



From global war to AI takeover: think tanks make dark predictions for 2022

6



Reconstruction of one of the most mysterious churches in Minsk revealed the secrets of a century ago

9

INTERNATIONAL

The Minsk Times

Socio-political Weekly

PUBLISHED SINCE FEBRUARY 2003 ● NO. 3 (913) ● THURSDAY, JANUARY 20, 2022 ● WWW.SB.BY



During a meeting of the peacekeeping task force that arrived from Kazakhstan

Mission accomplished

The CSTO peacekeepers dealt a dagger blow to the coup d'état in Kazakhstan with their appearance alone and completed their mission in just a week. The military performed their work with honour and deserved only words of gratitude addressed to them at the completion ceremony of the CSTO peacekeeping operation on the territory of Kazakhstan in Almaty.

President of Kazakhstan Kassym-Jomart Tokayev noted that the mission of the CSTO peacekeeping forces was assessed as very successful. He expressed gratitude to the command of the task force for the work done and emphasised that the presence of CSTO peacekeepers in Kazakhstan, including in Almaty, played a very important role in terms of stabilising the situation in the country. The CSTO in Kazakhstan has shown the ability to act quickly, decisively and effectively. → 2



9 771991 297007 22003

Efficient digitalisation

A new ministry will be created in Belarus, the state will help improve the financial literacy of citizens. These topics were discussed at a meeting of the President with the leaders of the Council of Ministers.

By Dmitry Kryat, Polina Konoga

When addressing the meeting participants, Aleksandr Lukashenko stressed that the digitalisation process should be built primarily in the interests of the individual,

“The digital sphere should not only improve the life of people, but also improve their well-being through highly efficient production.”

A number of topical issues have been prepared for this conversation. They include draft decisions of the President on improving the procurement system, managing the property of joint households,

and increasing the level of financial literacy of the population. The agenda also includes the creation of a new state body — the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications.

Aleksandr Lukashenko reasonably remarked, “On the one hand, thanks to the rapid development of digital technologies, the world really began to change very quickly. And we need to take full advantage of these processes. On the other hand, it should be remembered and understood that the state should be proactive in making decisions on the regulation of this sphere.”

The Head of State drew attention to the fact that the necessary basic infrastructure has been created in the country: data transmission networks have been developed, reliable data processing and storage centres have been built, and modern information security tools have been introduced. The main thing is that all this works for the benefit of people. And another benchmark point was outlined by the President,

“More attention should be paid to the digitalisation of the real sector of the economy, ensuring the competitiveness of enterprises.”

Following the discussion, the Head of State supported the creation of the Ministry of Digital Development and Communications. The corresponding draft decree will be finalised and submitted.

ABC of finance

The documents considered at the meeting include the draft decree ‘On financial consulting for individuals’. Aleksandr Lukashenko stated, “The pace of development of the financial market is explained by the modern economic trends. Therefore, the population has certain problems due to the fact that the average level of its financial literacy does not always keep up with the ongoing events.”

The President pointed out that getting assistance in choosing a financial institution, investment or credit products themselves are issues that most members of our society face. Therefore, he outlined specific tasks and goals,

“In this case, the task of the state is to form an effective institution of professional assistance to people who need qualified support to manage their finances. I’m only afraid, studying this idea, so that we, again, do not drag something that is not in demand in society.”



The President thanked Belarusian peacekeepers

The Head of State visited the military airfield in Machulishchi and congratulated the Belarusian participants in the CSTO peacekeeping mission to resolve the crisis in Kazakhstan on its successful completion, and also expressed gratitude to the personnel.

The Belarusian peacekeepers returned to our country on Friday by aircraft of the Russian Aerospace Forces. The withdrawal of Belarusian military personnel from Kazakhstan was thus completed. The President said,

“We understand that the events in our brotherly republic are another attempt of external interference in the internal affairs of independent states, and the threats that Kazakhstan has faced are common to most states in the post-Soviet space. Kazakhstan has been subjected to armed aggression by well-coordinated terrorist groups. They have undergone special training and have combat experience gained in various hot spots.”

According to Aleksandr Lukashenko, only thanks to the might of the CSTO, which was sent to Kazakhstan, that terrible plan to destroy the Kazakh state failed. The President emphasised, “By your actions, even without shooting, without conducting special operations, you only ensured peace and order with your presence in this country. It was a signal to everyone who today sharpens the sword along the perimeter of the Belarusian-Russian borders.

You showed everyone that it is dangerous to fight with us. Moreover, it is impossible. We cannot be defeated. This is the main result of your operation.

The organisers of the rebellion intended to blow up the situation in this Central Asian republic and generally destabilise the situation along the Russian perimeter in order to weaken our main ally and fraternal state.

To you, Belarusians and Russians, I will say more, without boasting. This whole operation, down to the details, was developed by two presidents — of Russia and Belarus — within one hour. The intention was set. And the ministries of defence under the leadership of Shoigu and Khrenin detailed the plan of the two presidents in the general staffs, and in a few hours the first planes flew to Kazakhstan. Everything was done quickly and decisively, without hesitation.”

Our common efforts not only cooled the ardour of terrorists and extremists controlled from outside, but also showed the whole world the close allied ties, the viability and potential of the Collective Security Treaty Organisation.

The President regards the success of the CSTO peacekeeping mission as the emergence of an effective mechanism for combating the so-called colour revolutions.

Aleksandr Lukashenko expressed special gratitude to the Ministry of Defence of the Russian Federation, Russian military pilots, who organised and promptly ensured the delivery of the Belarusian military contingent to Kazakhstan and back.

Speaking to the military, the President said that he sincerely worried about them, “I prayed to God that every single one of you would return from there not just alive, but healthy. And I’m happy that this operation ended just

like that. Today you will see your relatives, your families, many of you will hug your children. This is the greatest happiness for me as the Commander-in-Chief of the Armed Forces, when you send, I emphasise once again, your children into the unknown and they return back alive and healthy.

And remember (maybe some of you don’t know this): thousands of dollars were ready to pay for your heads there (Belarusian and Russian serviceman, as they wrote, of ‘Slavic appearance’). But you survived. Our fugitives and other bastards dreamed that someone would return from there in

an altered state. They did not get their way. And for this I am grateful to you (for saving yourself) and your commanders.

Every day, morning and evening, I simply interrogated the Minister of Defence about the state of health of our servicemen. You did an excellent job, as it should be for us, real men.”

The Minister of Defence of Belarus, Lieutenant-General Viktor Khrenin, on behalf of the Head of State, awarded the servicemen who returned from Kazakhstan and participated in the peace-keeping mission.

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by



The peacekeeping task force, which returned the day before from Kazakhstan, at the military airfield Machulishchi

Awards for patriots

By Svetlana Isaenok

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted,

“Our Belarus occupies a small place on the map, but it attracts huge geopolitical interest. So it has always been in the history of our land, so it is happening now. Yes, we are different today, the world is different, but the plot of political intrigues around us is the same. It repeats over and over. We have already done a lot to ensure that the chronicle of Belarusian statehood continues. And we will do even more, because we are united in our goals.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko began his speech with a reminder that the first days of the new year immediately dragged Belarus into a whirlpool of extremely negative foreign policy events, “The events that shocked and forced Belarusians to mentally return to that unfortunate 2020, once again analyse and evaluate what we could lose, what national tragedy we prevented. Throughout the years of independence, Belarusians have been anxiously following the fate of many peoples defeated by the ‘colour revolutions’. But what is most shocking is the reluctance of people to learn from the mistakes of others, from the experience of others. And it is horrifying how fatal unlearned lessons can be.

We have consciously and, I believe, timely declared the current year the Year of Historical Memory. After all, in order not to be mistaken in the future, we must look back to the past as often as possible. And value it.”

