of the rescue services can play a decisive role in saving a person's life.

**On September 13th, 490 BC**, near the ancient village of Marathon in Attica, north-east of Athens, during the Greco-Persian wars, Greek troops under the command of Miltiades defeated the Persian army.



According to legend, a messenger sent with a victorious message ran 40km to Athens and fell down dead. The origin of marathon running is connected with this legend — in track-and-field, the 42km 195m distance run is included in the programme of the Olympic Games.

**September 13th** is Tankman's Day in the Republic of Belarus. It's celebrated annually on the second Sunday in September. The holiday traces its history back to Soviet times and was established in July 1946 to commemorate the outstanding achievements of armoured and mechanised troops in the Great Patriotic War, as well as the selfless labour of tank builders to equip the Armed

Forces with armoured vehicles. Today, the tank troops of the Belarusian Army are represented by separate tank and mechanised battalions — capable of performing combat missions both independently and in co-operation with other troops and military formations.



**On September 15th, 1785**, Minsk Higher Theological Seminary — a higher educational institution of the Belarusian Orthodox Church — was opened in Slutsk. In 1840, it was transferred to Minsk, and, in 1918, the activities of the seminary were terminated. It was restored after the end of the Great Patriotic War in 1945 in the Zhirovichi Holy Dormition Monastery. In 1963, the seminary was closed again. In 1989, the Minsk Theological Seminary was once again reopened in the Zhirovichi Monastery, preparing priests and church officials for the Belarusian Orthodox Church.



**On September 15th, 2000**, the national team of athletes of the Republic of Belarus

won 17 medals at the 27th Olympic Games, held in Australian Sydney: 3 gold, 3 silver and 11 bronze. Gold medals were claimed by Yanina Karolchik (shotput), Yekaterina Karsten (rowing) and Ellina Zvereva (discus). Out of the 199 countries that participated in the Olympic Games, the Belarusian team took 23rd place.



**September 15th** is the Day of Libraries in the Republic of Belarus. The date of the holiday was chosen to honour the founding day of the National Library — the country's main book depository. The National Library, formerly named after Vladimir Lenin, was founded in 1922 and, before the Great Patriotic War, it was one of the 30 best libraries in the world. The new building of the National Library in the form of a huge glass diamond, built at the beginning of the 21st century, has become a real attraction in Minsk. In



total, today there are about 9,000 libraries in the country, whose total archives exceed 200m items.