Rise to the occasion

The Head of State, addressing those present, expressed warm words of gratitude to those who defend the honour of the country. Aleksandr Lukashenko

A reception hosted by the President on the Old New Year is a sincere tradition in our country. On the evening of January 14th, athletes and journalists, civil servants, public figures and scientists, analysts and experts gathered for a holiday with the participation of the Head of State. Like-minded people were invited, representatives of various fields of activity, those who fearlessly defended the honour of the country last year. Many of them received medals, orders and thanks from the hands of the President.



Olympic champion Ivan Litvinovich was awarded the Order of the Fatherland III degree

first of all turned to journalists. “You, dear friends, especially now, are at the forefront of events. You pass facts and opinions through yourself, work out informational attacks, beat them back in our direction. Last year I urged you to work harder, you heard me. And you didn’t let me down, firmly taking the informational agenda into their own hands,” said the leader of the Belarusian state.

The reception was also attended by our colleagues who covered the events that took place in Kazakhstan (among them — editorial columnist Lyudmila Gladkaya). The President admitted that he was very glad to see them. And he said that all the

restrictions that journalists experienced there in terms of work were needed to protect them,

“That was my order. It was unacceptable to lose at least one person in this terrible massacre that unfolded in the first days of the new year in our Kazakhstan. I received information from all sources from other states, how you were hunted there.”

Everyone’s contribution is appreciated

The Head of State emphasised the role of public opinion leaders, analysts, historians, political scientists, sociologists, who were also present at the reception. In his speech,

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted that in the conditions of the information war, their intellect is a powerful weapon, “At a critical moment in history, you stood up on one front to protect the interests of your state, proved to be true patriots.”

The President addressed special words of gratitude to the winners of the Tokyo Olympics, “Last year, you had to simultaneously defend both the sporting honour of the country and the political position of the nation. And this is a new, if you like, trend of our time. Have you noticed that we no longer say that sports, education, culture, healthcare are out of politics? Today it has become obvious: it is not enough to win in

sports, it is not enough to delight people with your creativity and just to be a professional.”

Aleksandr Lukashenko is sure: an athlete should be a patriot, be proud of his native country and broadcast it to people, as well as defend national interests and the state course in public, and not sit, as people say, under a broom.

The President said, “Everyone in his place — we all serve the country. This is our duty to the land that has nurtured us, to the state, which gives us the opportunity to reveal our talents and realise our potential.”

The Head of State noted that the theme of the evening — good moments and traditions of the Soviet Union — is more relevant than ever. The President congratulated those present on the upcoming New Year holidays, wished them health, happiness and success,

“Live long! And don’t worry. We are facing psychologically difficult times with this unfortunate pandemic, but this is no longer the pandemic that was in 2020, which converged on politics and other issues. Be healthy. And remember that our health is in the head.”



Our fellow journalists are constantly at the forefront of the information wave. The photo features Lyudmila Gladkaya.

The brotherhood of war

The President approved the idea of a joint operational exercise of the Armed Forces of Belarus and Russia. It will take place in February on the western and southern borders of Belarus.

Listening to the report on the concept of the exercise, Aleksandr Lukashenko recalled that an agreement on holding these exercises was reached with the President of Russia back in December last year, “We agreed to jointly carry out unscheduled specific activities on the western borders of the Union State and on the southern flank of Belarus — this is also the border of the Union State. Today we see that we need to conduct extensive exercises in this western and southern region, the ‘Belarusian balcony’.”

The Head of the Belarusian state stressed, “The situation is alarming, unfortunately, on our

southern borders, that is, with Ukraine. Ukraine continues to build up forces, concentrating units of the national guard from the ‘radical nationalists’. This is even worse than NATO military personnel. And all this is in close proximity to the state border of our country.”

The Chief of the General Staff of the Armed Forces, First Deputy Minister of Defence of Belarus Viktor Gulevich, following the results of his report to the President, told reporters that the Joint Exercises of Belarus and Russia will be held in two stages.

According to him, one of the risks for the military security of Belarus is the presence

of NATO troops on the territory of countries that border our republic. Thus, the group within the framework of operations ‘Forward Presence’, ‘Atlantic Resolve’ consists of more than 10 thousand people on the territory of neighbouring countries and more than 300 tanks.

“But besides this, as part of the migration crisis provoked by Western countries, a group of over 23 thousand people has been deployed on the territory of neighbouring states, which are distributed along the state border in the north-western, western and southern directions,” emphasised Viktor Gulevich. “Our country must respond to these challenges.

In accordance with the decision of the Presidents of Belarus and Russia, a comprehensive inspection of the response forces of the Union State is being carried out.”

The Chief of the General Staff noted that the authorities, formations and military units of both Belarus and Russia are involved in the inspection, “A fairly large task force will be regrouped on the territory of Belarus, with which a number of tasks will be practiced to protect the Union State in the southern direction, both in the airspace and on land, as well as the fight against sabotage and reconnaissance groups, illegal armed formations. The comprehensive

inspection of the response forces of the Union State will be carried out in two stages. During the first, a regrouping will be carried out, the occupation of initial positions in operational areas. At the second stage, exercises will be held, where the troops will work out the implementation of combat training tasks. The holding of this event will demonstrate to all Western countries the commitment to the allied relations of the armed forces of Belarus and Russia and will show our readiness to defend the independence of our countries.”

Based on materials of sb.by and belta.by

A detailed look into the future

Public reception and dialogue platforms for discussing the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution continue to work throughout the country. The nationwide discussion was another confirmation of the maturity of civil society.



Natalya Kochanova at the Minsk Bearing Plant

Dialogue platforms for discussing the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution are held on the basis of cultural and educational institutions, various public associations. But the most massive ones are based on the country's industrial enterprises. They, as well as various public receptions and hotlines opened throughout the country to discuss the draft Constitution and collect proposals, have one thing in common: Belarusian citizens study the proposed draft amendments and additions to the Constitution with interest, actively make their proposals and corrections.

Industrial scope

Chairwoman of the Council of the Republic of the National Assembly of Belarus Natalya Kochanova spoke about this during her visit to the Minsk Bearing Plant and a meeting with its workforce.

Speaking about the work on the draft amendments and additions to the Constitution, the nationwide discussion of which is taking place these weeks throughout the country, Natalya Kochanova noted that the senators are deeply immersed in this work, "Members of the Council of the Republic are members of both the Constitutional Commission and the working group to finalise the draft Basic Law of our country. Now we take an active part in meetings with labour collectives, with citizens — a public reception has been organised under the Council of the Republic, through which people turn to us on issues of making changes and additions to the main law of our country. There are many questions, but the most important thing is that people are really interested. They study the draft with interest, make their suggestions and adjustments."

And there are quite a lot of such proposals, added the Speaker of the

upper house of the Belarusian Parliament. Natalya Kochanova named the main ones,

"Most of all appeals from citizens come under articles on social support. They remained unchanged, only expanded, for example, in matters of support for families and the disabled. For many, it is also important to consolidate the concept of marriage between a man and a woman — the population is in favour of preserving traditional values."

They also ask about items related to maintaining health. By the way, people asked for a ban on the privatisation of large city-forming enterprises in the Constitution. For many, it is important that the factories remain in the ownership of the country."

No formalism

Head of the President Administration Igor Sergeyenko took part in a meeting with the activists of the Grodno region on the topic 'Constitution. Discussion. Referendum'.

"An analysis of the events held in the country to discuss the draft Basic Law showed that in the Grodno region they approached this work in an organised and non-standard way," Igor Sergeyenko addressed the audience. "Especially at dialogue platforms, in labour collectives of enterprises and organisations, educational institutions. The main task that the President has set before us is to prepare for the referendum as soon as possible."

The first days of the discussion showed a significant interest of our citizens. In the first five hours alone, more than 70,000 views were recorded. A little less than 5,000 different responses, recommendations, proposals from state bodies, individuals, and collectives were received.

A number of proposals are constructive and will be summarised in the next few days. It is worth noting that the basic cornerstone provisions of the Constitution are not rejected by an absolute majority.

"At this stage, it is important not to turn the work on updating the Constitution into a formality, not to hold events for the sake of appearances," Igor Sergeyenko addressed the audience.

"It is necessary not only to bring and explain the information, but also to get feedback, to organise a discussion. In the process of communication, you need to go out to discuss topical topics."

With an eye on the future

The First Deputy Head of the Belarus President Administration, Maksim Ryzhenkov, and the Chairman of the Board of Znanie (Knowledge) Belarusian Society Republican State



Igor Sergeyenko at a meeting with senior officials of the Grodno Region

OPINIONS

Oleg Slinko, member of the Standing Committee of the Council of the Republic on Regional Policy and Local Self-Government:

Opponents of positive changes are trying to escalate the situation, convincing Belarusians that the high status of the Belarusian People's Congress is, in fact, the birth of a new representative body, which in the future may lead to dual power. But this is far from being the case, because this mechanism has been successfully functioning for more than a year. At the legislative level, it is proposed only to assign to it the powers that the Belarusian People's Congress already has. Its main task will be to develop and approve the directions of the country's development for the next five years. I have repeatedly taken part in the work of the Belarusian People's Congress, I was impressed by its scale and have a positive view of the work of this body of people's power.

Dmitry Murashko, Chairman of the Gomel Regional Organisation of the Belarusian Trade Union of Construction Workers and Building Materials Industry:

Changes are being actively discussed, and I am glad that all of them are primarily aimed at the benefit of people. Particular attention is paid to the preservation of the historical memory of the Belarusian people and their role in the Great Patriotic War. And one of the key points, in my opinion, is that the updated Constitution will consolidate the duty of the state to provide citizens with free education and medicine and, in general, focuses on human life and health. Among the main activities of trade unions is the promotion of healthy and safe working conditions. And I hope that the new Constitution will spur employers to be even more active in maintaining and strengthening the health of their employees, because a healthy person is the future of the country.

Igor Borisenok, resident of Molodechno:

I propose to introduce the following wording of the national idea into the updated Constitution: 'FAMILY — UNITY — FATHERLAND!' The family is the basis of the present and future of Belarus, as well as of every country, every society in the history of mankind. The protection and support of the family must become a common cause on a national and international scale. Unity — of all citizens in the name of the protection and prosperity of the state, cooperation for the good of our native Belarus. Fatherland is the historical, spiritual and cultural roots of the nation, the Fatherland needs each of us. Only together can we resist external and internal threats. In addition, I consider it necessary to make a number of changes and additions, including changing Article 33 of the current Constitution ('censorship is not allowed'): it is necessary to allow moral censorship of the media. I think that raising children, young people without moral censorship of the media is like throwing grenades into your own yard.

Rita Kundikova, parent-teacher of a family-type orphanage of the Department for Education, Sports and Tourism of the Klichev District Executive Committee:

I support amendments to the Constitution, especially in the part where it comes to family values. Article 32 added a provision that the state provides support to families with children, orphans and children left without parental care. This is an important point. Our family-type home turns 32 on January 25th. I see how the attitude in society towards parents with children has changed over the years. Remember how many boarding schools and orphanages used to be! And now the kids get into a family where they are surrounded by love and care. After they graduate, they are also not left to fend for themselves. My children (I raised 47 children, the eldest are already under forty) got the opportunity to solve the housing problem with state support. It is difficult to imagine how much money is spent from the budget for these needs. But this is a really important item of expenditure.

Public Association, Vadim Gigin, met with students of Brest State University named after A.S. Pushkin. The conversation was lively and casual. Young people, not embarrassed by authoritative speakers, asked questions on various topics: from the need to preserve historical memory to increasing the social responsibility of every citizen for themselves, their health and their country.

Maksim Ryzhenkov positively assessed the genuine interest of students in the processes that are taking place in Belarus, including amendments to the Basic Law,

“The Constitution is turned to the future, it consolidates the transformations achieved in our country and builds a strong configuration of public administration for the future. The principles that form the basis of the document are aimed at changing life for the better, so that people, especially young people, can reveal their potential and realise themselves in our country.”

He noted that the discussion of the document is of a large-scale and nationwide character; never before have so many people been involved in the development of fateful decisions.



Dialogue platforms are being held these days in many labour collectives. Discussion of the draft Constitution at the Belarusian Steel Works

University students shared their impressions after the meeting. Thus, Kirill Keda, a 2nd year student of the Faculty of History, says,

“It is very important that according to the Constitution, the state promotes

the development of young people, creates conditions for their participation in public life. I also liked that today we talked about the preservation of historical memory, especially about the feat of our ancestors during the

Great Patriotic War. Belarusians should remember these events in order to continue to protect the sovereignty of the country.”

Based on materials of sb.by

NEWS IN BRIEF

The National Academy of Sciences of Belarus named the Scientist of the Year 2021



The title of the Scientist of the Year of the National Academy of Sciences of Belarus — 2021 was awarded to Aleksandr Ilyushchenko, General Director of the State Scientific and Production Association of Powder Metallurgy, Doctor of Technical Sciences, Professor, Academician.

The scientist was awarded this title ‘for the development of highly efficient technologies and equipment for the production of new composite materials, advanced models of special equipment’.

Academician Aleksandr Ilyushchenko is a well-known scientist in the field of materials science, surface engineering and powder metallurgy, not only in Belarus, but also abroad, Doctor of Technical Sciences, PhD. The scientist was previously awarded the Francysk Skaryna medal and the Order of the Fatherland, 3rd degree.

BSU has developed a draft application for ecological travel in Belarus

Svetlana Dolyuk, a post-graduate student of the Faculty of History, was the leader and author of the idea of the BY Guide project. She suggested that infor-



mation on green routes be made available through an online resource. So far, there have been no such developments in Belarus. The uniqueness of this application is that it is a kind of navigation along ecological routes, taking into account the capabilities and physiological characteristics of visitors. The resource contains tips for who this trail is suitable for: people with a visual impairment or in a wheelchair, families with children and animals. Also, each trail is accompanied by a description, photographs and a GPS track.

At the moment, the database includes more than 300 ecological trails and cycling routes in all regions of the country.

2021 entered the top 20 warmest years in the history of meteorological observations in Belarus

The average air temperature over the past year was plus 7.3, which is 0.6 degrees above the climatic norm. 2021 was not as abnormally warm as 2019 and 2020, which were the warmest years on record, but entered the top twenty warmest years, ranking 18th.

The air temperature in Belarus in the winter of 2020/2021 was close to the cli-



matic norm and amounted to minus 3.8. The spring was a little colder than usual — the average air temperature in the country was plus 6.6. The summer was one of the hottest, second only to the summer of 2010. The country’s average air temperature was plus 20, which is 2.6 degrees above the climatic norm. The autumn was a little warmer than usual — the average air temperature in Belarus was +7.1, which is 0.5 degrees above the climatic norm.

International Arts Festival Slavianski Bazaar in Vitebsk will be held from July 13th to July 18th in 2022

The new ideas of the organisers, which are being worked on now, will be definitely brought to life. For example, a new corporate identity has already been developed, which will be reflected in street posters, banners, advertising banners and billboards, in promotional products and in the scenography of the main concert venues. This is the same legendary cornflower and bright colours that Vitebsk shines with during the festival.

This year the festival marks its 31st anniversary. “Since 1992, Slavianski Bazaar leaves no one indifferent, gathers



loyal fans and is ready to accept new artists, partners, friends into its festival family. Every time the hospitable scene unites entire peoples!” said the organisers.

Kaleidoscope of achievements

In January-November, Belarus increased the export of goods and services to almost \$45 billion

In January-November 2021, Belarus increased the export of goods and services by 33.7% compared to the same period in 2020, which amounted to \$44.533 billion. This is evidenced by the data published on the website of the National Bank.

The foreign trade turnover of goods and services for 11 months amounted to \$85.088 billion, which is 31.6% more than in the same period of 2020. At the same time, imports amounted to \$40.555 billion (an increase of 29.5%). The positive balance of foreign trade in goods and services was at the level of \$3.978 billion (in January-November 2020, the balance was also positive — \$1.995 billion).



The first transformer kindergarten was opened in Mogilev

During the construction of a kindergarten with a swimming pool, designed for 200 places, advanced technologies were used. There is an indoor pool, sports and music halls, play areas for the harmonious physical and intellectual development of children, separate group covered terraces.

“The new kindergarten is unique, and is not at all like other preschool institutions,” said the Head of the school, Zhanna Sanarova. “There is no zoning here, there is no separate bedroom and a spacious dining room. It is for this reason that the groups are called transformers, because they easily turn from a playroom, where the kids study and have fun, into a bedroom: when it’s time for rest, the shutters are lowered and the beds are laid out.”

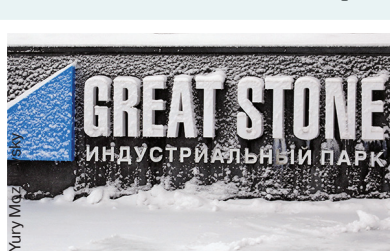


A record increase in residents of the Great Stone Park was observed in 2021

This was reported by the First Deputy Prime Minister Nikolai Snopkov.

“In 2021, although this year was affected by sanctions and COVID, we actually saw a record increase in residents — 21 residents registered in the park. Today there are 85 of them, of which 43 are from the People’s Republic of China with a total investment of \$ 1.2 billion. Despite all the complexities of the world agenda and external aggressive influences on our country, we see that active relations with China. This will be the case in the future as well,” stressed Nikolai Snopkov.

He said that cooperation of Belarusian enterprises with large Chinese corporations continues and as an example he mentioned MAZ-Weichai, joint projects for the production of auto components and electronics are being implemented.



In addition, the Great Stone Park will actively develop cooperation in the field of pharmaceuticals, in particular, through traditional Chinese medicine and the production of a vaccine against COVID-19.

Export of the Minsk Tractor Works grew by almost a quarter in 2021

In 2021, the Minsk Tractor Works increased its exports by almost 25% compared to 2020. These preliminary data were reported in the marketing centre of Minsk Tractor Works OJSC.

In total, more than 36 thousand tractors and machines have been delivered abroad. At the same time, in 2021, the Minsk Tractor Works delivered products to non-CIS countries by almost 42% more than the year before. “Among the countries of the so-called long-range arc, I would especially like to note a significant increase in supplies to Pakistan and Egypt, as well as to Cuba. Despite the difficult relations with the European Union, the Minsk Tractor Works also managed to increase its presence in some markets, for example, in Hungary, Poland, and Romania. In general, the growth rate of exports to European countries exceeded 120%,” said the company.

Export deliveries of products to neighbouring countries increased by 20.4%. The leaders in terms of volume are traditionally Russia, Ukraine, Kazakhstan.



Absolute drilling record

In 2021, Belorusneft set an absolute annual record for drilling — 213,412 m of rocks.

“This figure consists of the indicators of the Svetlogorsk Drilling Department, the sidetracking teams of the Enhanced Oil Recovery and Well Workover Department, as well as the Mozyr Deep Drilling Expedition, that is, the teams under the direct control of the Geological and Technological Support Centre for Drilling of the Oil and Gas Production Department of Rechitsaneft,” said the company.

The previous maximum of joint work was reached in 2019 and amounted to 199,595 m. Thus, the annual drilling rate has been improved by 13,817 m.

In 2021, Gomselmash increased the volume of equipment production by 30%

Machine builders have also increased the volume of exports. This figure has increased by 33% compared to 2020.

“Both GOMSELMASH combine harvesters and forage harvesters are in demand with buyers. Interest in leasing the equipment is growing. In 2021, the new line of GOMSELMASH GS812 PRO, GS812 PROFI, GS10 PRO, GS12A1 PRO and GS12A1 PROFI equipment was launched, equipped with a comfortable LUX CAB cabin. A batch of GOMSELMASH GS2124 premium combines equipped with a UNI CAB was also produced,” reported the company.

In winter, Gomselmash continues to produce agricultural machines, which will allow agriculture to prepare for the harvesting season.



Belarusian Railway transported 2.5 million passengers during the New Year and Christmas holidays

From December 24th, 2021 to January 10th, 2022, trains of the Belarusian Railway carried more than 2,466,000 passengers in all types of routes, which is almost 15% more than during the same period of the New Year and Christmas holidays in 2020-2021.

The greatest growth dynamics was shown by trains of urban lines, which transported almost 30% more compared to the same period of 2020-2021. There was a high demand for economy-class trains in regional traffic, but the transportation of passengers by regional business-class and interregional lines also increased by 21%.



Based on materials of belta.by

World dystopia

From global war to AI takeover: think tanks make dark predictions for 2022

Traditionally, at the beginning of the year, people 'get hooked' on all sorts of astro predictions and 'fortune-telling'. Our readers, of course, are far from such mystical 'analytics' and are more inclined to study the forecasts of risks and challenges of key investment funds, corporations and think tanks. It is their publications at the beginning of each year that give a clear understanding of how the leading 'decision-making centres' see the development of the situation in individual states, regions and on world markets. It is important for us not only to set out the entire list of forecasts, but to collect the most negative scenarios: this approach allows us to understand how the global political and financial establishment is ready to change the world in their own interests.



Scenario No. 2. System Failure

The second worst scenario named by Saxo Bank experts is a global disruption in the telecommunications system due to hacking, which can lead to global failures in air and rail traffic, electricity and water supply.

Some countries and entire regions may be cut off from 'civilisation' and plunge into chaos and confusion. Such a development of events can lead to the actual collapse of state institutions of power and 'bring to the arena' military or criminal groups. They will control the distribution of the main scarce resources (water, food, electricity, heat).



the active use of climate and geo-weapons against their rivals in 2022.

This can lead not only to atypical weather conditions (hurricanes, floods, tsunamis, earthquakes, volcanic eruptions), but also to the use of brand new technologies in this area. In particular, the forced closure of entire states and regions from sunlight for long periods of time (due to the so-called dirty clouds).

The use of such 'weapons' makes it possible to plunge countries into darkness, depriving them of the opportunity to engage in agriculture and typical life activities, which can lead to the deepest socio-economic crises.



By Aleksei Avdonin, BISR analyst

Scenario No. 1. Global War

The key apocalyptic model of the future for 2022 is, of course, the escalation of disagreements between key centres of power into a global war of the superpowers. Such a scenario for 2022 was predicted by the Bloomberg media corporation. At the same time, the publication indicates that the form of war can be different, including the escalation of the trade, economic and financial confrontation between China, the United States and Russia.

The real armed conflicts can arise on the contact lines of the superpowers' control zones. The forecast names Turkey, Brazil. Other publications included the countries of Central Asia in this list.

By the way, we see that the events in Kazakhstan at the beginning of January 2022 fit exactly into the forecasts of the media giants. It seems that they already knew where it would blaze.

If control over Kazakhstan is established by Western decision-making centres, a blow will be dealt to the integration projects of Russia and China in the Eurasian space.



After its testing in weak regions, such a model of controlled chaos can be implemented in strategically important areas (Europe, the Eurasian space, the Asia-Pacific region) and cause a wave of revolutions.

Scenario No. 3. Crises and defaults

The third negative scenario, according to Bloomberg analysts and investment fund experts, may be a sharp deterioration in the financial and economic balance in the United States and in the world economy as a whole.

The system is expected to go haywire amid high inflation and monetary tightening by the US Federal Reserve.



In simple words, inflation will be the highest since the 1970s, and the cost of credit money will become sky-high. All this will lead to the collapse of the economies of many developing countries, especially those that depend on external debt.

There will be defaults of sovereign (state) debt, collapse of national currencies, total impoverishment of the population, mass protests with riots, robberies and violence against the background of a general humanitarian disaster (hunger, lack of medicines, water, heat). All this can lead to the formation of conditions for a civil war in various regions of the planet.

Scenario No. 4. Climate and geophysical weapons

The fourth negative scenario for 2022 identified by the RAND Corporation includes environmental and energy disasters caused by the use of climate weapons. According to the experts of the corporation, the superpowers, pursuing their geopolitical goals, may switch to

Scenario No. 5. Super control

The fifth place is given to the scenario for which we have been prepared for a long time. It is about the seizure of control over nuclear weapons and machines by artificial intelligence. Some analysts assign the same place in the rating to hypersonic weapons, which have already changed the balance of power in the world.

Their further development will lead to a new arms race and 'testing' of such weapons in some external battle grounds (third states).

In general, 2022 is called the year of revolutions and global shifts in changing states as institutions of power. In this regard, the Belarusians feel the blackness of all these military and revolutionary scenarios more than ever. The main thing is to prevent their implementation on our land and to make the right choice in February 2022 in favour of stability and prosperity.



World’s first transplant

A US man has become the first person in the world to get a heart transplant from a genetically-modified pig

David Bennett, 57, is doing well several days after the experimental seven-hour procedure in Baltimore, doctors say. The transplant was considered the last hope of saving Mr. Bennett’s life, though it is not yet clear what his long-term chances of survival are.

Doctors at the University of Maryland Medical Centre were granted a special dispensation by the US medical regulator to carry out the procedure, on the basis that Mr. Bennett — who has terminal heart disease — would otherwise have died. He had been deemed ineligible for a human transplant, a decision that is often taken by doctors when the patient is in very poor health.

The pig used in the transplant had been genetically modified to knock out several genes that would have led to the organ be-

ing rejected by Mr. Bennett’s body.

For the medical team who carried out the transplant, it marks the culmination of years of research and could change lives around the world.

Surgeon Bartley Griffith said the surgery would bring the world ‘one step closer to solving the organ shortage crisis’. Currently 17 people die every day in the US waiting for a transplant, with more than 100,000 reportedly on the waiting list.

Dr. Christine Lau, Chair of the Department of Surgery at the University of Maryland School of Medicine, was in the operating theatre during the surgery.

“He’s at more of a risk because we require more immunosuppression, slightly different than we would normally do in a human-to-human transplant. How well

the patient does from now is, you know, it’s never been done before so we really don’t know,” she said. “People die all the time on the waiting list, waiting for organs. If we could use genetically engineered pig organs they’d never have to wait, they could basically get an organ as they needed it. Plus, we wouldn’t have to fly all over the country at night-time to recover organs to put them into recipients.”

The possibility of using animal organs for so-called xenotransplantation to meet the demand has long been considered, and using pig heart valves is already common.

In October 2021, surgeons in New York announced that they had successfully transplanted a pig’s kidney into a person. However, the recipient on that occasion was brain dead with no hope of recovery.

Hidden painting

Sandro Botticelli’s rediscovered and arresting *Man of Sorrows*, due to be auctioned at Sotheby’s on January 27th — with a guarantee of \$40m — has yet to be studied extensively, as it has been in private hands since the 19th century.

But technical analysis undertaken by the auction house in preparation for the sale has already revealed one unexpected discovery: an intriguing image of a Madonna and Child, buried beneath the paint layers.

Christopher Apostle, the Senior Vice President and Head of the Old Master Paintings Department at Sotheby’s in New York, who has had the opportunity to ponder the picture in depth, believes it to be an abandoned composition of a ‘Madonna of tenderness’ (a type derived from Greek icons), in which the Madonna intimately cradles the head of the baby Christ against her own, cheek to cheek. The facial features, particularly the nose, eyes and laughing mouth, which he identifies as belonging to the Christ Child, are very visible in the infrared image, if you rotate the picture upside down.



There is also evidence of some white underpainting, possibly in cadmium, in the lower part of the figure. Other visible parts of the abandoned composition include what looks like folds of a mantle, with decorative banding around the shoulder and part of a sleeve, and the Child’s chubby arm is discernible as well.



Protests across Europe

Weekend demonstrations have continued across the European Union as governments move to implement tighter curbs and new rules to encourage COVID jabs and booster shots

Thousands of protesters packed Amsterdam’s streets in opposition to the government-imposed COVID-19 measures and vaccination campaign. Authorities were granted stop and search powers at several locations across the city and scores of riot police vans patrolled neighbourhoods where the demonstrators marched with banners and yellow umbrellas.

Meanwhile, an estimated 5,000 people turned out for a protest in Brussels, with protesters carrying banners decrying what they said was a ‘vaccine dictatorship’ and voicing anger over Belgium’s COVID pass requirement to enter restaurants, bars and other cultural events. Dozens of people were detained by police in Brussels.

In Prague, thousands of people demonstrated against a proposal to make

COVID-19 vaccination compulsory for certain age groups and professions. Many in the crowd carried Czech flags while marching through the capital and chanting: ‘Freedom, freedom’.

Numerous German cities also saw protests, including demonstrations in Hamburg, Frankfurt, Düsseldorf and Koblenz. In the northern port city of Hamburg, over 13,000 people took part in the demonstrations, with some voicing anger over a recently passed vaccine mandate for people working in hospitals and nursing homes.

The Austrian capital of Vienna saw another weekend of mass protests, with some 40,000 people demonstrating against the government’s plans to implement a general COVID vaccine mandate.

Section of Great Wall collapses

A part of the Great Wall collapsed after a 6.9 magnitude earthquake hit China’s Northwest Province Qinghai at a depth of 10 kilometres

The wall was built, on the northern borders of ancient China, by the Ming Dynasty from 1368 to 1644. Two metres of the Great Wall collapsed in Gansu Province, which is 114km away from the epicentre. After the strong seism, authorities organised an inspection of local cultural relics and discovered the collapse site. A primary protection has been installed and the repair and restoration works are in process.

The quake struck an area that was sparsely populated but multiple bigger cit-

ies felt the tremor. There were no reports of deaths but nine people were injured.

Shi Yucheng, Chief of the Gansu Earthquake Agency, told media that the closest residential area is 40 kilometres away from the epicentre, which is on an earthquake belt and locals are used to dealing with tremors.

In the local battle against poverty, the houses of residents were upgraded or refurbished to be quake-proof, which also contributed to reducing casualties in an earthquake of such magnitude, Shi said.



Both the monument and the temple

The first thing you think about when you find yourself behind a massive wooden door: is this really a church?.. At the entrance, on both sides, the walls are decorated with murals that you would never expect to see in such a place. On the left, there is a fragment of Vasily Vereshchagin’s *The Defeated. Memorial Service* (the original is on display in the Tretyakov Gallery), and on the right is an episode of communion of wounded soldiers in a hospital.

“Don’t be surprised. The scenes are most directly related to these walls,” says Archpriest Nikolai Korzhich, Senior Priest of the parish of the Church of St. Aleksandr Nevsky.

The temple was founded by the military for the military. Now the place where it stands is the centre of Minsk. However, in the second half of the 19th century, it was not even on the outskirts, but in a suburb. Here were the officers’ quarters, barracks, warehouses. A real military town. What defined the life here? Battles and the memory of them, of course.

Few know that the character of the famous painting by Vereshchagin was inspired by the Belarusian priest Ioann Nosovich. During the Russo-Turkish War (1877-1878), he served in the 119th Kolomna Regiment. In the first battle, the unit suffered serious losses: 15 officers and over 120 soldiers of lower ranks were killed. The moment of their funeral service and burial inspired Vereshchagin to paint the picture. And Father Ioann himself compiled the first lists of fellow soldiers who died in battle. It was the starting point for the construction of a church near the hospital.

“As conceived by the creators, it was supposed to become a kind of monument in honour of those who fell on the battlefield during the Turkish campaign and at the same time a temple for the servicemen of the Kolomna Regiment,” says Archpriest Dmitry Khoroshko, who today serves as a veteran here.

The construction fell on the shoulders of the priest Pavel Bogdanovich, who was in the Kolomna Regiment. In close cooperation with the clergy, veterans of the Turkish War and the families of the fallen, as well as active military personnel and the authorities, Father Pavel took on a difficult task. By the way, he inspired the second scene at the entrance to the temple. The communion of wounded soldiers is not an abstraction, but a fact from his biography: before the appearance of the Aleksandr Nevsky Church, Pavel Bogdanovich served in the church in the Minsk Military Hospital.

Half of Minsk residents were baptised here

The guidebooks often call the church at the Military Cemetery the only church in Minsk that has managed to preserve its original appearance. But this is only partly true.

“Only during the reconstruction did we find out that initially our temple looked different. It’s hard to imagine, but in 1898 it was ... without side-altars,” Dmitry Khoroshko reveals the secret. “We have noticed some oddities in its architecture before. For example, under the roof there are certain architectural forms — stucco mouldings, pilasters, cornices. Why would such beau-



Heavenly protection

Reconstruction of one of the most mysterious churches in Minsk revealed the secrets of a century ago

The clergy and the army have always been inextricably linked in our lands. A striking example of this is the history of the Aleksandr Nevsky Church, located in the territory of the Military Cemetery in Minsk. The temple appeared at the end of the 19th century in memory of the officers and soldiers who died in the Russo-Turkish War, and was intended primarily for the 119th Kolomna Infantry Regiment. Although this military unit ceased to exist more than a century ago, its shrine protects Minsk residents to this day.



BY THE WAY

During the reconstruction, the temple was replenished with new holy relics. Thus, through the efforts of a benefactor, an image of the Mother of God with a Child (Hodegetria) was brought from Athos. With the blessing of Archbishop Guriy of Novogrudok and Slonim, icons with the relics of Blessed Matrona of Moscow and Saint Luke of Crimea appeared in the church. Furthermore, an altar cross was made for the Aleksandr Nevsky Church, which was created in the image of the Cross of Saint Euphrosyne of Polotsk. The Abbess of the Saviour-Euphrosyne Convent Evdokia handed over part of the relics that are kept in the monastery especially for it.

ty be actually hidden in the attic? It turned out that the side-altars were completed in the first two years after the consecration of the church. We managed to find the rarest picture without them. But in 1900 it already looked like it does now.”

Despite the fact that the twentieth century brought great shocks to the temple, the building was never used for other purposes. In World War I, the Kolomna Regiment was almost completely destroyed twice at the front, after the revolution it ceased

to exist. The church went from the regiment to the parish; in 1937 a lock was hung on the door. But the parishioners spent days and nights inside, not giving icons and utensils for the plunder.

In June 1941, the Military Cemetery was heavily bombed. One of the shells pierced the dome of the church, fell at the icon of St. Nikolai, but did not explode. Isn’t this a real miracle?

“During the war, services resumed and since then have not stopped. In the time of the God-fighting, there were only two active Orthodox churches in Minsk — the Cathedral of the Holy Spirit and the Aleksandr Nevsky Church. We are not exaggerating when we say that half of Minsk residents were baptised in our basement,” smiles Dmitry Khoroshko.

“This temple is an architectural monument. Reconstruction has been needed

Victor Drazhin, Chairman of the Board of Trustees of the Temple-Monument in Honour of Aleksandr Nevsky:

Our church is of great importance not only for Minsk and its inhabitants, but for the entire Belarusian people. Taking this into account, His Grace Filaret blessed us for its reconstruction in 2017. A colossal work has been done in the shortest possible time. We did not renovate the temple, but restored it in the way that was intended by its creators at the end of the 19th century.

It is gratifying that the state supported us at all stages. Fruitful collaboration attracted many caring people and even entire organisations to support and preserve the shrine.

Pre-design work is already underway to restore the facade of the church. In addition, there are plans to attend to the restoration of the graves of the soldiers of the Russo-Turkish War, the fraternal burial ground of the soldiers of the First World War, which are a couple of hundred steps from the temple. In general, the Military Cemetery requires special attention. This is, without exaggeration, a national pantheon. Poets and writers, artists and art workers, great people of medicine and scientists are buried here together with the heroes of several wars.

for a long time,” notes the Senior Priest of the Aleksandr Nevsky Church.

The roof, walls and floor were restored. The main thing is that now the dome and vaults are decorated with hand-painted faces of amazing beauty.

Get to the bottom of it

The original iconostasis has been preserved here. Among the images of the saints there are many donated by the families of the officers who died in the Russo-Turkish War. There are dedication inscriptions. There is even an icon donated to the Kolomna Regiment by Nikolai II himself.

“Let’s be objective: there are few churches in Belarus with so many worshipful icons that have come down to us through the difficult 20th century,” says Father Nikolai. He doesn’t hide, “We had to select murals for them, not vice versa.”

In order not to destroy the style set by the icons, utensils and interior details of the 19th century, the murals were made in the academic style. For this they invited Palekh masters who work in pre-revolutionary traditions.

The Kolomna Regiment, which gave life to the Aleksandr Nevsky Church, has been gone for more than a century. However, the church still bears the memory of it to its contemporaries. Here, every detail is speaking to you: from graves and slabs with the names of those killed in the Russo-Turkish War to the regimental coat of arms over the entrance and laurel wreaths, banners, and sabres in the paintings.

The Belarus Segodnya Publishing House has been ‘patronising’ the graves of several Belarusian writers buried at the Military Cemetery in Minsk for several years. Among them are the graves of the classics of Belarusian literature Pavlyuk Trus and Kuzma Chorny, as well as of the author of the text of the anthem *We, Belarusians* Mikhas Klimovich and others.

Spin in the dance

The time from Christmas to Maslenitsa in past centuries was full of dancing. Receptions were arranged everywhere — from the brilliant St. Petersburg to Nesvizh. Today, the tradition of winter evenings takes on a new meaning.

By Sofia Arsenyeva

Plunge into the love affairs of the Bolshoi

Do I know you? For more than ten years, on the night of the Old New Year, a magnificent masquerade ball has been held at the Bolshoi Theatre of Belarus. The date was not chosen by chance. In Russia, dressing up was associated with paganism, which is why they were held at Christmas time.

The dress code in the Bolshoi is strictly observed: they will not let you in without a carnival costume and a mask. Harlequins, Spanish women, Greek goddesses, hussars and mysterious strangers with flirtatious fans — everyone is here! The programme is rich in entertainment: locations with astrologers, fortune-tellers working with coffee grounds and Tarot cards are created in the theatre lobby. You can take part in a tea ceremony or watch a Christmas-themed performance. But the main thing is that the leading singers of the opera give the concert *Love, Intrigues and Passions of Kings*, after which a real ball begins with the participation of several orchestras. Dancing is planned until late at night. Towards the close of the masquerade — namely at three o'clock in the morning — fireworks bloom at the fountain.

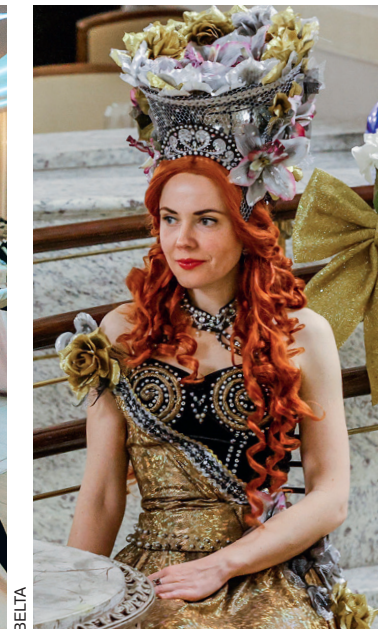
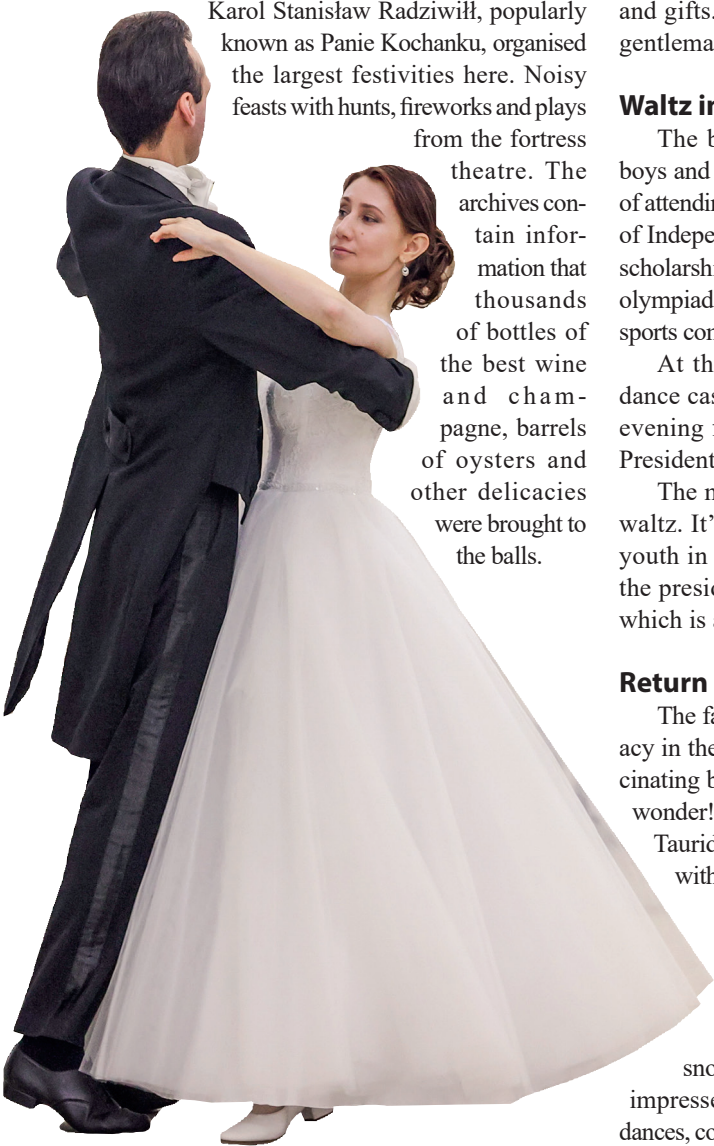
Attend a grand reception

'You can also look at the whirling couples under the rumble of impetuous bows' in Gomel. On the high bank of the Sozh, in a luxurious palace that once belonged to the generals Rumyantsev and Paskevich, social events are arranged according to all the canons. They invite the manager of the ball, the dance master, as well as the best orchestra in the city. The participants waltz in a spacious two-story columned hall, which still remembers Emperor Nikolai I. The Russian ruler personally came to Gomel three times. It is likely that he had a chance to dance as a guest of his beloved 'father-commander' Paskevich.

With this in mind, modern Gomel residents focus on classical dances that existed in the 19th century: polonaise, waltz, polka. A detail that may be of interest to the ladies is that there are many officers of the Gomel garrison among those invited.

Participate in gentry entertainment

The Nesvizh Castle was the main residence of the Radziwill family for several centuries. It is known that Karol Stanisław Radziwiłł, popularly known as Panie Kochanku, organised the largest festivities here. Noisy feasts with hunts, fireworks and plays from the fortress theatre. The archives contain information that thousands of bottles of the best wine and champagne, barrels of oysters and other delicacies were brought to the balls.



Once, a rich host even arranged a winter in the middle of summer for the entertainment of the guests: he strewed the road from the castle to the church with salt and invited everyone to ride a sleigh!

Today, guests are invited to the Nesvizh Castle to *Christmas Balls with Adventures*. The programme includes dancing, ballroom games and gifts. Everyone can feel like a gentleman here.

Waltz in the capital

The ball, which all the young boys and girls of the country dream of attending, takes place in the Palace of Independence. The best students, scholarship holders of special funds, olympiads, laureates of creative and sports competitions are invited.

At the same time, you need to endure a tough dance casting: the guys are trained for the cherished evening for six months! The host of the evening is President Aleksandr Lukashenko.

The main dance in the Palace of Independence is waltz. It's simple: it was the most popular one with youth in the 19th century. However, the entrance at the presidential ball is always made with polonaise, which is a complex, but sublime and solemn dance.

Return to the time of Potemkin

The favourite of Yekaterina II left behind a rich legacy in the small town of Krichev — the palace of fascinating beauty still amazes with its decoration. It's no wonder! The author of the project is the creator of the Tauride Palace in St. Petersburg, Ivan Starov. Balls with an imperial scale were in place here.

In our time, Krichev museum workers focus on the historical component of receptions. Therefore, there are always many reenactors from all over Belarus among those invited. Powdered wigs, tight corsets, fluffy skirts and snow-white boots — the brilliance of the outfits impresses with authenticity. And mazurkas, country dances, cotillions will help you to feel the Yekaterina's era.





People who glorify Belarus

Every year, the Palace of the Republic hosts the ceremony of presenting the Presidential prizes: the Spiritual Revival Awards, special prizes to art luminaries, and the Belarusian Sports Olympus Awards. They are awarded for truly unique achievements. Moreover, there are no analogues of this beautiful and sincere tradition in the world. Each year, the President personally honours the winners, presenting well-deserved awards to representatives of the clergy, creative teams, teachers, doctors, and journalists. Those who demonstrate an example of true patriotism make our country more beautiful and stronger.

Of course, this year was no exception. True devotees who glorify Belarus, contribute to strengthening its unconditional authority were invited to the stage. And, according to the established tradition, before presenting the awards, the Head of State addressed the audience, and in their person, of course, to all Belarusians with heartfelt words...

Aleksandr Lukashenko noted in his speech,

“Without strong spiritual foundations, it is unlikely that Belarusians, having gone through many years of wars and hardships, would have managed to preserve their native language, culture, traditions that have linked centuries and generations.”

The President emphasised,

“In the stormy sea of changes, we managed to defend the independence of Belarus, bring the economy to a new level, preserve and develop the social sphere.

But most importantly, we have preserved ourselves, the mentality, dignity and pure soul of the Belarusian people. Everything that unites us and allows us to look to the future with confidence.”

Another invariable detail of the ceremony: the winners are congratulated by the primate of the Belarusian Orthodox

Church, Metropolitan of Minsk and Zaslavl, Patriarchal Exarch of All Belarus Veniamin said that the coming Year of Historical Memory calls for turning one’s eyes back to past centuries, “Turn to the history of our people. And now the words of instruction are relevant, which call every person: remember the days of old, learn from the works of the Lord. And we have a reliable foundation for the good, blessed development of our country based on its history and rich spiritual heritage...”

It is gratifying to note that our colleagues are among the laureates. This year, the special prize to art luminaries was awarded to the team of authors of the Belarus Segodnya Publishing House, consisting of **Yuri Terekhovitch, Sergei Karpovich and Lyudmila Gladkaya**, who, by the way, was on a business trip in Kazakhstan at the time of the award ceremony...

The Belarusian Sports



Lyudmila Gladkaya, Sergei Karpovich and Yuri Terekhovitch

Olympus Awards for the year 2021 were awarded to multiple Paralympic swimming champion Ihar Boki, Head Coach of the National Women’s Wrestling Team Artur Zaitsev, and Head Coach of the Belarusian Rhythmic Gymnastics Team Irina Leparskaya.

The last sports season was rich in events, but the main ones, of course, were the Olympic and Paralympic Games in Tokyo, which brought us many pleasant moments. The winners of the special awards were very prominent figures at the main competitions of the four-year period, but, of

course, that is not their only credit: each of the winners did a lot to popularise and develop Belarusian sports.

Irina Leparskaya is a global figure in rhythmic gymnastics. There is every reason to say that if Irina Yuryevna had



not been with us, Belarus would not have had such high-profile and stable results in the most elegant and beautiful sport.

Once more, our graces returned from Tokyo with medals — Alina Harnasko managed to climb to the third line of the podium. She also succeeded at the World Championships, returning home with a full set of medals including gold for an exercise with a ribbon, which has never happened in the sovereign history of Belarus — this item is painfully capricious.

Ihar Boki became the main triumphant of the Paralympics in Tokyo. The swimmer from Bobruisk went to the start six



times at different distances and collected five gold medals. In total, Boki has 16 Paralympic gold medals!

Artur Zaitsev is a man who is in love with wrestling and devoted to his beloved work. For his students, he is the best friend, mentor, and second father. Silver medalist of the Tokyo 2020 Games Iryna Kurachkina is his student.

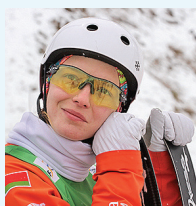


The athlete has repeatedly noted what an important role this mentor plays in her success and how much she owes him. The triumph of Kurachkina at the Olympics is a worthy result of a long and difficult path that the coach and student have travelled together.

Based on materials of sb.by

ARENA

● Freestyle skier Hanna Huskova won the bronze medal at the pre-Olympic stage of the World Cup in the USA



In the superfinal, Hanna Huskova made a bet on the unmistakable execution of a jump that was simpler than most of her rivals, and did not lose. This bronze became the second for Anna in the season. Another of our freestylers Anna Derugo took 6th place. In men, it is Dzmitry Mazurkevich who has the best result — 12th position.

After the American stage, the holders of Olympic licenses to Beijing will be determined.

● Gentlemen’s success of Belarusian biathletes

At the sixth stage of the World Cup in Ruhpolding, Germany, Belarusian biathletes climbed the podium three times: Anton Smolski became the bronze medalist in the sprint race and pursuit, and the men’s relay team, in which Mikita Labastau, Dzmitry Lazouski and Maksim Varabei, together with Smolski, took third place. The relay podium was the first for the Belarusian men’s team in 16 years.

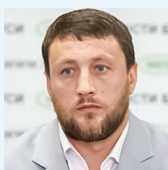
Today, the seventh, last pre-Olympic stage of the Planet Cup in Antholz, Italy, starts with the men’s individual 20 km race.



● Belarusian track and field athlete Ivan Tsikhan ends active sports career

Two-time world champion and Olympic medallist in hammer throw Ivan Tsikhan announced his decision in the Sport-Kadr show on the Belarus 5 TV channel. “Yes, I ended my career as an athlete. It’s hard to combine with the leadership of the Athletics Federation. Now I will pay more attention to administrative work, although I don’t forget about training,” said the athlete.

Ivan Tsikhan, now 45, won silver at the 2016 Olympics in Rio de Janeiro and bronze at the 2008 Olympics in Beijing. In 2003 and 2007, he became the world



champion. In September 2020, he became the Chairman of the Belarusian Athletics Federation. In the summer of 2021, Ivan Tsikhan was the captain of the Belarus national team at the Tokyo Olympics.

● Medal shower of the Paralympic World Cup in Skiing

Belarusian Yury Holub won the 10 km biathlon race for athletes with visual impairments. Previously, he was the best in the 6 km sprint and won the bronze medal in the 12.5 km classic cross-country skiing. Svetlana Sakhonenko won the gold of the world championship in the 10 km cross-country skiing race among the visually impaired. Valentina Shits became the owner of silver at a distance of 7.5 km among wheelchair users.



Photo of the week

The first child born in 2022 in Belarus is Bogdan Nekrashevich from Kalinkovich

DATES. EVENTS. PEOPLE.



January 20th is the World Day of Cheese Lovers. Some researchers mention 8000 BC as a starting point for the development of cheese making. As for the origin of cheese, there is no unequivocal answer, as the different versions of this dairy product were present in the culture of many peoples. The long and rich history of cheese making continues to evolve today. According to various estimates, there are up to 2,000 types of cheese.

On January 20th, 1958, the first speed control radars appeared on the streets of London. Much has changed over more than half a century of their history, but vigilant assistants are still in service with the traffic police regiment — today these are all kinds of road radars, cameras, mobile stations.



January 21st is the Day of Engineering Troops in the Republic of Belarus. This professional holiday was established by Decree of the President of the Republic of Belarus No. 157 of March 26th, 1998. The engineering troops trace their history back to the time of Peter the Great, when by his Decree of January 21st,

1701, created the School of Pushkarsky Prikaz in Moscow was created, which trained artillery officers and military engineers. The entire history of the Armed Forces and great battles is inextricably linked with the activities of the engineering troops.



January 23rd is the International Education Day. It was proclaimed by the resolution of the UN General Assembly of December 3rd, 2018. The resolution recognises the importance of education for achieving sustainable development and emphasises that education can increase individual productivity and increase the potential for economic growth, contribute to the eradication of poverty and hunger, and promote health and gender equality.

On January 25th, 1547, the first coronation took place in Russia. Sixteen-year-old Ivan IV was solemnly 'crowned' by Metropolitan Macarius, which meant the young tsar's official acceptance of the tsar's title. Signs of royal status were placed on him: the cross made of the wood of the Holy Cross, small shoulder mantles and the Monomakh's Cap. This coronation became an act of great political significance for Russia.



On January 25th, 1832, Ivan Shishkin was born (1832-1898), a Russian painter, one of the greatest masters of realistic landscape painting. His works include *Morning in a Pine Forest*, *Rye*, etc. In 1883 and 1892, he came to Belarus, painted a number of landscapes of Polesye. He created 20 sketches in Belovezhskaya Pushcha. They include *Felled Oak*, *Dead Wood*, *In Belovezhskaya Pushcha*, *Windbreak* and others. In 1893 Shishkin organised an exhibition of his Polesye works at the St. Petersburg Academy of Arts.

On January 25th, 1858, Mendelssohn's *Wedding March* was given a new life. It was written in 1843 for Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and did not receive much fame then. But fifteen years after the marriage of the English princess Victoria Adelheid with the Crown Prince of Prussia Frederick William IV, when the newlywed left the church to the solemn sounds of Mendelssohn's march, it became the most popular wedding march.



January 26th is the International Customs Day. On January 26th, 1953, the founding session of the Customs Cooperation Council (now the World Customs Organisation) was

held in Brussels. It has been celebrated since 1983. Currently, the World Customs Organisation unites 183 member states.



On January 26th, 1905, the world's largest diamond was mined in South Africa. The largest diamond in the history of mankind, weighing 3,106 carats (621.2 g), was raised at the Premier mine. It got its name 'Cullinan' after the discoverer and owner of the mine, Sir Thomas Cullinan. In 1908, it was decided to break the Cullinan into pieces and cut it. As a result, 105 diamonds were obtained from the original stone. 9 of the largest and most famous diamonds are the pride of the English crown.

On January 27th, 1820, Antarctica was discovered by the first Russian Antarctic expedition led by Thaddeus Bellingshausen and Mikhail Lazarev. Bellingshausen made three attempts to approach the land itself, but failed to get ashore. The perseverance of the sailors helped to achieve excellent results: 28 islands in the southern seas and an unknown coast of the mainland were discovered. The campaign of the Bellingshausen expedition is justly considered one of the most important and difficult ever completed.

